

PROVIDING CHILDREN
IN KENYA WITH HOPE,
HOMES, AND A FUTURE



Volume 6 Issue 1

January 2021

What was the best thing to come out of 2020? You!!!

Goodbye and good riddance to 2020, a year of few highlights and far too many lowlights. Hopefully, 2021 will be filled with celebrations and joyful memories.

This year the HCF board will continue to focus on providing quality educational opportunities to the children we serve in Meru, Kenya. In April, fifteen of our children will be taking the national exams that determine if, when, and where they continue their educational journeys.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all of our donors — whether mentors, bi-continental run supporters, craft purchasers or general contributors. We could not operate without your generosity. We look forward to continuing to work hard, hand-in-hand, to make Hope Children's Fund even more successful in 2021.



***Spotlight
on
Eric
Mutea
&
Robinson
Kithinji***



The Covid-19 pandemic has created havoc throughout the world. In Kenya, some students were able to return to schools on October 5th. In this edition we will highlight two young men who have excelled in the academic realm.

Eric Mutea arrived at the home in 2016 and is now a 14 year old in class 8 at Gikumene Primary School. Each year, Eric is in the top ten of his class. His goals include a career in mechanical engineering after university. At the home, Eric's favorite spot is the library. His hobbies include reading story books and football (soccer). His favorite foods are chapati chips and rice.

Much of Eric's time is spent studying for the KCPE (Kenya Comprehensive Primary Examination), which will be held in April 2021. This grueling multiple-day exam includes Math, English A, English B (writing), Science, Kiswahili A, Kiswahili B (writing), Social Studies and Religious Education. The results of the KCPE determine where or if a student can attend secondary school (high school). Many youth who receive high marks attend boarding school. The Kenyan government currently covers a small portion of boarding school tuition.

We wish Eric the best of luck on the KCPE. Eight of our children will be taking the KCPE this year. Eric is mentored by Yvette and Lawrence Hohler of Port Jefferson, New York. Eric is the Hohler's second mentee.

Robinson Kithinji is currently a Form 4 student at Kirige Secondary School. Form 4 is the equivalent of our senior year of high school. He arrived at the home in 2017 and is currently 17 years old. Robinson has consistently scored in the top ten of his secondary school class.

Robinson has his eyes on a career as a neurosurgeon. Obviously, this means many more years of education. Robinson will take the KCSE (Kenya Comprehensive Secondary Exam) in April, and his score on the KCSE will determine the post-secondary institution he will be able to attend.

The KCSE is the only determining factor for post-secondary education. Unlike our SAT or ACT, the KCSE is not a factor but the only factor for admission. GPA and secondary school grades do not determine post-secondary admission. The KCSE is a multiple part multiple day examination. The current structure is thirteen subjects over three and a half days.

At the home, Robinson loves to play football (soccer). The new football goals are a welcome addition for Robinson and his brothers and sisters. He is also a major music fan. Favorite foods include chapati, rice and pizza. Robinson is mentored by Lorna and Gene Mann of Bayville, New York.

We wish Robinson good luck on the KCSE and on his long journey to becoming a neurosurgeon. There will be seven youth from the home taking the KCSE this year.

A long-standing tradition at the home is to carry the high scorers on the KCPE and KCSE up the home's hill on the shoulders of their brothers and sisters. Let's hope that both Eric and Robinson get carried up the hill!

We are very proud of these two young men who embody our slogan: EDUCATION IS THE KEY! You can send good luck on the exam wishes to either of these young men at hopekids@yahoo.com. Please put their name on the subject line.

News from the Home

Sheltering Fun

The cloud of Covid-19 has drastically changed life at the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Home. Sheltering in place has been difficult for both the children and staff, but some recent improvements have helped.

We have added a full-sized basketball court, and our good Canadian friend Bruce Garrity is helping the children understand the game and its rules. Look out WNBA and NBA for our rising Kenyan basketball stars!

Two new portable football (soccer) goals have also been added to allow the boys and girls to indulge in their favorite sport. These new additions have made sheltering in place a bit more bearable.



Education is the Key to National Exam Success

October 5th marked the return to school for standard (grade) 4, standard (grade) 8 and form 4 (senior year). All post-secondary school youth returned to their colleges, universities and technical training schools. **The remaining children will return to classes on January 9th.**

In April, a number of our youth will be taking the national exams. These multi-day exams largely determine each child's educational future.

