



Congratulations to Teddy, our top student!



Some of the new Form 1's with our lovely counsellor, Cecelia



Cutting the ribbon on the new classrooms!



The Kenyan rainy season!



The Giraffe Children's Charity

Spring 2018 Newsletter

www.giraffechildrenscharity.org



Welcome to our Spring newsletter!

A lot has happened since the start of the school year in January. We had some excellent primary and secondary graduates last December. In particular, congratulations to Teddy from our secondary school, GEC: his exam scores put him in the top 4% nationally and he now has a place to study Mathematics at the University of Nairobi, Kenya's top university. What an achievement from an orphan from the slums of Nairobi! Three other students also gained entry to Kenyan universities to study degree subjects, so we are delighted with their achievement.

We also took 38 new students into Form 1 at GEC. These are the most deprived children we have ever taken onto our programme, so we are happy that they are now safe in our school - what tears of joy there were when they were told they all have a sponsor and their future is secure.

John (trustee) and myself went to Kenya in March to catch up on what was going on in the programme. Here are some of the highlights of the trip:

At GEC...

- Meeting the new Form 1 students and hearing their stories. They were so happy to be in school and many mentioned how friendly everyone was, the neatness of the campus and the quality of the food!
- Attending the ceremony to open the new classrooms you helped us to build. Now we have a large modern classroom for each of the four Forms.
- Touring the GEC premises to see development work and discuss future needs
- Meeting the new GEC principal, Mr Oyoo and members of staff and catching up with old friends
- Joining Evelyn, a career's advisor as she opened the eyes of Form 4 and Form 2 (subject selection year) students to the jobs market in Kenya
- Discussion with current Form 4 about our College Programme: colleges and courses offered and realistic ambitions
- Feedback from Cecelia, our lovely new counsellor, and how she is helping our secondary students cope with their hard backgrounds
- Celebrating a late 'Christmas Party' with our GEC students; cake, feast, gifts and music, and a great time had by all, despite a torrential rainy-season downpour!
- Sharing the pride of caretaker John Mulandi in the highly-productive vegetable garden, with peppers, spinach, tomatoes and kale growing fast under an irrigation and shade system provided by Giraffe

At Green Pastures and Tumaini...

- Visiting the primary schools, hearing about changes to the Kenyan school curriculum and how they are working to meet these new challenges
- Participating in a Tumaini geography lesson and attempting to explain travel options from Europe to Kenya
- Those never-ending smiles and requests for 'high-fives'!

The College programme...

- Interacting with college students and learning their challenges (university lecturers on strike) and successes (graduations and great exam results)
- Interviewing the secondary graduates for a place on our college programme
- Discussion in which current Giraffe university students related their experiences to those about to go, where a new, challenging and exciting life awaits them. How do you handle personal budgeting, relationship with different social groups, independent learning etc?

We also spent time looking for improvements and thinking of the future. On the education front we visited Pandora College, who have offered special rates to our students, discussed education and literature with Muthoni from Storymojo, a Kenyan educational publisher and met with others working with children from Nairobi's slums. In particular we had a very interesting discussion with George from the Dandora Dumpsite Rehabilitation Group (<https://www.dadreg.org/>), a charity working with families which scavenge the largest dumpsite in Africa to make a living. Seven children from this charity were accepted into GEC this year.

On student wellbeing, we visited the Mother Mercy orphanage and clinic, to set-up eye examinations for the students at GEC, and listened in quiet awe to the amazing nurse Elizabeth talk of her work in the sprawling Kibera slum.

As on previous trips we also bought Kenyan crafts from Margaret in Mathare slum ready for sale in Europe later in the year.

...and we also found time to enjoy being with our wonderful friends in the Kenyan team, spending a day with Liz, Lillian and Sam in the Giraffe office (setting up a new computer kindly donated by a UK company) and a sharing a meal with their families in Liz's home – thanks, Liz, for your wonderful hospitality.

All in all, it was a busy, but very rewarding trip. Once again, we felt humbled by the resilience shown by our students from such hard backgrounds, every one motivated and determined to grasp the opportunity we have given them to make a better future for themselves and their families. Thanks especially to our office team, the GEC board and teachers for working so hard to make our trip a success.

- **Jackie Newbold Sponsorship coordinator**

[A new experience by Winnie Wamaitha](#)

[For Winnie's full report and photographs please see our stories page](#)

When I was in school I always thought of what I would do to repay The Giraffe Children's Charity not only for their kindness but also generosity. After finishing Secondary School, I decided to volunteer in the Giraffe office and when we heard Jackie and John were coming from England three of my former classmates, Doryne, Teddy and George, also decided to volunteer. It was a busy week but we had lots of fun.

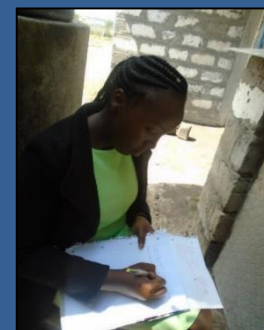
We helped take videos of all the children in each of the primary schools to send back to their sponsors. The pupils were very cheerful and taking their videos was really fun and some of them even sang songs. After the videos each child was given a beautiful pencil. We also took videos of their presentations, for



Our wonderful student helpers



'Christmas' celebrations at GEC



Winnie hard at work!

example, songs and memory verses. Then the four of us got the chance to play some games with them. The kids were so smart and bright that it was fun being with them.

