

Creation of Hope

Sponsors Newsletter | August 2020

VOL. 8 ISSUE 2

Greetings Creation of Hope sponsors and supporters,

It was only a month ago that the last newsletter was distributed and in it we shared the story of fundraising for the playground on the property of Hope and the trip that never was. This is only a month later but it surely seems that so much has taken place.

The playground was levelled, equipment installed, stairs to the space built and the project fully completed in six weeks! Enjoy the pictures and videos of the kids enthusiastically at play. It can't help but make you smile. And - it is worth seeing Ruth, our Project Manager, sharing a swing with Michael, our accountant! Thank you to all our spontaneous and generous donors.

Please remember that these unusual COVID times continue to stretch Creation of Hope resources. So it is never too late to donate for the playground - funds - that perhaps at this point go into the tummies of the playground users, to put it into the most practical terms.

I have found myself putting into words my feelings during the last 150 days. Many days I am just happy and grateful that there are so many safe and good things in my little world despite COVID. Experiencing nature at a cottage day by day can only be a good thing. And then I feel guilty sometimes that I have it so good. Other days, I am amused and almost feel like I am watching a world wide drama playing out as the realities of COVID unfold. Some days I am calm, others anxious and sometimes even desperate or grieving for what was and will never be the same again. And then, I think, whatever I am feeling, how can that compare to so many in the world generally and to Ruth and the staff and the orphans at Creation of Hope specifically? Their world is never as easy as ours and now in particular the needs are even greater.

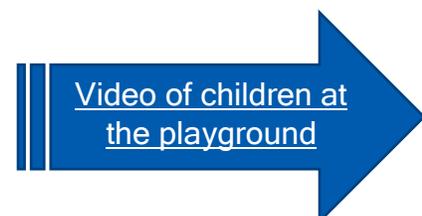


Children playing in the new playground.

We are so grateful for God's hand in guiding many good outcomes including the playground and all the support and care that Hope has experienced from so many. Please read the following account that Ruth shares about life in Kenya and at the Hope Centre since COVID. Please stay safe, looking forward and open to the needs of others in your world.

Thank you

Playground Video Links



A Note from Ruth

The first Covid-19 case in Kenya was recorded on Thursday, 12th March 2020. The following Sunday, 15th March, the president announced the cessation of movement from and to Nairobi and Mombasa for 30 days. He further imposed a curfew running from 7 pm to 6 am in the morning for the same number of days. He ordered the closure of all learning institutions - schools, colleges and universities - until a time when the danger to our children would pass. It was thought that the danger would be gone in a month or so but the curfew was renewed for a further 30 days in June and later revised to run from 9 pm to 5 am starting in July. At first schools were slated to be opened on 1st June but that was pushed to 1st September and now it has been pushed to January 2021, if the conditions will have improved to allow learning institutions to reopen. This whole year has been rendered lost in terms of learning.

The Kenyan education system runs on three terms; first term runs from January to the beginning of April when children go for a 3-week break. The second term begins at the start of May to the first week of August when there's another break. The third term is usually shorter for the students who are not writing end-of-year examinations as schools close at the end of October to re-open in January of the following year. Children study from nursery to standard (Grade) 8 when they write the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in October/November. Those qualifying join secondary school and study Form 1 - 4 (Grade 9 - 12) or attend a skills college. In Form 4 students write another national examination, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) during the month of November. Those who qualify join university or a middle level college. Those who fail to qualify attend a skills college.

All our program children have stayed home since mid-March and will now stay until the end of the year. The government had planned for university students to resume in September this year but that has been pushed to January 2021 because the Covid-19 cases have continued to rise and people continue dying. There is a real danger that students would be

infected, if they went back to schools. Some universities have continued to operate virtually but not everyone is able to access education that way so things have ground to a halt for a majority of students. It has become clear that the goals set for 2020 will not be achieved. It was planned that up to 20 students would complete their studies and join the world of work by the end of the year. That goal has had to be pushed to 2021. Without any idea what will happen in coming months it is difficult to make any plans.

In mid-March all program staff were quarantined at the program site to take care of the children, who have not stepped out of the property since that time. With time and the relaxation of movement restrictions, it has allowed for staff members to visit their families in turns, which has made them happier and more committed to their duties. Finances had been set aside for the goals and objectives identified at the time of drawing the work plan and budget for 2020. However, some sponsors were unable to keep up with the plan as they also lost their sources of income and had to stop their support, sadly. With the emergency, funds had to be sourced to respond appropriately through the concerted effort of many stakeholders, for which we are thankful. Things could have been worse but it has been possible to purchase food, detergents for washing both clothes and hands for both resident and community children, as well as a television set for the resident children to follow the broadcast lessons. This has been well



received and is a great cause to support as it keeps the children aware of what the ministry of education is teaching. This leaves out the students in the community since we cannot buy a television for everyone. They have been given age appropriate examinations to write while at home and these are graded by Hope staff members.

In mid-June, the Hope Story office organized for a webinar where Ruth Kyatha, the Manager, was interviewed and many sponsors and friends of the program listened in and followed the discussion. Some had questions which I, Ruth, responded to. At some point it was observed that the children are living in a very small space and are unable to play for recreation. I mentioned that there was a need for a playground, especially at this time when everyone is cooped up in the compound. One sponsor, Margriet Ruurs, donated \$100 towards the playground and

challenged other participants to match the amount. Within a short while there was a lot of money donated. Funds continued to flow after the webinar and within a week or so there was close to \$6,000 for the playground! Well, the money was transferred to Kenya and the equipment was bought and installed. This is nothing short of a miracle. We had been yearning to have a playground since the program started in 2007. Now it is in place and the children are excited to play there.

Playground Update

We are so thankful to everyone for playing an important role in the installation of a playground for the children, and staff, at Creation of Hope.

"This playground means a lot for the children. We have planned that they go for physical education (PE) lessons in turns. It's a lot of fun watching them play and enjoy themselves.

I know those who supported the project will be thrilled to see their money, donated in mid-June, already being enjoyed. We appreciate everyone who has supported this project. The entire staff and children send smiles of joy and gratitude."

– Ruth Kyatha



"It was amazing that a webinar with Ruth in mid-June spontaneously became a fundraiser to provide for 79 orphans locked up on the Hope grounds with only a gravel driveway to play on. We were so encouraged by the generosity of sponsors and donors who quickly made the playground dream a reality. Along with Hope Story we wish to extend our sincere thanks to all who donated to make the lives for our orphans so much brighter and more fun during this COVID period. It is really encouraging that from the time of the webinar to a complete playground, the project took just six weeks! Your immediate response provided the opportunity to put dollars into action quickly!"

– Eric and Anita Walters

Thank You!!!



Please contact Maggie at sponsorship@hopestory.ca for more information about children in need of an educational sponsor.

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