The following children will be taking the KCPE (Kenyan Comprehensive Primary Examination):

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1.Eric Mutea | 5.Glory Kangai |
| 2.Alex Mawira | 6.Dina Karimi |
| 3.Dennis Maitethia | 7.Brenda Mwendwa |
| 4.Pharis Bundi | 8.Nicholas Kimanthi |

The following children will be taking the KCSE (Kenya Comprehensive Secondary Examination):

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1.Evans Kirimi | 5.Joy Britney Kinya |
| 2.Beth Kinya | 6.Ken Murithi |
| 3.Frankline Mutembei | 7.Kelvin Koome |
| 4.Robinson Kithinji | |

We wish all the children the best of luck on these most important examinations!

**Happy faces
revel in
celebrating
the high
scorers after a
prior year's
exam.**

**Who will the
high scorers
be on the 2021
exam?**



A Promising Life Cut Short

The Hope Children's Fund family suffers losses and extreme sadness as all families do. Sadly, we share the passing of Kelvin Mutuma. He was born on March 16, 1997 and passed on September 16, 2020. Kelvin came to the home in 2005 after the deaths in rapid succession of both of his parents. Kelvin attended Meru National Polytechnic and received a certificate in Business Management. He completed an internship with Meru Toyota.

Kelvin is survived by a sister in Timau, Kenya and all of his brothers and sisters at the home. We grieve the loss of his great potential and a promising life cut short. R.I.P.



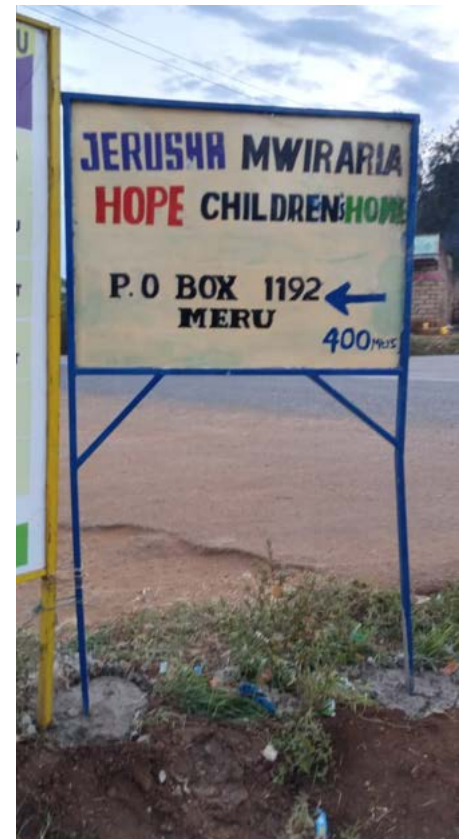
News from the Board

Both boards were able to carry out a highly successful 16th Annual Bi-Continental Run. Veronica Kirima, the home's director, and Kenyan board members held their portion in honor of founder Joseph Kirima, who passed away on January 30, 2020.

Veronica Kirima is working hard to supervise the planting of crops on our farm acreage. The yields from the farm reduce our dependence on market prices for the food staples needed to feed the children. The farm produces maize, arrowroot, onions and greens. The children from the home assist in the planting and harvesting of the crops.

On the U.S. side, fundraising has been extremely difficult during the pandemic. Many of our fundraisers have been postponed or cancelled. Our craft fairs, a source of income and publicity, have been totally eliminated. Our St. Anselm's Basket Raffle has been postponed indefinitely. Our 4th annual gala has been postponed until July 24, 2021.

We are extremely hopeful that 2021 will allow both boards to return to some semblance of normalcy. The one consistent factor has been the steady and consistent generosity of our supporters on both sides of the pond. Together we will get through this pandemic as will the children under our care. We want to give special thanks to our many long-standing donors who make all our work possible. You are changing the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable children . . . forever!!



One of the elders from the church next to the home made this sign to replace one that had been knocked down. It is on the main road pointing the way to the home.

