

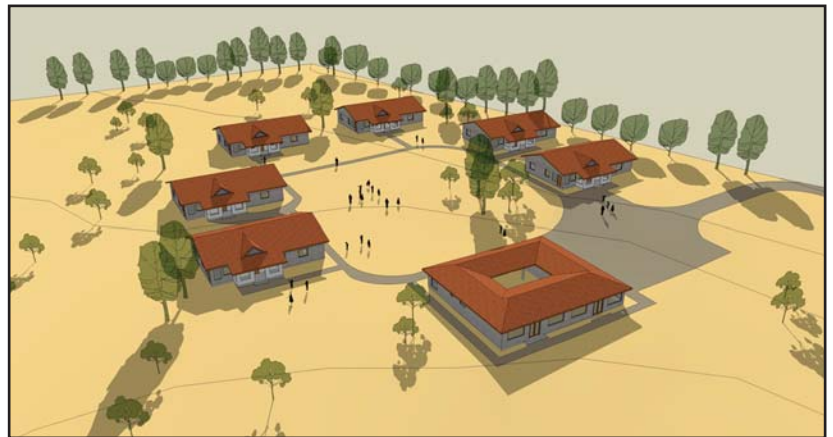


Building the Future, One Girl at a Time

The future shines bright for our girls at Hekima Place as construction begins on our new permanent home. Just last summer, the U. S. Board of Directors purchased 10 acres of land in Kiserian, Kenya to secure the future for Hekima Place, for the girls we now serve and for those we will serve in years to come. Since then, staff, volunteers and the girls themselves took up the challenge to prepare the land for construction. From clearing trees on the property and gathering rocks for building a wall to planting the Shamba (garden) and drilling a bore hole for fresh, safe water, each week showed progress toward our ultimate goal – a home we can call our own.

The coming months will bring six new cottages and a dining hall to our new land, property we own rather than rent. A Blessing and Dedication Ceremony on September 11 allows us to thank our heavenly Father for the graces He has showered upon us and lets us welcome all who can join us to celebrate this grand occasion.

Kate Fletcher visited the United States twice in the past six months, sharing the dream of this permanent home with thousands of people in the churches and organiza-



This architect's rendering depicts the six cottages and dining hall on the land of Hekima Place's permanent home.

tions that have been so good to the girls over the years.

Those efforts, coupled with generous donations from board members and many long-time and new donors, have put Hekima Place on the road to success with more than half the needed funds already raised or pledged. The big challenge still lies ahead in securing the remaining funds to complete the dream and to "build the future" for girls like Colleta and Naomi, who share their stories in this issue.

Colleta

My name is Colleta. I am one of the girls who live in Hekima Place. I come from a family of five, my mum, and my sister, my brother and I being the last born. I was one year old when my mum and dad broke up and separated. I was brought up by my grandmother after my mum's death when I was in grade two. When I was living with my grandmother the life was so hard for all of us since we could not get enough food to eat and the school. We were always sent home for the school fees. When I was in grade six my grandmother always prayed that she could ever find someone who would help me to go to school. And a very God fearing lady lived by our home, she is the grandmother to Sharon. My grandmother always prayed and talked to her that she may find someone because she lived in America.

God is good and gracious, one of the fine days when I was in the 7th grade, as it was a routine to me, I woke up and prepared myself to go to school and my grandmother said to me, please go back in the house and wear your church clothes. I said, "Why am I not going to school" and she told me that what she had been praying for finally had become true. That's when we set off for our journey to Hekima Place. I am very thankful to God and Mum Kate for finding or starting a home for girls because now I don't know where I could be. Since there was no money to take my sister to high school she ended up being a house girl and finally being married and my brother stopped from going to school when he was in 5th grade due to lack of money.

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Colleta



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Now I am living in Hekima Place where now I got everything that I need for my school work and also the encouragement from mums, especially Mum Kate and Mum Gladys and my sisters that I can make it in life. Before I joined Hekima Place I did not have any dream, hope, goal, nor future but now I know that when I finish my schooling I will be somebody respectful in the society. I do believe that I will make it in life.

My dream is to help those who will be in need as I was helped and to pay back to Hekima Place because if it was not for them and God I wouldn't have reached this far.

I joined Hekima Place when I was in 7th grade in 2006 and now I am going to my third year in high school. I am grateful for having gotten this golden opportunity to go to high school because I never dreamed of it. Also Hekima Place has enabled me to visit some countries that I never thought of, like the United States of America. I truly believe that God has good plans for me in my life.

I would like to thank Mum Kate, Mum Gladys, all the the mums, all the uncles and to thank all the sponsors, big sisters and donors for making our lives to be possible in Hekima Place and for providing all that we need. And to my sisters, always thank God for the breath that you are taking in now. Use every opportunity that you have to make a difference in your life and make a difference in the world today and forever.

Colleta, Grade 11

The Light of a Child

by Nancy McCann

When my nineteen year old daughter Rebecca and I were planning our time as volunteers at Hekima Place, we were not sure what to expect. We had heard stories about the girls at Hekima Place – parents lost to HIV/AIDS, early years spent moving between relatives, and in some instances neglect or even abuse. Given this history, our pre-conceived image of the children was not a happy one and we prepared ourselves to see many sad faces. However, this was not to be the case.

We arrived at Hekima Place late on a Friday night in mid-May, after twenty-seven hours of traveling. Within minutes a group of gracious older girls was standing in the doorway of the volunteer house, greeting us with wide smiles and hugs. I felt like we were being welcomed by old friends – not by girls we had never met from a completely different culture and background.

