

Sponsorship Newsletter

Happy New Year! Welcome to the first sponsorship newsletter of 2010! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to 2 important people who work hard to ensure that both family and child sponsorship succeed in making a difference to the lives of the children and families we work with. There is also some news from one of our successful families and a request for support that we encourage you to share with friends if you can. Thank you for your incredible support!

*Su Corcoran
Sponsorship Coordinator*

Introducing Elizabeth...

Elizabeth Gakure was AfCiC's House Mother at our Interim Care Centre for 4 years. Aside from an excellent job of ensuring that our boys were well clothed, fed and cared for, she also worked as one of a team of social workers and counsellors preparing the boys to go home and their families for their return.



Elizabeth with the children of one of our families

In November, with the help of a perfectly timed grant, AfCiC was able to promote Elizabeth to the position of 'Family Empowerment Officer'. Elizabeth is now responsible for all the families on our family sponsorship programme. Once a family at risk is identified and passed on to us for a sponsor to be found, Elizabeth

carries out the follow up visits, guides the parent or guardian through their choices and helps them to make the most out of their business or skills training, and gives all the assistance necessary to help them find their feet and move forward.

Elizabeth understands our families well and is the perfect person for the job. She is enjoying the new challenges and looking forward to all the achievements that could be possible in the coming year.

...and Daina!



Daina Kibera is our Education officer, working with AfCiC since 2005. Previously

she was an early childhood teacher in a private school.

"I heard about AFCIC from a colleague who was in my teacher training class and knew they worked with vulnerable children. I was very interested as at that time there was a child in my class who was going through a lot of physical and emotional abuse from his step mother right under the nose of his father. The matter was solved through the District Children Office. This came as an eye opener for me as this was just one case in many. My heart went out to all the other children who suffered the same plight. When the opportunity came up I applied to work for AFCIC so I could try and make a positive difference. I look forward to my job everyday because I know my results will be seen in the future and I will walk around Thika and see what I gave to the society a few years back.

Everything in life has challenges and in my line of duty, the biggest one is when a child refuses to move on since he/she is less worried about the future yet I know too well what that future holds. This really breaks me. I also work with several teenagers who bring along with them all sorts of challenges but I take heart since I am a mother of a teenager and the challenges are no different.

My greatest moments are when a child sticks in school and is top of their classes because I know despite their vulnerability they outshine the rest and that makes me so proud.

My job in a nutshell is to provide a better tomorrow which is the best thing anyone can give or get. I look for appropriate schools for the children we work with and also visit the schools regularly and encourage the children".

Tailoring a new future

Everline Anyango's mother died when she was seven years old and both her and her siblings have been under their father's care since then. She has been forced to grow up prematurely, taking over the role of the mother by cooking for the family on a daily basis and performing the household chores.

Everline's father, Evans, is employed at Kairangaita farm as a labourer earning £20 a month. The family lived in extreme poverty with Evans struggling to feed and support his three children, because of a loan incurred as a result of his wife's death. After paying his loan he had just £5 of his monthly salary, making it very hard to cover basic needs such as clothing, school needs, health costs and food.

Everline's family was introduced to AfCiC through her brother, Michael, who had been found gathering materials on the street in order to sell them and add to his father's income. Through family sponsorship Evans was assisted with a business loan so that he could buy a sewing machine to set up a tailoring business at home in the evenings. This boosted the income from his daytime job and helped him to better support his children. Evans has received and fully paid off three loans from AfCiC and was moved off family sponsorship last month. As an extremely responsible father he works hard to provide for his children. He is committed to their education and wants to improve their prospects for the future. Everline and Michael have just completed their final year of primary school and will move on to secondary school in January. Michael has a sponsor and we are looking for a second to help Evans to pay Everline's fees, as his savings will not fully cover these costs.

Without the goodwill and support of his sponsors, Evans and his family would not be in the position they are now, and he is very

grateful for the opportunities that his children are able to enjoy as a result.

Secondary students need sponsorship...

With a number of our children having just finished standard 8, and another 5 boys having lost their free secondary places as their missionary school has closed, AfCiC now have a small number of secondary students who are in desperate need of sponsorship.

All secondary education in Kenya is fees based. A Day school costs **£17 a month**, or £200 a year. A boarding placement costs **£55 a month** or £650 a year. We have two boys who are a two year commitment and other girls and boys who need sponsorship for four years.

Currently the best education available in Kenya is obtained in the boarding schools. For example, there has been only one B+ (the mark required for university) ever obtained at a local day school and that was by a student who transferred in form 4 as he could not afford to pay the boarding costs. As children do better at boarding school and benefit from the routine and the feeding that they get there, they are the best option for our students.

This is particularly important to our female students as families are more likely to save for their sons' educations rather than their daughters'.

One of our students in need is **Stanley Kiruga Macharia**. He was born in Ruiru in 1992 and is the third born of a family of 6 children. When he was 12 years old Stanley's father was killed in a road accident. This was a big blow to the family because he had been the sole breadwinner. Stanley's mother then had to work to feed her 6 children and find the money for rent and school fees.

She took on casual jobs and worked in the nearby coffee plantations. The wage for a

woman working with coffee is very low and not enough to support 6 children. Once the rent was paid and the school fees for the youngest twins who were in ECDE class (nursery) was covered, there was little left for food and the family often had to survive on one meal a day when they managed to get that much.



" After the death of my father, my mother was left with the burden of taking care of us, which was very hard for her because she was doing low paying jobs like working on the coffee plantations. She was taking care of 6 children all alone which proved difficult with this kind of work."

Stanley was brought to the attention of AfCiC in 2004 and we managed to find a free place for him and a number of our vulnerable boys in a missionary school. However, in early 2009, when Stanley was in Form 2, the high school closed unexpectedly. Stanley and the other students were forced to find alternative schools. Due to the lack of money Stanley missed a term and a half, but we managed to get him into an alternative school for the last term so that he could complete the year.

Stanley now requires the sponsorship for the last two years of school.

If you or someone you know are interested in helping one of our secondary students to achieve either a day or boarding place at school please email the Sponsorship Coordinator using sponsorship@actionchildren.org.