Board of Directors

President – Larry Hohler
631-473-1662
hohlerlj@aol.com

Vice President – Kevin Mann
631-470-6351
Kevinmannmail@gmail.com

Treasurer – Peter Wunsch
516-817-3307
wunschp@aol.com

Secretary - Yvette Hohler
631-473-1662
hohlerlj@aol.com

Aida Mann 631-470-6351
aidamann@optonline.net

Ed Hyshiver 631-664-0257
edhysh@optonline.net

Tiffany Mann 631-260-0678
tiffanylynn23.tm@gmail.com

Victor DeSanctis 631-807-1394
vdesanct@optonline.net

Cari Besserman 631-875-4238
cf4hcf@gmail.com

Kyle Spillane 631-566-2700
kylespillane.ks@gmail.com

Laura Spillane 631-804-5388
lauraspillane1212@gmail.com

The Board of Directors would like to thank all the donors for their continued support. As a grassroots, all-volunteer organization, we literally could not exist without your support.

News from the Heart



Over the years, one glaring issue for our orphanage has been the lack of safe, reliable transportation for the children. We have lacked a vehicle to transport the children to schools, shopping and medical visits. Transportation safety is critical in Meru as the common means of travel--walking, matatus (minibus), boda boda (motorcycles) and lorries (trucks) can be dangerous. Indeed, over the years, two of our children -- Glory and Michell -- have been killed on the road not too far from the home.

While having our own vehicle would not provide all the needed transport all the time, it would ensure greater safety for more of our children more of the time. Additionally, a new vehicle will also hopefully help us reach our goal of self-sustainability as hired transportation is a significant part of our monthly budget expenses.

We are very fortunate to have received a \$10,000 grant from a "secret" donor to help purchase a vehicle. We are very excited to announce two additional partnerships on the vehicle. An anonymous donor offered to match the first \$5,000 in donations to the vehicle appeal. This matching donation will be available until June 30, 2021. NYU/PDK (New York University/Phi Delta Kappa) has pledged to donate \$2,000 to the vehicle fund.

Mombasa Toyota will provide us with a new Hiace minivan (16 seats) for \$39,000. If we cannot raise enough funds, we will purchase the best used vehicle possible. Kyle Spillane is in the process of setting up a Go Fund Me page for the vehicle appeal.

Please consider donating to the vehicle fund. We have established the following sponsorship levels:

Elephant \$2,000 +	Hippo \$250
Lion \$1,000	Giraffe \$100
Rhino \$500	

Any donation, small or large, will inch us closer to the goal of safe transportation. Please send your donation to Hope Children's Fund P.O. Box 387, Setauket, New York. Please mark your check or donation "vehicle donation." Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Please help our orphanage while shopping online. When shopping **AMAZON**, go to smile.amazon.com and choose **Hope Children's Fund** as the organization you want to support. For shopping at over 2400 online stores and services other than Amazon, many of which you are probably already using, please go to our website, www.hopechildrensfund.org and click "sign up" under **iGive**. It is free, makes shopping easier, and you even get a small tax deduction! Really, no kidding.

Please help us help the helpless with your tax-deductible donation. Make your check payable to: Hope Children's Fund, P.O. Box 387, Setauket, New York, 11733.



The 4th Annual Douglas J. McDonough

Passion for Education



Rotary
Rocky Point



2021 Gala

to benefit

Hope Children's Fund

July 24, 2021

The Inn & Spa at East Wind,
Wading River

Join us for an evening
of live music by X-Session,
cocktail hour, a plated dinner,
raffles and silent auction—
all supporting the education
of the children
of the Jerusha Mwiraria
Hope Children's Home,
Meru, Kenya

