

Changing  
the world  
one  
child  
at a time

# MAKENA Musings

Newsletter of MAKENA Children's Foundation, Inc.

Fall 2014 Vol. 15, No. 2

## JAMBO



A Message  
from the  
President

Anne Batzer

*Recently I wrote this summary of the Makena Children's Foundation for someone who is new to our organization. I send it along to all of you, our faithful supporters and sponsors, with gratitude for your partnership in this life-changing work:*

The Makena Children's Foundation (MCF) offers love, encouragement and academic opportunity to children growing up in rural Kenya. Since its founding in 1997, 52 children from the subsistence farming village of Maraigushu, near Naivasha, have pursued an education funded by their generous American sponsors.

The residents of Maraigushu raise their families without the benefit of electricity or running water. They rely on their shambas (gardens) to feed their families. On average, the adults in Maraigushu have completed education through the third grade.



Jobs are sometimes available at local commercial flower farms. These parents and grandparents walk for as much as several hours to these farms to inquire if work is available. If the farm needs workers, a full day's labor provides wages in Kenya shillings the equivalent of approximately \$1.50.

Many of the Makena Kids are orphans because of the AIDS epidemic, other diseases, accidents or abandonment; some have a single parent. Sponsorship allows these children to attend excellent Kenyan-run private or public boarding schools near their village

MCF is a true American/Kenyan partnership. Our Kenyan management team, dedicated brothers Charles and Francis Karanja, who grew up in the village, share in decision-making and in responsibility for our success. We work together during an intense few weeks in spring when American leadership personnel travel to Kenya, and communicate through email on an almost daily basis the rest of the year.

(Continued on back)

## The Future Starts Now

By Anne Batzer

*"The future of the Makena Children's Foundation is here in Kenya. We must get to the point where we're educating our own children." These words from our Kenyan colleagues have resulted in a project that brings sustainability to the ideals envisioned by our Founder and President Emeritus Sherri Mills.*

Our Kenyan management team, Francis and Charles Karanja, recently founded the Makena Alumni Club. In July, 10 of our alumni and university students met for peer support, mentoring (both to be mentored by some amazing adults and to mentor our younger students) and to sign a commitment statement.

*They agreed they will work together to fund the education of other young, deserving Kenyan students. Their long-term goal is to be independent and continue MCF's mission without financial support from Americans.*

*Makena student  
Samson Machohi  
and Kenyan  
Management  
Team members  
Charles and  
Francis Karanja  
enjoy the first  
meeting of  
the Makena  
Alumni Club.*



Our profound joy about this development is difficult to describe in words.

This project has evolved over the last couple years in conversations in Kenya with Francis and Charles and with Daniel Waithaka, owner of Elite Schools in Nyahururu. But it is the Karanja brothers who put in many hours of careful thought and planning to make the launch of this Club a quality experience for our students and alumni.

The first meeting of the group was in Nairobi where they learned from various presenters. Liz Njiraini, a Nairobi businesswoman, guided the students through a process of self-examination and developing a personal vision statement. Business coach Timothy Waiharo took them through a deepening experience, setting and reaching goals. Francis described the framework of the Makena Alumni Club, leaving room for members of the group to use their own creativity to fill in the frame.

Two Makena university students are the first elected officers of the Club. Simon Gatonye is secretary and Rose Waithira is vice-secretary. The group meets again in November to elect more officers and continue crafting its final mission statement. We look forward to sharing their progress with you. If the astonishing academic success of these bright young people is any indication, we can expect great things.

A surprise for the first members of the Makena Alumni Club came from the generous hearts of two of our most faithful sponsors. Jim and Judy Adams of San Antonio, Texas became aware of the lack of computer access for our university students. Jim contacted us earlier this year and offered to donate laptop computers to each individual in the group. With our blessing, our Kenyan management team, Francis and Charles Karanja, insisted that it was important the young people "earn" the laptops by first committing to participate in the Alumni Club.



So, after the members signed their commitment statements, they were overwhelmed — and overjoyed — to learn about this valuable gift. Never in their lives have they had such a practical and beautiful possession. The laptops have made completing university assignments much easier and have opened the world to these young people. As they have many times in the past, Jim and Judy set an example for all of us of compassionate charitable giving. We send them our heartfelt gratitude.

