



To Africa with Love, NFP – Update

January 2026

Dear Friends of To Africa with Love, NFP,

We hope you had a wonderful Holiday Season! While it is still early in 2026, our programs for the year are going strong!

I've recently returned from a trip to Kenya, where **we launched the 4th Cohort of our Amka program**. It truly is amazing to see how this community of young women has grown – from a pilot group of five, to now almost 30 young women across all the cohorts.

Planning for our Pads with a Purpose program in 2026 is also underway – tentatively scheduled for events to occur in April 2026, in partnership with a local Catholic Church in Nairobi, near Shalom House (where I stay during my visits).

We also continue our Acts of Love program – small, one-time financial contributions to meet the specific need of an individual or group. This is a program that has immediate, direct impact to its recipients and aligns with our mission to, “Connect, Care and Contribute,” in meaningful ways to the people of Kenya.



***Our Amka 4 Cohort: From left to right –
Vanessa, Sharon, Talia, Emma, Britney, Audrey, Damaris and Shalet.***

See photo insert for additional photos from our time together in November and December.

You are an important part of our journey, and your on-going support truly means a lot to us. We welcome your questions and love to get your feedback and suggestions! Feel free to email us anytime at toafricawithlove@yahoo.com, or contact me directly at (847) 757-3286.

With gratitude,

Karen Bychowski

To Africa with Love, NFP - Executive Director

Winter Reading Suggestion

If you are interested in hearing more about what it is like starting and running a program in Kenya, I highly suggest the book, **Go Find the Hidden Children**, authored by a dear friend, Tracey Hagman.

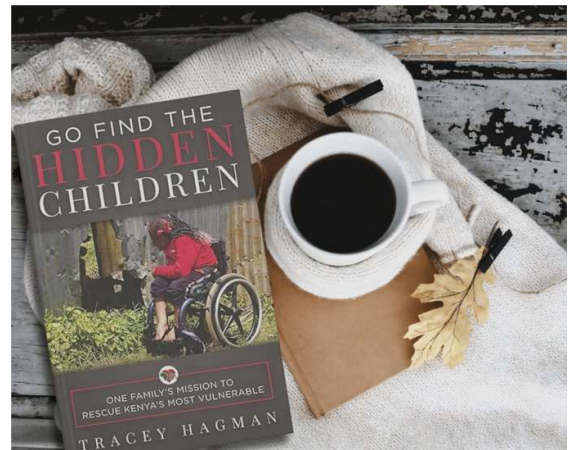
Tracey's journey has been an inspiration for me, and I hope her story might also be a source of inspiration for you.

A brief synopsis:

God wasn't messing around when He asked the Hagman family to move from Minnesota to Nairobi, Kenya, with their two small boys—one of whom had special needs. Their son Simon had spent the first year and a half of his life in the hospital, and now, two years later, God was prompting them to move to Kenya.

Kenya turned out to be a place with no special education services for Simon—or for the many disabled children living in the slums. Was this why they'd been called there? To create a safe space for these children, who were often hidden away from society?

This is the true story of one family's journey to bring hope to Kenya's hidden children. It's a story of human frailty and resilience, spanning thirty years—from Simon's birth to the present. Today, Kenya is home for the Hagman family, and Heshima Children's Center has become a place of refuge for more than a hundred destitute families, moving from the shadows into the light.



Opportunities to Engage

We are so grateful for all the help we have received thus far, and the ongoing support continues to be needed. Here are some specific ways you can get (even more) engaged with us:

- **Help Us Raise Awareness** – Do you know a group that might be interested in the work we are doing? Invite us to speak with them! This could be book clubs, church groups, student groups, the list goes on.
- **Clip Magazines** – Magazines (used for our Pads with a Purpose program) are becoming more difficult to find in Kenya (due to content moving to digital) and shipping to Kenya is cost prohibitive. Clippings of words and pictures are much easier to carry and help immensely!
- **Join Our Board** – we have an open opportunity for a Secretary, as well as Board Members At-Large. Board Members help provide perspective on the work that we are doing and help shape our path by their input. The time commitment is minimal (generally just a few hours a year), but the impact is great!
- **Come with us to Kenya** – Karen will (tentatively) be returning to Kenya in April 2026 and January/February 2027 and welcomes anyone interested to join her! This is a great opportunity not only to experience the beauty and culture of Kenya, but to engage firsthand in our programs.

Feel free to reach out directly to Karen at toafricawithlove@yahoo.com if you'd like to talk more about any of these opportunities.

Program Spotlight: Amka

In November, we launched the fourth cohort of our Amka Program with a group of eight young women who had just completed their third year of high school.

During November and December, the cohort met several times to explore topics such as values, goal setting, time management,

teamwork, leadership, stress management, and resiliency. They also participated in a variety of experiential learning activities, including swimming, an Escape Room, hiking the Ngong Hills, and yoga (see photo insert). The cohort will meet again during their school breaks in April and August, and then again after they finish high school, in January and February 2027.

A key element of the Amka Program is the ongoing engagement of past cohorts, who serve as mentors and facilitators for the new group. This not only encourages the current cohort – providing a peer community that understands and supports them - but also offers continued growth and development for those who have already completed the program.

As this community continues to grow — from an initial group of five in 2020 to nearly thirty young women collectively now in 2026 — we are discerning how best to support it going forward. This includes seeking input and feedback from previous cohorts and their parents, along with expanding partnerships with local, in-country support.



Topic Discussions are a core element of the Amka Program



***Our Growing Amka Community –
pictured includes young women from across our four cohorts and their Moms.***

Our Amka Program – in Pictures

Learning about Leadership and Teamwork through a variety of experiential learning activities!



A Cooking Class - where the girls learned to make fajitas and a cake from scratch!



A Swimming Class - to build confidence and community (most of the girls had never been swimming before!)

A visit to Enzi Motors – an all-electric motorbike company – to speak with female engineers and learn more about the business.



For additional pictures, please visit our website:

www.tawl.org

or Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/toafricawithlovenfp>