6:00 - 11:00pm \$199 per person

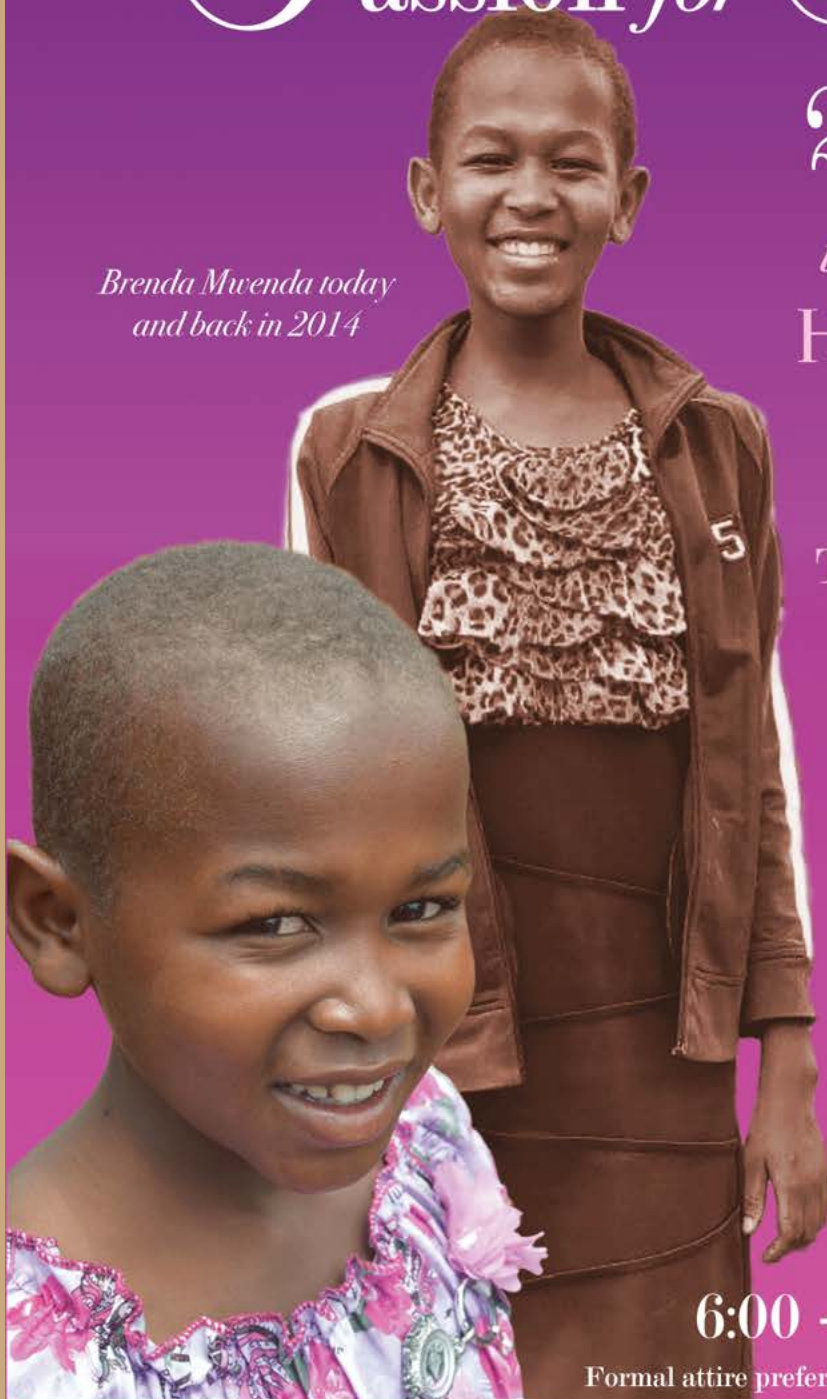
Formal attire preferred. Discounted overnight accommodations available.

Every ticket pays for a trimester of secondary school for a child from the home.

Please RSVP: HCFgala@gmail.com

Hope Children's Fund, P.O. Box 1345, East Northport, NY 11731

hopechildrensfund.org



Gala Weekend

The Douglas J. McDonough Gala Committee proudly announces the expansion of the 4th annual gala into Gala Weekend!

The weekend will kick off Friday, July 23, with a 6 p.m. cocktail party reception at Desmond's at East Wind in Wading River. The gathering will welcome back all former Kenyan travelers and their families to share photos and memories of their experiences at the home in Meru. East Wind will be offering a special room block rate for us both Friday, July 23, and Saturday, July 24.

Saturday will be a double-header event. During the day, Hope Children's Fund supporters are invited to visit the Shoppes at East Wind. All supporters will receive a special discount booklet. Ride the Carousel, visit the cheese shop, the wine shop and the other twenty or so specialty shops.

