



Metrine in front of Red House

A Letter From Kate

Dearest Friends of Hekima,

As I travel by train through Pennsylvania, with its new life springing green on every hillside... I am writing to thank you abundantly with all my heart and soul... for the LIFE you have given to the 87 girls we are blessed to call family.

You have been such a blessing to all of us—to me, the children, and the staff—and you have truly given us LIFE: dreams, possibilities, a future filled with light, where there was only darkness before. For the last twelve years, we have sent you prayers and love and gratitude daily, weekly, monthly. And all this time, you have continued to support the girls' dreams with your generous hearts and faith. For all you have done and continue to do, thank you from all of us!

A joyful note of welcome to our new Director Jenny Roach, who comes to us from Wales and has been a youth minister of Liberty Church in Newport, Wales. After an international search, Jenny was the unanimous choice of our Kenyan Board of Trustees, and was greeted with enthusiasm and love by the U.S. Board of Directors, with whom she spent two weeks earlier this spring. After I arrive home in Kenya this May, Jenny will follow just a few days later. I will be working with Jenny for an orientation time, then will be devoted to raising funds in Kenya for our campaign to build a boarding high school for girls. For now, the staff and girls know that our new director will soon be with us, and that we shall have a glorious welcome home party!

So to ALL OF YOU: donors, board members, volunteers, church members, Rotarians, friends, house hosts (who kindly put up with me the last two months), and families seen and unseen—MAY GOD GIVE YOU SO MANY BLESSINGS, SO MUCH LOVE AND PEACE AND JOY that your hearts will be pressed down and overflowing with the gifts...

With all my heart, thank you,

Kate

Grandmom Kate



Welcome, Jenny Roach!

We are delighted to welcome our incoming Executive Director in Kenya, Ms. Jenny Roach of Newport, Wales! Jenny comes to Hekima Place with extensive experience in youth and community development, which she has performed in countries around the world. She has led a number of successful programs and projects in Kenya, focusing her efforts there on helping orphaned and vulnerable children and youth. Jenny's credentials, work experience, and accolades are too many to list here! Please visit www.hekimaplace.org/about/our-team to learn more about our new director. There, you can also watch a short video of Jenny reflecting on her new role, and how she immediately felt a sense of connection and belonging when she first visited Hekima Place.

Impressed and Inspired by Hekima Place

by Elizabeth Hagan, Executive Director,
Our Courageous Kids

I discovered Hekima Place over a year ago, while I was vetting future partners for **Our Courageous Kids**, the foundation I lead. **Our Courageous Kids** provides scholarship funds and other life enrichment opportunities for children who are growing up in orphanages. I was eager to learn more about Hekima Place, and once I visited the home during my next trip to Kenya, I became even more impressed!



Elizabeth Hagan and girls at Hekima Place

I don't use the word "impressed" lightly. For several years, my husband Kevin and I traveled the world during his time as President & CEO of Feed the Children, an international organization dedicated to ending child hunger worldwide. Kevin and I have visited many children's centers, including orphanages throughout Kenya, and we often worried about the well-being of the children we met. The difference of the **Hekima Place** model can clearly be seen in the quality of its staff, facilities, and programs.



I was impressed with so many aspects of **Hekima Place**. I felt I had met in Kate Fletcher a kindred spirit with the same passion for helping children in Kenya. I saw for myself how Sophie and the childcare workers cared for the girls' well-being, and how they loved them like their own. The lush grass fields and beautifully constructed buildings of the campus were a welcome surprise, but even more important, each cottage truly felt like a home! During lunch with several of the girls, I was impressed to hear them share more about their big dreams for the future. The table felt like a place where the girls felt comfortable to be themselves.

For all these reasons, **Our Courageous Kids** feels like it has found a gem in **Hekima Place**! We were glad to become a partner of **Hekima Place** in 2016 with a grant for the counseling program, which helps create physical and emotional space for the girls to process their grief and loss. We believe this work is critical, and we are proud to be a supporting partner of **Hekima Place**.

We are cheering on the administration and the girls in all they do!



