

Building a great team

This year's newsletter features articles from two of our staff and an inspiring young man who started High School with us this year. Bildad (article below), pleaded with us at the start of the year for a place in our High School. We really were his last chance of going to High School. He could not afford to attend any of the local secondary schools and had been cheated out of a place in a National boarding school. Another school's loss is definitely our gain and we look forward to seeing him grow into his leadership role. Mr. Thomas, our new High School Principal has, in previous years, been involved in the leadership programme that Bildad did so well in this year. His 'elevation' to the role of Principal is a great testimony to his character and sense of purpose in his work. We are praying that he will be at the helm of the High School for many years to come. Collins is the reason that Hope and Kindness exists. If we had not started sponsoring Collins in November 2000, when he was a ten yr old living in a children's home in Kisumu (our nearest big city) we may never have come to Kenya let alone started the work here in Kosele in 2002. The rest is history. Fortunately for us Collins remains part of our history and has a key role in the future of Hope and Kindness.

President Bildad's opening remarks



managed to be elected as President at the sub-County level. Many people could not believe when I was announced as the President. I came to believe that success does not belong to the chosen few.

After being chosen as the President at sub-County level, I led my team to the county level which was held at the county town of Homa Bay. My team and I showed unity amongst ourselves as well as self-discipline which attracted other students from other sub-Counties. I was chosen to represent our team again and was elected as the Organising Secretary for our county. This allowed me to go and represent our County at National Level and I attended a meeting of the Student Council in Nairobi. I am sure that God saw it good to give me this life chance to serve my generation and lift the name of our school, Kosele Christian Community secondary school to a higher level.

The national level meeting was held in Nairobi at the Bomas of Kenya (a very prestigious meeting place). There I met many students from different counties. My heart was joyful to see different leaders that I had never seen before. I saw the President of our

country together with other great officials from the government who came to participate in the election of the Student Council. I prayed for courage and good speech throughout my campaign at the national level. I was elected a delegate to represent the Lake (Victoria) region at national level. From my experience I have come to learn that the impossible is a myth. Through your support for Hope and Kindness and our school I assure you that our school will be a national school through our powerful faith in God.

I am proud because my school has become famous in producing a leader at national level and achieved a good result by beating big schools. Being a leader and somebody chosen to serve my generation I will help others who are in need and guide them on to the right path. I will set a good example to others and be a role model to them. I will stand up for others even in hard times by listening to them and giving them good ideas and knowledge. My mission for the next two years is to support students and student council in their academic, leadership and community endeavours.

As I inform you about empowering young student leaders I am thankful to my great God who saw it good to give me life and a chance to serve my generation by His divine purpose. All the schools in our sub-county sent student leaders to a meeting at Agoro Sare High School to choose leaders for our sub-county. I represented my school and was chosen to stand for the post of President. I believed and convinced myself that I was the best and my school was the best. I campaigned the whole day to put across my policies to my fellow students from other schools. Through my good policies and good speech I

Receiving great teams -

In April we received a visit from new friends Mandy, Matthew & Andrew Massey and Keith Pauley from Bromsgrove Baptist Church. They brought love and fun and left a legacy that will bless our children for the rest of this year and longer... 13 yr old Andrew is a pupil at **Hazel Oak School** in Shirley, West Midlands. He had to get permission from his Head Teacher to be absent two days before the end of term two. Not only did she say "Yes" but she then got the whole school to rally together and in less than one term they had raised £2,000 for our school!



Some of the sports equipment bought with the money raised by Hazel Oak School

Classes of 2016 - Onwards, Upwards



Kevin, Wycliffe and Dolphine 2006

We all know that education is about so much more than exam results - but doesn't it feel good when your kids do well in their exams?

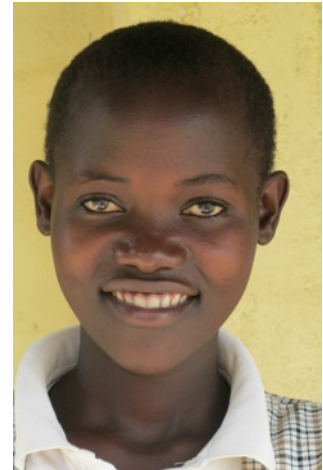
During November last year our oldest primary school class, Standard 8, sat their KCPE exams and our Form Four students in High School sat their KCSE exams. The results determine your opportunities for going to a *good* High school and getting onto a government funded, *good* degree course. Because of this there has been a very high level (*rampant* is the word most frequently used) of cheating. The cheating had become

so 'rampant' that the new Education Secretary decided to do something about it. Very strict measures were put in place to ensure that the KCSE exams, in particular were conducted with a very high level of integrity. Reported cases of cheating fell to a record low, as did the number of top grades awarded, much to the disgust of much of the education establishment.