The warm welcome continued the next morning. We woke to the sound of children playing and laughing. I peeked out the door of Amani house to observe a hubbub of activity. Girls of all ages were riding bicycles, playing ball, talking and giggling as only little girls can do. Stepping out into the blue skies I was attacked with hugs. Bikes were dropped, balls rolled away, and girls appeared from everywhere, hugging, talking, introducing themselves, climbing into my arms. Their beautiful and happy faces caused me to smile – a smile which started that morning and rarely faded during my time at Hekima Place.

Joy was evident everywhere at Hekima Place. The dinner tradition of “my day was good because” was filled with giggling accounts of small daily pleasures and accomplishments. A bus ride to a field trip resonated with song. Soccer games, rock games, reading, ball throwing, bicycling, even studying – all done with an amazing sense of presence, thankfulness and joy.

We encountered many children during our trip to Kenya, and most were not as fortunate as the girls at Hekima. It is obvious that but for the grace of God, and the wonderful efforts of Mum Kate and Mum Gladys, the other Mums and Uncles at Hekima and the generosity of the volunteers and supporters, the lives of these girls would be very different.

A well loved child radiates joy. The generosity of all those who support Hekima Place and love the girls is reflected in the light that shines from each and every girl.

After visiting Hekima Place, Nancy McCann joined the U. S. Board of Directors.



Volunteer Rebecca Robbins hugs Mercy during her visit to Hekima Place.

A Baby's Journey to Hekima Place

She was nestled in a garden, among the bright blooms of bougainvillea just outside the gated entrance to a large home in Kenya. The baby was truly helpless, wrapped only in a kanga, a thin cotton cloth often used as a skirt or shawl. The kanga was covered in a typical flowered pattern, but one thing made it different. A message printed on the cloth in the African national language of Kiswahili -- most



Hekima Place girls gather around Mum Kate and the newest arrival Baby Kate to welcome the infant to their home.

likely straight from the heart of the baby's desperate mother -- said, "Long after you have gone from my sight, I will still be crying."

A startled gardener found the baby and brought her to the owner of the home. Just a few days later, the police handed her to a new "Mum" -- Kate Fletcher -- and the infant began a new life, one her mother could only dream of, at Hekima Place. Who knows if the baby would have survived -- or how -- without that journey just a couple miles from the garden to Hekima Place. Now her future is bright and certain.

She has been assigned a romantic birth date: February 14. The Hekima Place cook suggested a familiar first name: "Kate." Her fitting middle name is now "Makenna," which means "happiness" or "smiling" in the tribal Kikuyu language. Little Kate is showered with affection at Hekima Place, from her new "Mums" and from the other girls -- 57 new "sisters" vying for the privilege to hold her.

"With us, she will be loved, praised and comforted," Kate says. "She will be given medical, dental, optical and psychological care, and she will be educated. She'll grow up confident, articulate and faith-filled and do great things for Kenya. I have no doubt."

Naomi



My name is Naomi. I'm one of the orphaned girls in Hekima Place. I joined Hekima Place in 2006 when I was in 5th Grade. Before I joined Hekima Place I was living with my aunt who could never afford enough books for me to read. I used to collect pieces of pencils in my classrooms and pieces of papers to make a book. This kind of life made me feel unworthy and less important. My sisters were always encouraging, telling me not to worry and always hope in God.

I'm the kind of girl who likes taking advices seriously. I hoped in God and worked very hard at school not caring whether I had enough books or pencils. Due to lack of enough food, my effort bore no fruits. I tried to concentrate in class but it was all futile. My grades were very poor and I wondered whether I was ever going to make it in life, but as my sisters encouraged me to hope in God, I prayed and kept God first.

Surely God answers prayers. It was almost in the afternoon when a pupil was sent to come in my classroom and call me. As usual I had my heart in my mouth since I thought I had made a mistake and I was going to be punished. I followed the pupil quickly and when I reached the staffroom, I found this lady who was tall and friendly. She asked me whether my name was Naomi and I was astonished that she knew my name. She explained everything to me about Hekima Place and I agreed to join Hekima Place.

It was after confirming whether I was actually an orphan that I joined Hekima Place. I am now very advantaged to have enough books and even more than enough. I have every thing I need and I have no reason to fail. I can now meet my goals and have a great chance to change the world. I thank all those that helped me change my mind and my life and encourage others who are like me to hope in God who provides and He will provide.

Naomi, age 14



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A Place of Wisdom

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New Jersey Volunteers Help Clear Land for New Construction

For 11 volunteers from two churches in New Jersey, the first week in April was filled with hard work – and lots of blessings – at the site of Hekima Place’s soon- to-be- built new home in Kenya.

Seven adults and four high school students from the First Presbyterian Church in Moorestown and Deerfield Presbyterian Church in Deerfield Street, South Jersey headed to Kenya to help clear the new property and prepare it for construction this summer. Each day, girls from Hekima Place worked along side them and the Hekima Place day laborers to take out hundreds of small tress, slice grass and move rocks so building can begin.

“It wasn’t all work since we were able to celebrate Easter with the girls,” explained Carol McWilliams, mission administrator, First Presbyterian Church in Moorestown. “We had an Easter egg hunt for the girls and gave them small gift bags with personal items.”

McWilliams said their group coupled the days of work with the joy of spending time with the girls for a visit that was truly blessed.



This group of volunteers from New Jersey put some “muscle” into their visit to Hekima Place’s new property, helping to clear the land for construction.

This newsletter is created for the friends and family of Hekima Place – to let you know how your support with prayers and donations has changed lives of the girls at Hekima Place. We thank the benefactors for donating their time and for underwriting the production of this newsletter.

Hekima Place is a 501 c3 non-profit organization. Official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.