

# The Village Gathering



January 30, 2018

*Be not afraid, my child, but let your world be gently lit by miracles.*

- A Course in Miracles, Chapter 28, Section III, Paragraph 8

Dear friend,

One day, during my first week in Kenya in 2007, I returned to Pastor George's house to find all his children excitedly gathered around a laptop. Eager to see what fun game had captured their attention so thoroughly on their summer break, I wandered over. They were teaching themselves Spanish!

Education is everything to families here in Kenya. Education is the way out of poverty, the way to avoid being a child bride, the way to building up this young democracy that is once again mired in political unrest. Here's the challenge with the Kenya education system...

Unlike free public school in the United States, Kenya's public education ends at the equivalent of 7<sup>th</sup> grade (primary school). In addition, the Kenya teacher to student ratio is often 1:80 and sometimes as high as 1:200 at public schools in lower income areas (imagine a class of 200 first graders!). What's worse: while about 85% of primary age children attend school, it's estimated only 2% of children go on to secondary school (8<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond) – regardless of how stellar their test scores are.



Now you see why many Kenyan parents yearn to send their children to low-fee private schools like the ones Pastor George has founded. These schools are well regarded and offer better pre-primary services. In fact, research shows these pupils tend to perform better than those from government schools.

In 2017, we donated nearly \$28,300 directly to pay school tuition, support farming projects, and pay off old debt from the former school rent and the balance of Naomi's hospital bill from when the twins were born five years ago! Donations rose 16% over 2016, and a full 96.6% of your money went straight to projects on the ground – no program administration fees or anything. YOU made all this possible!

Thanks to you, all of Pastor George's children were able to stay in school. Without your financial support, NONE of these students would have been able to stay in school past 7<sup>th</sup> grade. And we made substantial inroads toward our small, medium and large goals. We accomplished 6 of our 8 small goals, and 5 of our 6 medium goals. And all our efforts laid foundations for our large goals, by paying off school and hospital debts to help our programs become sustainable.

P.O. Box 7530, Denver, CO 80207; 720-539-6098

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### **Highlighted 2017 Accomplishments**

- 1 - We kept the family in a house with electricity and running water, with a family garden area to raise vegetables, plus chickens (and now a cow!)
- 2 - We kept the family fed, with funds for three meals a day, as well as assistance with funds for various living expenses such as health insurance, electricity and food so Pastor George could use the funds from farming to keep the farming project moving forward.
- 3 - We kept all the children in school again, for the third year in a row. Willie, who graduated from high school a few years ago has decided he wants to get a university diploma as an automotive mechanic. Irene is continuing university studying law and Leon will join her at the same school and program in May. Lavender is entering her final year of high school and Charlie has just started high school. And Paula and Paulette graduated from pre-school and have just started kindergarten.
- 4 - We continued funding the farming of the five acres of farm land near the creek, and kept the water pump, generator and irrigation system running, with a rotation of crops that Pastor George has been able to bring to market.
- 5 - We paid off the balance of the past school's teacher salaries and school rent as well as the balance on Naomi's hospital bill from the twins' birth five years ago, plus we paid off a small balance of Lavender's school tuition. Today, the family is completely debt free.
- 6 - We paid Naomi's transportation costs to get to an interim nursing job in a nearby region, where she was able to get back to nursing, filling in for a colleague who was taking a leave. Having recent work experience makes her a more attractive candidate as she continues to interview for jobs.
- 7 - We bought a truck, additional chickens and (technically in January 2018), a milk cow!

As a result of our support, Pastor George was able to use the farming funds to replant repeated crops, build a storage unit for the maize, expand the number of chickens for egg sales, get greater amounts of sales of crops, and build a shelter for the milk cow.



All this, you made possible. You can see a complete month by month breakdown of our 2017 activities on our website at [www.thevillagegathering.com](http://www.thevillagegathering.com), plus details on our July 2019 Service Safari (prices start at a low \$7175 per person INCLUDING R/T airfare from JFK to Nairobi)!

## **Our Most Pressing Needs for 2018**

### **Small Projects** (the exchange rate is extremely favorable right now!)

1. Keep the family fed and take care of basic needs. For example, your \$16 one-time donation feeds the entire family for a day. \$60 a month keeps the lights on in the house. A

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single \$60 donation pays for the family's annual health insurance! (**we have raised our monthly stipend to \$800** which makes it possible for Pastor George to set aside small savings to cover unexpected expenses, like when both George and his mother needed emergency medical attention).

