



HEKIMA PLACE

Celebrating 15 Years



SPRING 2020

A Message from Margaret Nyawira, our Kenya Program Manager

To donors and friends of Hekima Place,

As we tread through the year 2020, I would like to express my deep gratitude for the far we have gone and for the many blessings we have experienced. We are happy that our Hekima girls are continually growing to realize their potential due to the support you generously offer us. Last year, seven (7) finished secondary level (grade 12) education. This is not something to take for granted as there are many of their age who could not afford it despite the fact that the Kenya Government is talking of 100% transition from Primary to Secondary School. Over 90 girls at Hekima Place, residential and those integrated living with relatives, are receiving a better quality of life and education due to your support.

Since I joined Hekima Place in October 2019, I can testify that, your generosity has truly given our girls reason to smile. Besides getting quality food, clothing, education, they have opportunities for attending spiritual and motivation seminars and workshops that help them remain focused on their goal in life. It also stirs a deep sense of hope and introspection.

As they shared during some of the workshop. "The support I have received has given me sense of dignity as I know who I am and what I can become. Trained in cabin crew and never getting a job in that field has forced me to venture into the field of business. This taught me that I should always have more than one plan in life," Margaret, Hekima Place Girl. This is true education. These words truly testify a lived mission for Hekima Place...building a future – one girl at a time. Through education, she has learnt that she and others should not stick to only one plan/option in life.

As part of a family at Hekima Place, we take time to celebrate everyone's birthday and major events. This makes even the little ones very proud and happy to get attention like everyone else on their special day. Great sentiments of joy are expressed even by those with no words to say. Silently, they say "thank you for telling me that I am special and for making me feel special." These moments are great as a heart speaks to other hearts, saying "thank you for loving me."



COVID-19 Update

Hekima Place continues to address the COVID-19 outbreak in Kenya and follow all the government guidelines to protect our girls and staff of Hekima Place and HHLC. Rebecca Muriguh, Board Trustee Chair, has taken a very serious and focused approach to caring for the girls and to implement all the precautions required and more. In addition, the Kenya President outlined in his address of March 25th, "the state interventions to cushion Kenyans against the economic effects of COVID-19 pandemic." As one board member commented, "the president's message is pretty impressive, his delivery is knowledgeable, vigilant and very compassionate." His message and other government guidelines as well as updates from our Program Manager and HHLC can be accessed in their entirety through our website. We thank the trustees, program manager, school principal and staff for doing all they can for our girls of HP and the children of HHLC.

Congratulations!

Our girls continue to excel at home and at school. In December, three girls - Cynthia, Charity and Clovelina (Clovey) - graduated from 8th grade. All three of these girls entered high school this January. They are following in the footsteps of their successful sisters, including Frida. Frida is in her second year of high school and recently received an award for being the best student in English in her grade.

Seven girls - Mary, Grace, Christine, Christine, Winne, Cynthia and Lavender - graduated from high school in December. These young women returned to their relatives and are working with our Hekima Place team to determine next steps in their education.

Congratulations to all our girls and young women!

Life at Hekima Hills Learning Centre

Contributed by Sr. Joyce Kwamboka Nyakwama, SSND

In January 2020, the hills of Hekima were glowing with a gorgeous new school. With staff in place and students enrolled, Hekima Hills Learning Center opened January 9 to welcome our first students. Today, we have 41 students at the school. We have six levels of learning with children ranging from the age of 3 to 8 years.

Two months down the line, HHLC is filled with happy faces of children who have come to find a home away from home. Today I see happy children learning, playing as they call each other and their teachers by name and embrace all around growth. The staff is committed to creating a family where all have a sense of belonging.



We offer Kenya's new Competence Based Curriculum (CBC), with seven core competencies that learners are expected to learn: Communication and collaboration; Critical thinking and problem solving; Imagination and creativity; Citizenship; Learning to learn; Self-efficacy; and Digital literacy. Besides these core competencies, the CBC also focuses on enhancing eight life values: Love; Responsibility; Respect; Unity; Peace; Patriotism; Integrity; and Social justice.



The saying that “The hand that rocks the cradle builds the world” has made a lot of meaning these past two months of our beginnings. Here at HHLC, we have embraced our mission with hands, minds and hearts full of “Love that Conquers Everything” led by Christ, the first and greatest of all teachers. The staff has exhibited great commitment to co-building, co-empowering, and co-enlivening the little angels who have been entrusted to our nurturing. We continue to shape a team as we accomplish daily acts, collaborating with a unity of purpose. We are a deliberate team, vigilant and ready to facilitate with love the holistic growth of our learners.

As we focus on the formation of the entire child, our deepest desire is that each learner at Hekima Hills comes to a growing awareness of their dignity as persons created in God's image and likeness so that they can go forth from here believing in themselves, willing to share the knowledge, skills and values they have discovered, learnt and developed. This way I believe, their impact on world in whose responsibilities as an adults they will share will be positive.

News from our Founder

Dear All who Love Hekima,

Hekima - meaning wisdom - is truly a great and wondrous gift; it marries compassion and love to all that we know: knowledge, skills, common sense. So this year brought us the birth of a community school next to our children's home in Kiserian, Kenya. It's called Hekima Hills and operates on the premise that love does indeed, conquer all... our motto and creed.

In addition to the six teachers for the first five grades of primary school (nursery, kindergarten, 1st-3rd.), we now have admin staff consisting of principal, deputy, bursar and receptionist along with two in dietary, driving, property, and cleaning. The school is unlike anything our neighbors have ever seen: It is colorful, happy, serene, treed and the children attending are always smiling. The staff are half women and half men, so lots of happy mommy and daddy looks are found all around the property. And to see a teacher outside under a tree, with students around him, all looking at leaves, does my old teacher's heart a world of good.