Lois Bryan Joins the U.S. Board of Directors

Lois Bryan, D.Sc., CPA is Professor of Accounting and Senior Associate Dean for Academic Excellence at Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Specific areas of expertise include assurance of learning, taxation, and managerial accounting; she has published on these topics in various academic journals. Lois has served in numerous leadership positions at RMU, including most recently as the Interim Dean of the School of Business. A resident of Washington County, Lois has two grown children and two grandchildren.

When asked what inspired her to join the Board of Hekima Place, Lois reflected on the ways in which education changes lives in countless positive ways. "I have experienced the transformative effect of education in my own life and have witnessed it in the lives of others," she said. "Hekima Place is providing educational, life-changing opportunities, and I am honored to be given this opportunity to serve."

We are delighted to welcome Lois to the U.S. Board of Directors, and we are grateful for her gifts of time, energy, and expertise!

“What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?”

by Lorraine Bridy, Board Member



Bridget

I posed this question to the girls in informal “interviews” during my most recent trip to Hekima Place in January 2017.

“The first woman president of Kenya,” seven-year-old Bridget exclaimed, a great deal of confidence in her voice.

I was surprised but thrilled by her answer.

“Fantastic!” I said. “First woman president of Kenya!” Her small face broke into a smile, revealing a dimple I hadn’t noticed before.

It was Sunday afternoon, another beautiful day in Kenya. The sun was bright but not too hot, as the girls gathered around me on the park bench in the grassy courtyard, watching my every move as I jotted down their responses. They were



excited to be interviewed, and I was excited to hear what they had to say. These precious interviews would help us give the girls’ sponsors a more personal snapshot of their sponsored child.

Some of the questions I asked were: What is your favorite color? Do you have a favorite subject in school? What is your favorite book or movie? Favorite books and movies included *Princess and the Pea*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Gifted Hands*, *My Father’s Dragon*, *Peter Pan*, and *Men in Black*. To the question “Whom do you admire the most?” common answers were Mum Kate, other Hekima Place mums, and older girls. Some girls chose public figures: former South African president Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai, and Portuguese football (soccer) star Cristiano Ronaldo. 13-year-old Esther Wanjiku chose “my little sister, Anne”—Esther’s biological sister, age seven, who also lives at Hekima Place!

And of course, the last question was: What do you want to be when you grow up? Some wanted to be pilots, brain surgeons, doctors, and business owners. One young girl wanted to be a ballet dancer; others dreamed of becoming a cosmetologist, an airline stewardess, a meteorologist. Needless to say, I was moved by their ambitious responses!

We planted many seeds that Sunday afternoon. At my going away dinner, I applauded the girls and encouraged them to be diligent in their studies and to be guided by Mum Kate, their teachers, and other mentors. I urged them to trust in their faith and to believe that one day, their dreams will become realities—and that they will become great ambassadors for Hekima Place!





NOTES FROM HEKIMA PLACE

A Letter from Grace Wanjiku

Dear donors, sponsors, big sisters, friends, well-wishers, and everybody who makes Hekima Place possible—

I want to express my deepest gratitude to you for believing in me. You, our donors, said “yes” to God’s call to help me and my sisters when we first came to Hekima Place. This gift will forever remain a major contributor to my success and achievements. I really look forward to the day I can do the same for other children and young people in need.

You have inspired me to pursue my goals with hard work and dedication. You have shown me the value of honesty, sincerity, and trust in all that I do. The knowledge and wisdom you have imparted to me has been a great help and support throughout my academic career.

Grace at a scholarship awards ceremony

A special note to Mum Kate and my sponsors Diana, Shirley, and Julia: It is impossible to put into words everything I appreciate about you! From day one, you have been my support system and my greatest fans. Thank you for always listening to me and for giving me the gift of education. I pray that you never lack for anything. I love you all!

Luke 6:38: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

Thank you, once again, for your time, support, and patience. May God bless you!