At GEC we also took some videos of the students and took photos and interviewed the school staff for the website. On Saturday, we had a Christmas party. The rooms were decorated and the students played in football and volleyball matches against each other. After the matches the food was brought in and then the surprise presents for the school were presented – a television, deep freezer and a huge cake! The students were all very happy and the sponsorship coordinators helped in cutting the cake and sharing it with everyone. It rained heavily to an extent of the nearby river breaking its banks so no car could pass near the school. We had to walk all the way to the bus stop including Jackie and John – you can just imagine!

It was enjoyable doing the one week, touring different schools, interacting with different people and learning from them. Though it was tiring, it was fun. We look forward to working with them next time.

Thank you and it was a privilege!

Winnie

Life as a student nurse by Matilda Muthoni

[For Matilda's full report and photographs please see our website](#)

Hujambo, my name is Matilda Muthoni, a 23-year-old nursing student at Kenya Medical Training College located in Lodwar, the capital of Turkana County. Lodwar, located near Lake Turkana, is the largest town in North-western Kenya and has extremely high temperatures reaching a maximum of 41C. I was surprised when I first came to here to see few trees having green leaves - the result of it being a flat, dry land where it rarely rains. I also never expected to see hills surrounding the city.

My roommate and I stay in Kapua one of the college's hostels for women named for a small Turkana river. I buy my breakfast, lunch, and supper at our school cafeteria, and as there are no seats there I eat in my room.

My Nursing class has 39 students; 4 men and 35 girls with 12 teachers divided into specialty units. In our college Medical-Surgical Nursing classes we learn Anatomy and Physiology, disease and disorders. In Midwifery, we learn anatomy of the reproductive system, normal and abnormal pregnancies and complications. In Community Health Nursing we study the epidemic diseases affecting the community and how to promote health in the community as a nurse. At the hospital we rotate over four months in four different wards. We offer nursing management to the children admitted in the paediatric ward for conditions including burns, pneumonia and malaria. The male ward focuses on major medical conditions such as fractures, leishmaniasis (parasitic infection, ascites (swelling of the abdomen) and the female ward for conditions such as TB, malaria, incomplete abortions and fibroids and we help with deliveries in maternity.

My College day starts at 5:00AM with Continuous Bible Reading (CBR) where I read one chapter a day. At 6:30AM I prepare for my classes that start at 8:00AM and finish at 5:00PM. Each morning lecture is two hours with a 30-minute break at 10:00AM. At 12:30PM we break for lunch until our 3:00PM class starts after the mid-day temperature has reduced at 5:00PM. We have a six-member discussion group that meets every evening from 8:30PM to 10:00pm to gain deeper understanding and share knowledge. Working in a



GEC students enjoying the new television!



Fun at the primary schools...



Matilda, one of our student nurses



Graduate teacher Molly!



Lavin struggles academically but is good with his hands.

Last week he started his apprenticeship at a local garage – now on his way towards a brighter future!

'It is amazing that for less than the cost of one Starbucks coffee a day we can provide an opportunity for a young man like George' –Betsy, a long term sponsor of George, currently studying Electrical Engineering in a Nairobi college



The boys' bathroom at GEC –in urgent need of repair



Philip and Lenox, two of our current university students



Please support our Brussels 20k team – our biggest fundraiser of the year. Just go to

<https://www.justgiving.com/teams/giraffebrussels20km2018>

group is important as nursing is all about teamwork. On Saturdays, we meet again from 10:00AM to 12:00PM and Sunday in the evening from 8:30PM to 10:00PM.

It takes about 18 hours to travel from Nairobi to Lodwar; approximately 678 km. We travel in a police escorted vehicle for 100km when we transfer to the hospital for our practicals. Security is a challenge since there have been endless wars between the Picot Community and the Turkana community fighting over their livestock. Due to the distance and unavailability of transport in Lodwar it takes people in remote areas 12-24 hours to arrive at the hospital. Difficulty with transport makes them seek medical attention from traditional medicine men and as such they may not recuperate or sometimes the condition worsens. This is the major challenge we face at the hospital.

I really love and enjoy Nursing, helping people, seeing them recuperating and discharged to join their families. It is the best feeling ever. The positive side that I love most is the adventure, learning different cultures and language, mostly the Turkana and meeting and helping people. It is the best feeling ever.

Thank you for your continuous support and helping me to achieve my goals. Nursing has been my dream ever since I was little, changing lives of many in the community at large.

Matilda

Challenges for Lenox

Lenox, studying biochemistry at Jomo Kenyatta University, has been offered a chance to research malaria at the Kenyan Medical Research Clinic but cannot complete his degree because of the lecturers' strike. He just needs to sit his final exams but until the dispute is resolved he has to wait. 'I am worried that I will miss this wonderful opportunity' he says. However, despite this he still 'thanks God for making me a part of the Giraffe Children's charity. Through your support, I've gone beyond all I once thought to be my limits

Thank you Giraffe Children's Charity –says Philip Mwema

Philip is one of those bright students from Kibera slum benefitting from our College Programme. I met Philip while I was out in Kenya: he is a lovely person who has kindly offered to help any 'Giraffe' students who are struggling with the IT part of their course – giving back.

I had the opportunity to be sponsored by the Giraffe Children's Charity through my education. Education is the key to success and for everyone getting a good education from primary through secondary up to university is a golden opportunity and shouldn't be taken for granted. The support from your charity has made me where I am today. I was enrolled in Green Pastures school, supported through high school and right now I am in 3rd year in one the best universities in Kenya studying a BSc in Business and information technology.

Always counting myself lucky, I hope to study and work hard so that one day I can support kids like me who will end up having a great impact in Kenya.

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