# Thank you, Innocent Eyes Project!

By Mary Jo Baich

Hallelujah! We have just received a second grant from Innocent Eyes Project (IEP) and we are in a celebratory mood! The goals of MCF and IEP are to educate children in the developing world. These funds will help us bring the fullness of our mission to the children of the Maraigushu community who have lost one or both parents. This grant turns their loss to gain and their confusion about their life's opportunities to greater clarity.

While the story of David Noyes, founder of the Innocent Eyes Project, was covered in our Fall 2013 Makena Musings newsletter (see it online at [makena.org](http://makena.org)) one should take note of David's fundraising ideas — my goodness they are creative!

IEP ([innocenteyesproject.org](http://innocenteyesproject.org)) holds the largest online adventure-travel charity auction, which includes both trips and equipment. David takes hale, hearty and generous folks not only on safari in Tanzania's amazing national parks, but on a week-long ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro — and that is 19,341 feet of UP.

The funds raised by these ventures are awarded in grants to nonprofits like MCF to further the educational needs of children in the developing world. We are so grateful for this partnership that will insure that these two of our university students continue their studies:



## Rachael Njeri

Because there are more applicants than placements, it took Rachael almost two years to get acceptance to Kenya Medical Technical College where she is pursuing her lifelong dream to become a nurse. During her wait for acceptance, she diligently applied to every good nursing college in Kenya and faithfully volunteered daily at an excellent private hospital. To help support herself during this time, she crafted and sold beautiful beaded jewelry. Her intelligence and warmth, her social skills and sense of humor will serve her well in her chosen profession.



## Daniel Githinji

Githinji was so dissatisfied with his high school test score at Anestar Boys' School, that he asked his principal if he could repeat his senior year. Recognizing Githinji's potential, the principal agreed to his request — at no charge — if MCF would pay his test fees. Githinji bettered his test score and gained acceptance to the Technical University of Kenya where he is pursuing his goal of owning his own construction company. He takes his classes in the evenings so he is available to gain experience by working as a laborer on construction jobs. In his spare time, he enjoys exploring Nairobi, looking for examples of interesting architecture.



## Future Teacher, Martha Waithira

Determination has always been an admirable characteristic of Makena student Martha Waithira. Although her test scores just missed the cut-off point for university entrance, that didn't stop Martha from pursuing her goal to be a primary school teacher.

Following graduation from secondary school, Martha moved in with relatives in Nairobi. She applied for a job at many elementary schools and was hired as an "Untrained Teacher" or what in America we call a teacher's aide.

"I just love the kids," Martha says. "They're noisy and wiggly, but they can learn." Kenya has a program that enables Untrained Teachers to take focused classes and become primary school teachers.

With the generous support of her faithful sponsor, Acmar United Methodist Church and the Reverend Belinda Wilson, Martha is working and studying hard, determined to make her dream come true.

## Welcome Brenda Morgan to our Board of Directors

Our newest Board member, Brenda Morgan, has already taken on the job of secretary. Currently residing in Austin, Texas, having moved from Southern California after 25 years, Brenda is still trying to adjust to wearing cowboy boots instead of flip flops!

She brings a wealth of experience in both the private and nonprofit sectors. She was a member of the launch team for USA TODAY and, in California, worked with a national multi-media company, Target Media Partners, as Vice President of Operations. In Austin, she is a vice

president with Plant Interscapes where she can express her love of gardening. She has been an active volunteer with Ronald McDonald Houses, Olive Crest and regional food banks. We are so fortunate to welcome her to the Makena Children's Foundation.

And, we express our gratitude to Tina Wilson who has served our Board as secretary for many years. We are so pleased that Tina will continue on the Board and grace us with her graphic design skills here in *Makena Musings*.





# Won't you be my sponsor?

We have four students who excel in school, despite the fact they have no sponsor. Six other students have faithful sponsors who are able to pay part of their annual fees.

**Will you please be the one who insures that these students reach their potential and graduate?**

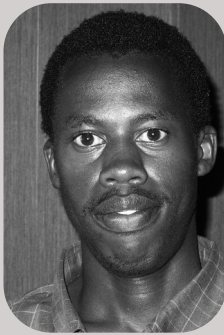
*Here are two examples of these remarkable young people:*



**Naomi Wairimu Mwangi**

Now finishing the eighth grade at Elite Schools in Nyahururu, Naomi lost her father a decade ago, when she was very young. She and her three brothers and three sisters have been raised by their single mother. Naomi is an academic star, never receiving a grade lower than a B. Wise beyond her years, she demonstrates self-discipline one usually finds only in much older individuals. Naomi loves reading novels and drawing designs for clothing, but her goal is to become a cardiologist. She accepts the academic awards she receives with deep humility. "Deep" is a good descriptor for this charming, intriguing young lady.

