

Changing
the world
one
child
at a time

MAKENA Musings

Newsletter of MAKENA Children's Foundation, Inc.

Winter 2025 Vol. 25, No. 1

JAMBO



A Message
from the
President

Anne Batzer

My annual working trip to Kenya starts with questions and continues with varied experiences that lead to answers. Always, I am greeted with a warm embrace which immediately makes the long trip there worth it!



Our students are full of ideas, advice, questions and humor. Being with them is a potpourri of the best of human potential. These young kids who have known profound loss and hunger model the value of honesty when openly expressing their deep fears and inspire with their resilient hope. It's a humbling experience.

Our parents and guardians express the wishes of parents everywhere: a life for their children that provides the basics of food, shelter and water; a life for their children that supports them in being good human beings, and a life for their children that gives them options as they become adults.

Our schools' staffs are good partners, providing excellent classes and responsiveness to our students' emotional needs.

Our Kenyan staff, our manager Charles Karanja and volunteers: Charles' wife Carol, his brother Francis Nijraini and Francis' wife Kuhi, bring the best of professionalism, warmth and creativity to our endeavor. We are so fortunate to be working with these colleagues and friends.

Accompanying me on this trip was my sister-in-law Annette. Retired from her career as a Nurse Practitioner, Annette has many years of varied nonprofit experience. Like me, she loves a good question and, then, diligently uses every available avenue to pursue good answers. I know you will enjoy her reflection.

Always, Africa prompts a sense of wonder and awe. I can't wait to go back.



Full Circle: Thoughts from a Kenyan Traveler

Generous Makena donor Annette Batzer accompanied Makena president Anne Batzer (they are sisters-in-law) on her recent working trip to Kenya. Annette brought her background as a Nurse Practitioner and her wealth of years of nonprofit and international experience, which contributed to all of the meetings. Here are Annette's thoughts on her experience:

I was privileged to return to Kenya with Anne. My first experience was as a tourist on safari in 1995, the trip that birthed Makena. I found Kenya to be a magical place with landscapes, wildlife and cultures so dissimilar to ours in North America.

Memories of traveling as a tourist bumped alongside me as we met with our students, their schools, families, communities and the wonderful Makena staff. In 1995 I recall traveling on the road's dirt shoulder because the roads were too potholed. Now, we drove on pavement. Running water is present in most cities, though there is still no drinking water from any tap. People continue to walk long distances and use public matatus (though people no longer hang off the backs or sides of these vans.) Small stalls still fill the dirt tracks along the roads. In some places western attire has replaced the colorful tribal dress.

Most importantly though, the generous and warm nature of the people is unchanged. Deep gratitude was expressed in every meeting.

The impact of Makena is abundantly apparent. Alumni are navigating adult lives, mentoring new graduates, dialoguing about the changing educational system and employment scene and helping each other to future success. All the while, they are starting beautiful families—children who will benefit from having educated parents.

The Makena students come from the Maraigushu region which has allowed these families to join together to benefit each other in ways that they could not have done individually. Makena's rippling effects that impact one child, one family, one village, one region will endure. What an honor to experience Makena!



Annette and Anne had a warm reunion with Preston Mutinda, one of their safari guides in 1995. Preston continues his work as the stellar safari guide and runs his nonprofit Wildlife Foundation which provides services in conservation and discourages poaching. In addition to this important work, Preston promised to hand flyers about MCF to all of his American customers.

Parent/Guardian Meeting



Always a highlight of our time in Kenya is the daylong meeting in Maraigushu hosted by our parents and guardians. Most importantly, it's a time to hear their ideas. This year we focused on Kenya's current recession and how to help our alumni find good jobs. It's also a time of camaraderie: we take a hundred photos we then give to them as keepsakes. Many belong to the self-help group they formed and are helping each other with micro-loans. The cake we provided to the delicious lunch says it all:



One Family!

Oh Baby!



The Makena Children's Foundation has been going for 27 years, so "our children" are having babies of their own. It's lovely to witness these mature, educated parents nurturing our next generation with thoughtful love.



A Special Day

In order to promote unity and share expertise, Makena alumni planned and hosted a lively November meeting of parents and guardians and our current students. Under the direction of Makena Alumni Club officers, Samson Wahito, Mary Muthoni, Martha Waithera and Joseph Kairuki, the group gathered for a day of bonding and information sharing. Alumni expressed the desire to strengthen their mentorship relationships with students to support them in making good choices for their futures. Alumni Martha Waithera, a teacher, explained Kenya's new education system, the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) to the group. Our students received supportive messages from their parents and guardians. Alumni provided a delicious lunch to the group and enthusiasm for this gathering resulted in a plan to repeat this joint meeting in April.