The media frenzy following the release of the KCSE results gave a clear indication of just how high the stakes for KCSE success have become. A large number of students were angry and frustrated. One of the teaching unions called for the papers to be recalled and remarked. The Education Secretary was having none of it. The marks stood and, hopefully, a new high level watermark has been established which will encourage all the students who have never cheated. Especially the students in our school.

When other schools saw their results decline, the results from our students actually went up. Our Form Four students had only been beaten by two well established boarding schools in our zone and we had topped all of the local secondary day schools. Our Primary school was number 7 out of

25 schools in our zone (which includes four fee paying private schools.) It was a young girl called Dolphine who scored the highest mark ever for our school and she came 4th out of the 289 girls sitting the KCPE and 24th out of the total of 624 candidates. The picture opposite was taken of Dolphine and her two cousins back in 2006, another time of drought and hunger. The children live with their grandmother and back then she could barely feed or clothe them and certainly could not afford to send them to school. Ten years later Dolphine has a lot to smile about and a lot to look forward to.



Words from the new High School Principal



May I take this opportunity to greet you all on behalf of the students and staff of our school

I joined Hope and Kindness four years ago as a secondary school teacher. Over this period I have had the opportunity to grow with the school. It's been an exciting experience seeing the school grow from strength to strength.

My core duty is to ensure that the school runs smoothly and has high standards. This involves monitoring the academic achievement of the students, our pastoral support programme, the management of the teaching staff, provision of educational vision and representing the school at conferences and other events outside of the school.

We have the challenge of attracting and retaining qualified staff and training any new staff to 'teach our way' based on a data driven 're-teach', a six-lesson a day core timetable and a six-week evaluation cycle. This has made sure that the maximum time is available for teaching and learning. In addition we tailor Math lessons for those who need extra help.

Students admitted here come from financially needy backgrounds, either orphans, or the parents are unable to

afford the fees and other school requirements elsewhere. It's a challenge for them to get all the resources they need to study at home.

From very humble beginnings the school has risen to the point of giving competition to established schools from around our area, in extra curricular activities as well as academics. In 2016 our final year candidate class emerged position 3 out of 43 in the School District. It's strides like these that make us feel richly rewarded.

At KCCSS, we strive to give our students the best possible education that they can have while helping them fulfil God's purpose in their lives.

With your support, I have the belief that we will nurture these young people for a future filled with promise. Many thanks for your support.

Thomas Wandago.

Collins - Making sure we have a future

My name is Collins Ndalo, I have been a part of Hope and Kindness since I was 12. My first time here was in the year 2002, when Hope and Kindness began and Terry and Judi were my sponsors. My primary, High school and college education have all been accomplished with the help of Hope and Kindness.

Currently I am serving in the position of Youth leader, Youth Church leader and Project Manager at Hope and Kindness.

As a youth leader my main job is; encouraging the young people in our schools and church to have a strong faith in God and to realize God's purpose for their lives. We really want our young people to learn how to make wise choices, develop an authentic faith in God, maintain good moral boundaries and healthy friendships, and finally to learn to put others first. We encourage realistic approaches for facing modern challenges to facilitate our teaching.

As a project manager I handle some of the overall management issues. These include ensuring that

all staff salaries are paid in good time (which our staff really appreciate as this does not happen in many other organisations). I also make sure that cash books and accounts are kept up to date. In co-ordination with the head of maintenance we ensure that all buildings, equipments and utility services used or provided on site are maintained in good working order. Together with the farm technician and other key players involved I work in improving our farm and ensuring that it is more productive and sustainable enough for future development of the project.

As a first timer in such a position I face a myriad of challenges but the greatest one posed by this nature of job is that it requires a high level of flexibility. You've got to be a multi-tasker in order for things to move in such an environment as so many things are competing for your attention. If you aren't careful before you know it one thing or another has fallen out of place.

One of the most rewarding things about my job is that it fills my heart



with great pleasure to know that I have played a role in making a difference in the life of a needy Kenyan child and that this pleases God.

To our beloved sponsors on behalf of Hope and kindness I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for your Kindness, generosity, time and the effort that you put into making the organization a success. Simply put, if it wasn't for faithful supporters like you we wouldn't exist.

Hard Times



Piki Piki taxi taking food to feed families during the school holiday.

Many of you will have read the recent news about famine in Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. The situation in those countries is so severe that the UN is calling it the worst humanitarian crisis it has seen since it first began in the 1940s. It is easy to blame the usual culprits for it - war, bad governance, poor planning and climate change. They are all

contributing factors. But it is still a humanitarian crisis. The level of hunger and poverty around us, here in Kosele, is not something that we have to imagine. It is very real. Our neighbours and their children face a very tough time in the coming months because of the failure of the rains at the end of last year and the continuing uncertainty about rain this year.

