



**Supporting women
and youth in Kenya**

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Kennedy's success story

I met Margo in July 2006. We quickly clicked. "You have to be here by 8:00 am," she said with her heavy American accent. That is how I joined her maths class.



Little did I know I was talking to the angel who would turn my life around. I was fourteen years old, having problems with maths and in need of a direction in life.

I had always wanted to be a doctor, but in 2007, following a disputed election, violence broke up the peace we had always enjoyed with our neighbors. Naivasha was the hotbed of the animosity in the country. My family was of the "wrong tribe" and to save ourselves, we fled to our tribal home area.

With little to nothing to start over, my schooling was interrupted. That was when Margo came to my rescue. Through Kenya Help, she took me under her wings, not only ensuring that I could continue my studies but also planting in me a never giving up attitude. She literally

turned around my perception of life. She taught me how to be a creator, how to be an independent thinker and a purpose-driven individual.

In my 3rd year of medical college, during my community work I became interested in the HIV menace. I noted that many young people lacked information about HIV/AIDS and that being a student of higher learning is, itself, a risk factor of contracting HIV. I felt the need to do something about it. I started "UNIAIDS" (University HIV/AIDS), a training and control programme, with the goal of combating the disease in institutions of higher learning. At UNIAIDS we created awareness on HIV/AIDS, we also offered voluntary counseling and testing services as well as preventive measures. Our target is to issue 20,000 condoms by December 2019. With this we believe our coverage will be wide enough to prevent many people from contracting HIV. We also offer support services to infected individuals and rape victims. We ensure

that people who turn positive get the best care possible and that they can easily access their drugs. To achieve our goal we started I-Med Clinic, a sex health clinic where people can access our services. We are in the process of developing our core ideology and core values upon which our services will be based.

In 2006 July while walking uphill with Margo I shared my dream of one day opening a health care facility in my home area. As always she urged me on.

On 3rd December 2015 I was blessed by a daughter. I named her Jolie Margo. I aspire to return to school and do medicine specialising in orthopedic surgery/oncology. I want to see to it that I-Med Clinic will evolve to become a place where people can access quality health care services eventually turning it to a brand that is not only recognised locally but globally. I am grateful to Kenya Help and Margo for giving me the opportunity to exploit my potential. I will forever be indebted to Kenya Help and to the angel who turned my life around.

Yours in love, Kennedy

Please help:

Donate to Kenya Help:

Send a check.
(See above.)

Via Amazon:

Sign up for [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), choosing Kenya Help as your donee. Each time you make a purchase using Amazon Smile, .5% of your purchase automatically goes to KH, at no cost to you.

Donate from your RMD:

If you are 70½, consider donating directly to a charity. This money is never taxed and does not add to your total income. Call your IRA provider and ask about this tax savings.

Via PayPal:

We are set up to receive donations through Pay Pal Giving Fund:

- 1) Go to the secure Pay Pal Giving Fund Website: <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/hub>;
- 2) Enter "Kenya Help" in the space titled "Search for any charity name or keyword"; and when the Kenya Help name appears, click the blue "donate" button on the right.

Donate appreciated stock:

Kenya Help has a Schwab account. Email Margo if you wish to donate stock: margo@kenyahelp.us.



Getting to know Hillary Agisa, our student liaison

I was born in a small village in the west part of Kenya, 4th in a family of six. I graduated from primary school, with a mean grade of A- and was admitted to one of the best schools in the country.



Unfortunately, my parents did not have money to take me to this school. I ended up in a local secondary school about 3.6 miles away from my home. I would wake up at 5, to be at school by 6:30. Walking was not easy but it was my only means of transport. Rains are very common there and the dirt is red! At times I walked barefoot to school, carrying my only pair of shoes in my school bag. Once at school, I cleaned up the dirt and dressed my shoes. This reduced the wear and tear of my only pair of shoes.

After high school graduation, I began teaching biology and geography in a secondary school nearer my home. This was voluntary but I did earn some income, \$15 a month. I did this for about 1½ years, while I tried to figure whether what was in my heart and mind was really what I wanted to be; a missionary brother in the Cath-

olic Church. I made my decision and joined the congregation of the missionaries of Marianhill, where I stayed for 8 years.