We fully expect Naomi to qualify for university entrance when she finishes high school. She needs a sponsor willing to commit to eight years of funding. Full sponsorship: \$2,000 per year covers tuition, room-and-board, uniforms, books and school supplies, transportation and toiletries.



**Joseph Kariuki Wambui**

Born to a single mother who died when he was just seven years old, Kariuki went to live with his grandparents. However, more tragedy followed. His grandparents' house burned to the ground and, shortly thereafter, his grandfather died. In spite of this, Kariuki has always demonstrated a persistent, quiet intelligence. He did so well in primary school he was invited to attend the top-rated Mangu secondary school. There he received an A- score on the comprehensive test for all seniors (KCSE) which easily earned him a spot at University of Nairobi where he is majoring in Economics.

Kariuki has partial sponsorship and will graduate from college in just 2-and-a-half more years. Co-sponsorship: \$1,250 per year for just 2-and-a-half years would cover all of Kariuki's university expenses until graduation.

**Will you sponsor Naomi or Kariuki?**

Please accept my tax-deductible gift, payable to Makena Children's Foundation, Inc., 711 Medford Center, #117, Medford, OR 97504.

- ☐ I wish to sponsor Naomi with a gift of \$2,000 annually (for 8 years).
- ☐ I wish to sponsor Kariuki with a gift of \$1,250 annually (for 2.5 years).
- ☐ I wish to lend a hand to the smooth operation of the Makena Children's Foundation with a gift of:  
☐\$50    ☐\$100    ☐\$200    ☐\$400    ☐\$600    ☐\$1,000
- ☐ You have permission to mention my support in your publication(s).
- ☐ I prefer to make my gift anonymously.
- ☐ I am unable to contribute now, but please keep me informed about the work of Makena Children's Foundation.
- ☐ I would like to share my story relating to Africa or my sponsored child. Please contact me by phone ☐ or by e-mail ☐.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_



**Kenya is a beautiful yet harsh country.**  
Your support of a Makena student will help a child thrive under the most challenging conditions.

## Congratulations, Daniel Waithaka!

For many years, we have had a close partnership with the couple who own Elite Schools in Nyahururu. Daniel and Keziah Waithaka offer our students one of the best educations available in Kenya. In addition, they open their home to us during our working trip to Kenya and serve as excellent advisors. Last year, Daniel embarked on an 8-month political campaign and was elected Governor of Nyandarua County. When we were in Kenya in March, Daniel told us stories of his recent state trip to China. He was one of a 7-person delegation that included Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta. We know that Kenya is indeed fortunate to have someone with Daniel's intelligence and integrity in its government. We're so grateful for his willingness to take on this challenge and wish him well as he moves forward.





**A big heart for  
Makena Kids**



Be sure to read our lead article to get all the scoop on the incredible generosity of Makena supporters Judy and Jim Adams (pictured at left, enjoying a meeting with Board members Ed Baich, Mary Jo Baich and Brenda Morgan.) Hint: What they did brought some huge smiles to the faces of our college students!

## MAKENA Musings

Fall 2014



MAKENA Children's Foundation, Inc.  
711 Medford Center, #117  
Medford, OR 97504

If you'd like to help bring the priceless gift of education to deserving children, please complete the form inside and send your donation TODAY.

## A Message from the President

(Continued from front)

This project is a labor of love: no American working for the Foundation has ever taken a salary or stipend. All are volunteers. We work from our homes so overhead is extremely low.

We are somewhat unique because we strive to support our students through higher education. MCF students have achieved remarkable success: Many of our alumni are gainfully employed in Kenya where the unemployment rate hovers at around 40%, 12 are currently enrolled in universities and one of our students is completing work on his PhD.

We attribute this success to the personal relationship we have with each child, their parent or guardian, Kenyan school personnel and our generous sponsors. Emotional needs, as well as academic requirements, receive our loving attention and support.

We are so proud of the irrepressible spirit of the Makena Kids. They have overcome severe emotional and economic challenges to achieve admirable success. They serve as an ongoing inspiration for all of us.



**"Hear no evil ... see no ... speak no ..."**

*Makena students Naomi Mwangi, Hannah Virginia and Christopher Kidali clown for the camera, having fun with Makena supporter/photographer LaVerne Ramsey.*

### MAKENA Musings

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