In Kenya there are two growing seasons. The rains failed in the 'short rains' season at the end of last year. As I type (April 1st 2017), we should be experiencing frequent fairly heavy rain as the 'long rains' start. In our community this should be a time of joyful confidence in anticipation of a good harvest. Fifteen years ago the rainy seasons were predictable and dependable. They are not any more.

The farmers in our community still farm the hard way. They are mostly 'subsistence farmers'. They grow just about enough for their families. They use teams of bulls to plough the land and the crops are planted, tended and

harvested by hand. It is backbreaking work. It can become soul destroying work if the rains don't come.

This year, thanks to generous donations, we have been able to step in and give assistance to the some of the most hard pressed members of our community. We have given rice as food relief and maize seeds to assist farmers whose first planting dried up and died. Our school feeding programme continues to ensure that three hundred children can be sure they have two meals five days a week.

All of these things are continuing despite the financial hit that we took from the falling value of the pound post-Brexit. In these globally hard times we can only thank you and thank God that we are able to continue bringing Hope in this community. We are so thankful to those of you who have been with us for such a long time. Your continuing commitment to the long haul is amazing, because, to really make a difference we need to be in it for the long haul.

When you feel that you can't go on...

It would be very easy to look at the the way things are today and think - "The world has gone mad. Everything is going wrong. I can't cope anymore. There is no hope." All over the world people are doubtless wondering what the future really does hold for humanity and planet earth.

It's no different for us at Hope and Kindness. When Judi and I first came to Kenya fifteen years ago we were often overwhelmed by the size of the problem in front of us. The number of children without real families. The number of youngsters not going to school. The number of people going to bed hungry. As you will see in our story about Hard Times, Kosele is still a really tough place to be born in and to live in. Children are seeing and experiencing things that they should not. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles are having to make decisions that must be heartbreaking. Poverty is about so much more than 'not having things.' Poverty is soul destroying.

Despite all this, despite the frustrations and challenges that many of you will have read about in our weekly prayer letters, we remain determined and optimistic because we are also surrounded by glimmers of hope.

The hope of seeing young people like Bildad grow as leaders, recognised by their peers, teachers and the wider community. Daring to believe that these experiences will shape their future and that they will continue to show the same leadership as adults. The hope that comes from

seeing the happiness and pride on the faces of our students and teachers as they taste the success of being a top school in our area. The hope from watching our High School teachers go the extra mile for their students. The hope that comes from sharing challenging situations with our young people and knowing that each challenge shared takes them a step closer to the better future that we, and they, are believing in.

It says in the Bible "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him." (Romans 8:28). In what might seem like dark times many people may feel that God is at best, asleep at the wheel and, at worst, a God who doesn't care. It's easy to understand these ways of looking at things. The problem is that they lead people to despair and to hopelessness. And the situation is far from hopeless. During the fifteen years that we have been in Kosele, we have experienced every high and every low imaginable. We could have become very cynical, we could have been defeated and given up - but we haven't. It's not because we are supermen and superwomen but because we believe that Romans 8:28 is true. The teaching of Jesus which guides our work is very "upside down". To many people it probably looks like foolishness, but it is our faith that has seen us through. And it is our faith that will continue to guide us. As somebody much wiser than me writes:

Calling all teachers. Please can you help our schools?

I still find it hard to believe that I am 'allowed' to do this. Working out here in Kenya with our teachers and young people is, for me, the fulfilment of a lifetime of dreaming and scheming about changing young people's lives through education.

I am always impressed with our teachers' response to the various training and development sessions that we have done together and their willingness to try out new ideas and resources - which leads to my request!

Our biggest challenge is to make sure that we have enough resources to really fire up the imagination of the students and teachers. Over the years we have been adding to our stocks of PowerPoint presentations, PDF textbooks, videos, past papers, revision guides and online worksheets. We do have a computer room with ten laptops and it is well used. However.. Download times are slow, unpredictable and expensive in Kenya, so it is difficult adding to our school intranet resources while I am in Kenya.

I will be back in the UK from June to mid-August this year with access to 'good internet'. It would be FANTASTIC if you could share resources that you have created for your classes to help our teachers. I have set up a dedicated email address terrybox2911@gmail.com to receive contributions and would be extremely grateful for any resources I receive. Our primary school and high school students follow a curriculum very similar to those in Europe, the UK and America. We teach all the usual core subjects as well as Business Studies, Agriculture, Social Science and Life Skills. Thanks in advance.

Terry

God is the reason why

In Pain - I smile

In Confusion - I Understand

In Betrayal - I Trust

In Chaos - I have Peace

In Scarcity - I have Enough

In Weakness - I have Strength

In Agony - I have Joy

In Fear - I continue to Push Forward

In Darkness - I have Hope



Our 'little people' - Cute? Yes, very. Cheap publicity? Not really. Hope and Kindness is about helping generations to thrive. Thank you for believing in us.