While in the seminary, I joined the university and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Sustainable Human Development. The person I am today is courtesy of the people in the seminary. It was a good experience where I developed a lot of good attributes and met people of different cultures. I left the seminary in 2016. In 2019 I married my lovely wife, Sophie.

I joined ETW in May 2016. I knew the work of ETW through Fr. Kiriti, whom I had met in Pokot. I was still a missionary brother, attached to East Pokot Medical project then headed by Sr. Irene Loina. Fr. Kiriti is a very spiritual and industrious person and I liked him. Later, when he realized I had left the seminary and was searching for a job, he recommended that I apply to ETW. At ETW, I am responsible for the daily running of the foundation.

During the last quarter of each year, I visit schools in poor villages, advertising sponsorship opportunities and giving out application forms to possible candidates for the January intake. The students and families fill the form, then return them to me. Most of the time we have more than 50 applicants. The scholarship committee then meets and does the shortlisting on the merits of each case. At this time, I must visit all the homes of shortlisted candidates to verify the information given and make a recommendation. After this, we have our final list of students to be sponsored for that particular year.

I am also responsible for annual reporting---preparing books of accounting, for audit reports and budgeting. I do school visits to our students each term to track their progress. I counsel the students regarding the challenges they face and how best they can improve at school.

I have a great passion for the poor, for touching each life with an act of charity and kindness. At my graduation from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, we were told, 'go out and graduate the poor.' This is exactly what ETW is doing and I am very happy to be a part of this great family.

[Hillary is the only paid employee of Empower the World.]



ETW mentorship

Our mentorship program works to help our scholars acquire skills to deal with day to day challenges. It also promotes personal and professional development beyond any particular curricular or institutional grounds. We mentor our scholars to realize their full potential, be assertive and make wise decisions. The mentorship assists our scholars to analyze their strengths and weaknesses to mitigate doubts and uncertainties. It focuses on who they are, the challenges they face in life and how to overcome them.

ETW holds this mentoring event at least once a year in our two schools (St. Francis and Archbishop Ndingi), which most of our sponsored students attend. In June, 2019 the ETW board members visited St. Francis where we had a successful talk with the girls that we sponsor.

The 2- hour event was attended by all our sponsored girls. They were excited to have us in the school and wanted us to make it a termly event. They could not hide their joy at seeing that people other than their own kin were interested in their lives and well-being at school.

We each spoke for 15 min, sharing our personal experiences and challenging them to perform well.

The girls were given a chance to talk to us and they highlighted the following:

- They were happy to be at St. Francis, which holds a very conducive environment for learning.
- They were grateful for the opportunity given by ETW, not to worry about being sent home for fees.
- There was a concern about some teachers (no names were mentioned) leaking to them the topics and questions expected in their exams. However, this has since been rectified.
- The form 4 girls were worried they wouldn't be allowed to watch set books (role played or dramatized) since they had not paid the required fee. However, the chairman sorted out this and they were very happy.
- The form 4 girls promised to work hard and meet with their teachers to earn better grades in the upcoming KCSE exams.

--Hillary Agisa

Jane Mwangi's story



Jane Mwangi

When I was young, there were many trees in our village. We fetched firewood, played in the forest and gathered fruits and bush honey. The climate was good, the land productive, many people came from other areas. Within 5 years, 3/4 of the forests were cleared, replaced by maize, potatoes, beans, *sukuma wiki* (a traditional green) and other food stuffs. People burned wood to make charcoal, despite it being outlawed by the Kenyan government. My dad cleared our one-acre land leaving not a single tree. In time food production in the area declined from increased runoff of topsoil, reduced natural nutrients in the soil and increased dry periods.

In high school, I was sponsored by Kenya Help and Fr. Kiriti to attend SFG where I scored a B grade in 2012. I had lost hope in education after primary school because my parents could not afford my fees for high school. SFG was a home away from home which has made me the person I am today.

After high school I joined Moi University, where I faced many problems because my mum is a subsistence farmer, my dad deceased. I am 4th born in a family of 9. Only my elder brother and I have attended post-secondary school. A high school teacher, he funded my education, but because he is the only one in our family holding a good job, he was burdened to pay school fees for my siblings.