At 6 p.m. the party starts in the Northampton ballroom. Live music by X-Session, live video from Kenya, dancing and merriment accompanied by raffles and a silent auction. East Wind will again provide special room block rates. The party ends at 11p.m. with after parties on your own.

Sunday, July 25, starts with a group breakfast at Desmond's. The breakfast is at your own expense. At 11:30 a.m., it's all aboard the North Fork Trolley for a tasting tour of RG/NY and Macari wineries followed by a tasting at Long Ireland Brewery. This is a separate ticketed event. We will return to East Wind to complete our fun-filled weekend.

For questions and bookings contact Aida and Kevin Mann at (631) 470-6351 or kevinmannmail@gmail.com. Please do not contact East Wind directly.

16th Annual Bi-Continental Run

Our 16th Bi-Continental Run had a very different look from previous years due to the pandemic. The U.S. side was virtual with two small gatherings of actually runners/walkers on October 24th. The Kenyan component with actual runners and walkers took place on October 25th.

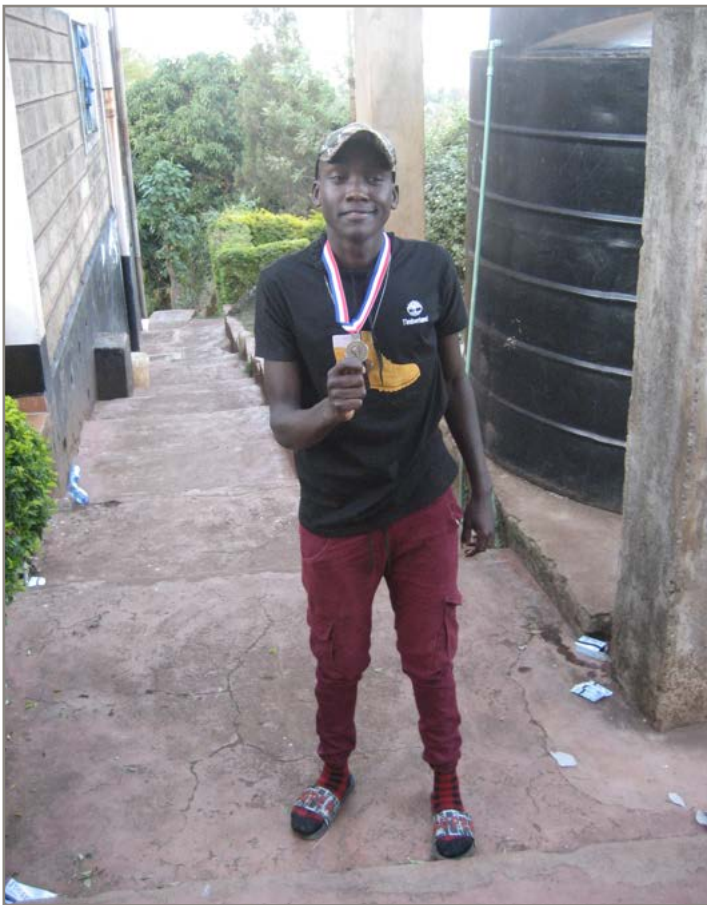
U.S. race director Ed Hyshiver stated, "Considering this year's Covid-19 circumstances, we had very good community and financial support on both sides of the globe. In Kenya, approximately 150 participated in a walk from the home through town and back. Shortly thereafter, another 23 runners ran a typically Kenyan fast 5K to once again win the Bi-Continental competition. It was wonderful to see the overwhelming support there for the home."

The Kenyan side had a very different tone as well. The Kenya run/walk was held in honor of the founder of the home Joseph Kirima who passed away on January 31st 2020. The Kenyans had far more ceremony than ever before including huge banners, tents and performances all dedicated to the memory of Joseph. In addition, the Kenyans provide food to all attendees. Fundraising stickers were sold, and the Kenyans made a considerable profit which will be used for improvements to the Joseph Kirima Dormitory.

Plans are already underway for the 17th Annual Bi-Continental Run, according to race director Ed "Fast Eddie" Hyshiver.







**Please help us grow! Forward the e-newsletter to friends and relatives.
We are very much a grass roots organization.
Every new contact helps the cause tremendously.**

**Last year we were supported by fewer than four hundred donors.
Each additional person really does matter!**