On the other side of the fence at Hekima Place, Precious and Grace are not yet one. Patty and Mercy are two and three and Gift has graduated to a uniform and marches with the others through the farm path to attend school at Hekima Hills. Seven more girls have finished high school and 3 have graduated from university while two alumnae are making their way in self-owned entrepreneurial efforts. When we have had lunches to meet with our alumnae, we are so proud of the wives and mothers they have become with their values and attitudes so shining and true. When they share with each other what is tough in the world and what has been successful for them, it makes us feel so glad...to have been called to love them. And we cannot say THANK YOU enough for all the help that has made this possible...in a land where they used to have no dream. Be so very blessed for the sharing you have done with the blessings you have living here. We will forever be grateful.

From First Time Visitors to Hekima Place

Contributed by Chrissy Grainger

This past November, my three children and I joined my mother for her second visit to Hekima Place. The months leading up to the trip were filled with a lot of excitement, a ton of questions and a bit of anxiety as we had never been that far from home. What would we do? What would the girls of Hekima Place think of us? How could we be of assistance to them? Where would we eat and sleep and many other similar questions that preoccupy the minds of Claire (8), Abby (10) and Nolan (12).

Once in Kenya, our journey took us on a 45 minute ride that led from the hustle and bustle of Nairobi to the picturesque hills to the Hekima Place gates. We arrived just in time for dinner and were immediately greeted with a roomful of smiling faces and words of encouragement to join them at their tables for dinner. The warm welcome was a preview of how our week long stay would be.

One sunny afternoon a handful of the teenage girls took us to explore the gorgeous hills that surround Hekima Place. We spoke of their dreams, goals of future education and even touched on politics- both on the US and Kenyan fronts. We made arts and crafts with many of the younger girls and played games and cards during any free moment we had- I had no idea that a single deck of UNO cards would be played so many ways. We read books and worked with the youngest of girls to learn their colors and numbers while making bead bracelets and exploring the colorful grounds of their home. We even spent one morning in the kitchen, where the Mums taught my daughter how to make her favorite African food, chapati, which is an unleavened bread similar to naan and quite delicious!

Saying goodbye to the amazing ladies of Hekima Place was one of the most difficult things we have had to do, but we hope our journey takes us back there in the very near future.

A heartfelt thank you to the Hekima Place staff, to the many Mums who welcomed us into their homes and their kitchen, Hekima Place founder Kate Fletcher and all of the loving girls and young women who reside at Hekima Place. We are better people because of the time we spent with all of you.



Hekima Place Celebrates 15 Years!

Hekima Place is so proud to be celebrating 15 years of educating and empowering girls in Kenya. In 2005 Kate Fletcher founded Hekima Place, a safe, loving and faith-based home for orphaned and vulnerable girls. Fifteen years later, Hekima Place has cared for over 124 girls and has supported them as they grew into empowered young women. Today we are seeing the many positive results of providing educated Kenyan girls for the good of Kenya and the world. THANK YOU KATE.

Over the past 15 years together we have reached the most vulnerable children, those left behind by parents or rescued from abuse and in need of protection and education. We recently reached our latest milestone, the opening of Hekima Hills Learning Centre, where nine of our own girls are attending. HHLC is also providing the chance for many underprivileged children in the community to receive the same quality education we are providing our girls and soon, life skills learning will provide education to many who otherwise would not have an opportunity for a better life. THANK YOU KATE.

Please celebrate with us – our donor family – because your support has made this all happen. This is your achievement as it is ours. With your continued support, we hope to carry on our mission to care for and educate girls. Through HHLC we hope to provide scholarship support to educate community children who might never have had the opportunity to attend a state of the art school and help them build a future they may otherwise never have had. Your support helps ensure our girls and our community children can write their own destiny through education. THANK YOU KATE FOR REACHING OUT TO ALL OF US TO BECOME A PART OF HEKIMA PLACE.



HEKIMA PLACE

305 34th Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
PERMIT NO. 2295



And in Other News...

US Board Welcomes Jill A. Perry, PhD

Jill Perry was recently welcomed to the US Board of Directors. Jill is currently the Executive Director of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, an educational nonprofit, headquartered at the University of Pittsburgh and sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation. Jill is also an Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Pittsburgh and has also taught at the elementary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate levels in the US and abroad. Jill is a Fulbright Scholar (Germany) and Peace Corps volunteer. She received her Bachelor and Masters Degrees from Boston College and her PhD from the University of Maryland. Jill commented “With Hekima, two of my passions came together—empowering young women and girls and international education. I was delighted to be offered the chance to offer my skills and abilities to support Hekima Place”. With the qualifications and experience, Jill is a welcome addition to the US Board of Directors.



Save the Date

May 16 – I Want to Hold Your Hand Benefit Concert – Due to the corona virus challenge we are all facing the concert has been postponed until further notice. **Come Together Pittsburgh** has cancelled all performances through the end of May. Depending upon band and venue availability **AND** Kate’s travel schedule it is difficult to predict when our concert will be rescheduled. Ticket presales can be held until a new date is announced or returned. Our website will have more information on refunds and rescheduling.

November 14 – Hekima Celebrates 15 Year Anniversary Gala at the South Hills Country Club. Dancing, entertainment, Kate and other guests from Kenya. Join us for an event like we’ve never held before!!