2. Buy the family a router (**\$120**) and pay for monthly internet (**\$60**). (access at internet cafés is expensive.)
3. Get Pastor George on a monthly, limitless cell phone plan (**\$50**), rather than “pre-paid”. (We have an old smart phone that is “unlocked” that we can send him so he doesn't have to buy a phone.)
4. Buy the family beds and mattresses (they've been sleeping on the ground, on piles of cloth, since they moved into the new house 2 years ago. Beds cost: for Pastor George and Naomi (**\$350**), the 3 boys (**\$330**), the older girls (**\$250**), and the two little ones (**\$150**).



Buying the truck



After a new paint job

### Medium Projects (every dollar donated toward these projects helps move them forward!)

1. Buy a second breeding cow for milk (**\$1350**) and 5 goats for meat and milk (**\$315/each or \$1575**)
2. Pay the annual rent on the homestead (**\$2631**)
3. Expand our educational donations, paying school costs for the coming year for all seven children, which totals \$11,500 for the coming year (as little as \$93/month keeps a child in school for the year!). The four youngest are all on a tri-semester schedule, while the three oldest will be on a two-semester “university” schedule, starting in May. (**Four primary/secondary students: \$1160/semester; \$3500 for the year. Three university students: \$4000/semester total; \$8000 for the year**).

As the children are getting older, and move into secondary school and university, their tuition is also rising. In addition, Pastor Evans, who has worked hard over the years to keep the Church at Bukokholo, as well as securing and maintaining our hospital property, has two sons we would like to help get through high school. We'd love to help them out too. You can find out a bit about each child (and a breakdown of their school expenses your donations are sponsoring) on our website, at [www.thevillagegathering.com](http://www.thevillagegathering.com)

4. Get Naomi ready for the NCLEX-RX in London (**\$2000**) so she can come to the U.S. in 2019 to work for 1-2 years (which will give the family 7-10 years worth of income!).

### Large Projects

Our first large project is now an immediate need for this year.

Others, we would like to move forward as we further stabilize the family's expenses. One of the biggest ways we'll meet these goals is through our July 2019 Service Safari – where we'll be working on projects at the homestead, the girl's school, the hospital, the well and the internet café! Here is our wish list for large projects. We

welcome outright donations, legacy contributions and we also

welcome low interest impact loans for these larger projects. For additional details on including The



The driveway to the property



Village Gathering in your estate planning, or making a loan, call 720-539-6098 or email [revpaula@thevillagegathering.com](mailto:revpaula@thevillagegathering.com)

1. Purchase the six acre homestead with the house, two wells, and the partially built girls' school where Pastor George is living now as per the terms of the lease/own contract. **(The first payment is due by June 2019, so now is the time to start buiding our Housing Fund). Purchase price is \$95,000 outright, or roughly \$15,000/year for 7 years.)**
2. Create a solar-powered internet café and charging station in Kitale that will double as a computer training center for area families and students **(roughly \$35,000)**
3. Buy a van suitable for 9+ passengers so the whole family can travel together. **(\$17,000)**
4. Finish and open the girls' school with an endowment for scholarships for deserving students from low-income families **(\$100,000)**
5. Finish, staff and open the Bungoma community hospital **(\$50,000)**



Your continued prayers, financial support and willingness to share the work we are doing makes a difference. Always remember: ANY donation is gratefully received.

**Tax-Deductible Donations** – *including recurring ones AND legacy gifts!* – can be made directly to The Village Gathering at the link at the bottom of this page, or via mail at: The Village Gathering, PO Box 7530, Denver, CO 80207

**DONATE YOUR MILES!** We also welcome donation of frequent flyer miles that can be used on **British Airways/American; KLM/Delta or Lufthansa/United.** This helps us travel to Kenya, and will offset the cost of transporting Naomi to London and to the U.S.

I am so blessed and so grateful to have you as part of the Gathering Family. With your continued support, we'll soon be able to bring clean water, health care and advanced schooling to more women and children of Kenya. Thanks to you, we are helping reduce the incidence of child brides and increase the economic stability and independence of this young democracy. You ARE the change you want to see in the world!

All my love,

Rev. Paula Langguth Ryan

*Please know your 100% tax-deductible gift is gratefully received. Thank you for sharing our passion with others. We are humbled to have fed your spirit and we thank you for feeding so many others with your prayers and support! Whenever guided, you can conveniently donate online! Simply visit our website: [www.thevillagegathering.com](http://www.thevillagegathering.com) and press the "Donate" button. Thank you!*