As a child I had observed environmental and agricultural deterioration. I had the idea of planting trees and educating the farming communities when I was in high school, but I had no idea how to do it. At university my roommate, Carol, noticed my passion for environmental conservation. She encouraged me to join the environmental club, where I gave talks about trees, with encouraging feedback. We initiated a program in the school, where we planted over 1000 trees in 1 year!

After completing my degree, I met someone who invited me to public meetings to talk about the benefits of trees and environmental conservation. People were open and receptive to my message and when I offered to give them tree seedlings, they happily agreed. However, getting the seedlings has always been the biggest challenge. I have bought some from the Kenya Forest Service, but I do not want to sell the trees to farmers. My aim is to help them conserve the habitat. We hope to expand the project to other areas in the future.

In 2018 I established Green Future Initiative, a tree planting project which aims to restore the pre-existing environment in Kenya. It promotes agroforestry practices for socio-economic and environmental sustainability. #



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See Margo's past blogs at www.kenyahelp.us

Summer visitors in Naivasha



Julie and Niki

We spent two weeks in Naivasha, Kenya this summer. In the years since Margo and Julie first met at the Rotary Club of Menlo Park,

Margo introduced Julie to her passion for Kenya. This inspired Julie to visit, initially in summer of 2018 and again in 2019 with her business partner Niki to share her experiences.

Knowing how hard it is to have guests for two weeks, we did much of the cooking. In return we got to spend time with Mji kids John, Mary, and Margaret, shop at the Naivas grocery store, haggle with vendors at the street market, and learn to work together in Margo's tiny but functional kitchen, affectionately dubbed, "the one-butt kitchen."

When not cooking we were on the go! These are just a few of the highlights of our trip:

- Joined Hillary visiting several 8th grade classrooms, including one on the grounds of the local prison, to inform

students of the scholarship program offered by ETW.

- Toured St. Francis Secondary School for Girls and met students just before they went home for their August recess.
- Saw hippos in Lake Naivasha on a boat tour with Mji kids (after walking 5 miles on back streets and footpaths.)
- Met with several women's savings clubs to learn about their financial challenges and try to offer advice.
- Convinced Lydia (SFSG principal) to join us on a 3-day safari on the Maasai Mara where we saw giraffes, zebras, lions, cheetahs, elephants, warthogs and wildebeests among many other animals (up close and personal!)

We were fortunate to attend both the ETW and the Mji reunions! It was a real privilege to spend time with these young people and learn about their lives.

[For details about our trip, email Julie Schatz: julies@feesonly.com.]

Friend of Kenya Help

When you meet Anita Dippery it is easy to see how she could make a big impact on an organization like Kenya Help. Her initial involvement happened soon after her longtime friend Margo McAuliffe told her about this wonderful opportunity to build a school for girls in Naivasha, Kenya. All she needed was money and Anita thought she might be able to help with some of that need.

So she started out holding coffee meetings with her many local friends and writing letters at Christmas, urging them to contribute anything they could to help build a high school in Africa. And the response was beyond her wildest dreams. The dollars flowed in, \$3,000 or more the first year and every year since!

And not only did Anita raise funds for the Kenya Help school, she agreed to contribute in other ways, like serving on the board of Kenya Help, which meets year-round except for the six weeks when Margo is teaching in Kenya.

Anita is a teacher herself, working in adult education and local schools for many years. Which in part is why she became inspired by the Kenya Help project.

"What touched me was that if these girls could go to high school they would have a choice: They could go on to high school and not be married off at age 14. I thought it was important for them to have the same opportunities as all the other girls in the world. This is what inspired me."

Anita decided she wanted to do something more for the girls at the St. Francis Xavier School. In addition to contributing money she also designed a quilt with her friend Mariann Moutoux that is now hanging in the school library. Ultimately two more quilts were produced by Anita, and all are hanging in the school.



The chance encounter with Margo (on the Stanford Dish walking trail) led to more than fund-raising and board service.

—Tom Gibboney, KH Board Member