Makena Alumni Club Chair Samson Wahito and Vice Chair Mary Muthoni help serve lunch to the gathering.

Some Makena Alumni, students and parents who attended the joint meeting.

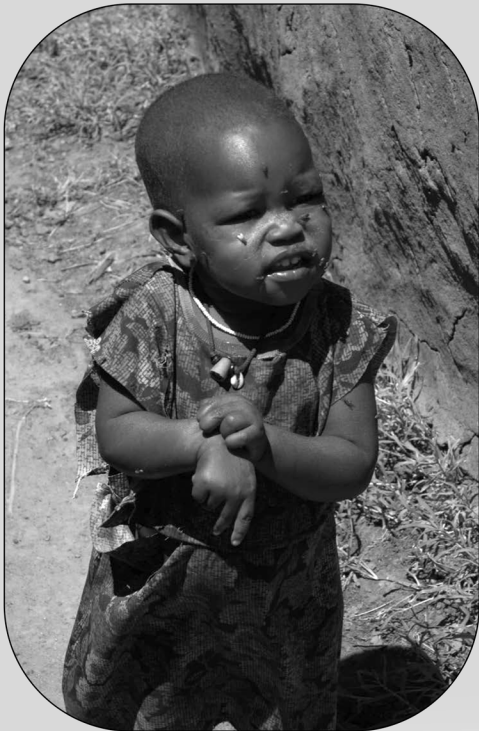
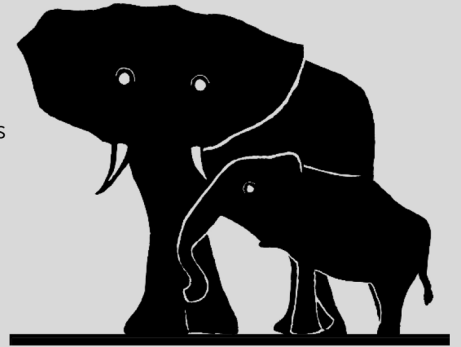
Makena Alumnus Peter Gatere and student Joseph Njoroge help serve lunch to the attendees

“The Example of Elephants”

By Mary Jo Baich

We are drawn to elephants: their strength, their concern for each other and, especially, their ability to lovingly nurture their young make them compelling subjects to observe. The Makena logo was chosen for these enduring qualities which mirror our work nurturing the children of Kenya.

For 27 years our donors, but especially our sponsors, have committed to this vision. We are pleased that those sponsors who can, are now sponsoring a second student.



But there are so many Kenyan children growing up without one or both parents, without enough food, without a decent education.

It's an incredible waste in our world where educated, creative thinkers are needed even more now than when we were founded 27 years ago.

We need new sponsors!! Please consider joining us as a sponsor!

\$2,500 a year changes a life completely!! Maybe you could join with your family or your group of friends to help us lift a child out of poverty and into a world where they have options.

Won't you join us in continuing the Makena mission of educating the children of Kenya?

**Sponsorships do not cover all of our costs.
Please help us with a donation to keep our students in school.**

Make your tax-deductible donation TODAY, payable to
Makena Children's Foundation, Inc.,
711 Medford Center, #117, Medford, OR 97504.

- I wish to sponsor a Makena student with a gift of \$2500 annually.
- 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 _____

Makena Children's Foundation ... educating children in Kenya since 1997

Gratitude

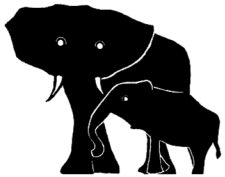
With deep sorrow we mark the November passing of Makena Board member Ed Baich. Ed served as our Treasurer for many years and provided creative advice and wise counsel. His profound suggestions were always couched in gentle words and light-hearted humor. We miss him so very much. His obituary called for donations to Makena and thousands of dollars have come in to extend Ed's invaluable legacy to our mission. We are so thankful for his life and for his service.



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Winter 2025

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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.

What Joy!!!

When we are in Kenya, we always give our students new experiences. These four Lizar School students took their first boat ride ever on Lake Naivasha, which is full of hippos and overseen by scores of exotic birds. A naturalist accompanied our kids to explain what they saw. Having a glorious time are Esther Wakiuru, Martin Chege, Margaret Wambura and Margaret Njeri.



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