Grace now works on community development projects in her old neighborhood

Grace Wanjiku is studying Leadership and Management at St. Paul’s University. Watch Grace speak about her life at Hekima Place in a short video from 2013, “A Look at Hekima Place,” which can be found on our YouTube channel. (www.youtube.com/user/HekimaPlace1)

Our Newest Girls

Over the last six months, we have taken in four new girls: Hope (7 months), Mercy (1 year), Sema (10 years), Mary (11 years), and Grace (11 years). We could accept these new little ones because four of our high school graduates have recently moved on to full-time school and vocational training. Several of the new girls have come to us from truly desperate situations, so we are happy we can give them a safe, warm home and lots of love and attention!



Sema, 10



Mary, 11



Grace, 11 holds Baby Mercy



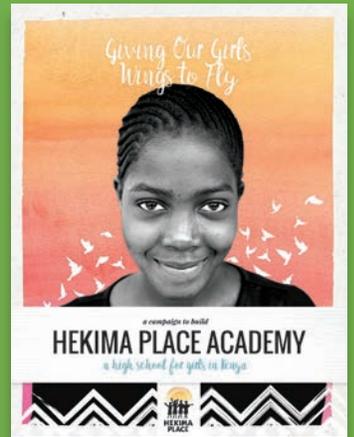
We gratefully acknowledge our volunteer photographers Grace Stewart and Pat Jacobs.

"Basic education begins to unlock potential, but it is secondary education that provides the wings that allow girls to fly." –Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of Malala Yousafzai, winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize



Hekima Place Academy - artist is David Csont

If you have heard Founder Kate Fletcher speak recently, you may have also received a copy of our brochure, "Giving Our Girls Wings to Fly: A Campaign to Build Hekima Place Academy." You can find an electronic version by visiting www.hekimaplace.org/new-school. We hope you will share this beautiful vision of our future school with your friends, family, and community organizations!



"The schools nearby in Kajiado County only yield 24% of students who are able to attend university," noted Kate. "We would like to offer our community the chance for a better education. The school will have fully-equipped science labs, a computer lab, and a library. We will also create a center for life-learning skills and offer a music and art program." Great progress has been made in raising funds for this important project, and we continue to expand our network of supporters. Your support and prayers are greatly appreciated!

RUNNING FOR HEKIMA PLACE!

Congratulations to our relay teams and individual runners in this year's Pittsburgh Marathon, who helped raise **over \$20,000** for Hekima Place! We are grateful to every donor who supported this year's runners and turned miles into schoolbooks, nutritious meals, and warm beds for our girls. Your collective generosity made this amazing success possible, and you will help us do so much good for our girls over the coming year!



Many thanks to our relay team runners: **Julie Baych, Kirsten Engle, Lauren Julius, Ashley Koltonski, Alice McLaughlin, Suzanne Schreiber, Nora Simpson, Deirdre Stewart, Chelsa Wagner, and Simone Woodhouse**. We are also very thankful to the runners' many friends and families for their strong support! Our runners blew past their original goal of \$5,000, and together raised **more than \$9,000!** Thank you, Nora and Lauren, our team captains, for inspiring such an amazing outpouring of support!



Sarah Markwardt and Simone Woodhouse

Thanks also go to **Jessa Darwin** and **Sarah Markquardt** for making the cheer station a big success and lots of fun—complete with Kenyan music and treats!

We also extend our very special gratitude to the **Jacobs family**. They offered challenge grants throughout the spring to their friends, family, and the wider Hekima Place community. Together, donations made in honor of Pat Jacobs totaled **over \$13,000!** Your extraordinary support of Pat is truly humbling, and we cannot thank you enough!

Pat and Rick Jacobs asked us to share these words of thanks with our Hekima Place family:



Nora Simpson and Jessa Darwin

"We thank you all for your overwhelming financial support of Pat's half marathon. Every step taken by our runners will bring joy and hope to the girls of Hekima Place. May God bless you for your gift to us and the girls of Hekima."



HEKIMA PLACE

A Place of Wisdom

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Pittsburgh, PA 15216

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Have you checked out our new website? Go to www.hekimaplace.org to learn more about our work in Kenya and different ways you can get involved. We'd love to hear from you!

