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## **2015: A Spectacular Year in Review**

February 4, 2016

Dear Sponsors and Supporters:

Before I begin, I want to send all of you a belated wish for a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year from all of us here in Kenya.

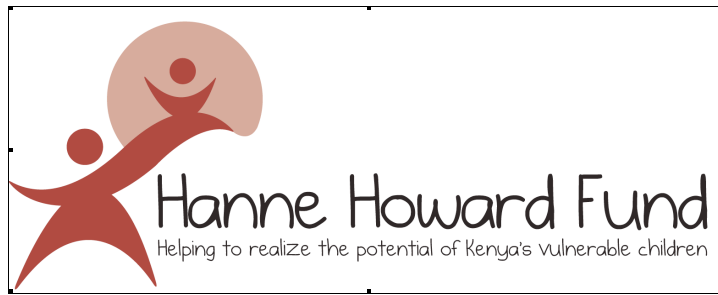
All the HHFL kids and staff join me in these wishes and in the hope that perhaps some of you will come and visit us in Lenana this year!

Unfortunately for us, the start of 2016 was marked by anxiety followed by shock and then extreme sadness. As you may or may not know, the beginning of 2016 brought tragedy to our midst as we buried our dear "little Brian" on January 12th.

Brian succumbed to complications of AIDS on January 7th after a 5-day battle in hospital where we spared no cost and his doctors made every effort to try and save his life. For five days his HHFL siblings, friends, staff, Mama Margaret, Lucy, Ted and I stayed by his side hoping and praying for his recovery.

On his fourth day in hospital, we exhaled a sigh of relief as his condition improved to the point that his doctors said he could go home the next morning. Sadly, that morning never arrived for our Little Brian. His heart stopped beating at 7:45pm that night. The shock and pain of the loss is indescribable. Our heads and hearts remain so heavy.

The hostel seems empty and a mournful tone resounds in our compound. As for Ted and I, coming to terms with his loss remains a difficult thing as we never bargained on losing any of our African children. We all miss him - his playfulness, computer shenanigans (he ruled supreme in our computer lab) and love of animals. But above all, we miss his lovely smile.



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## **Primary School**

Our 55 primary kids are on a steady escalating mode reflected in improved grades.

Over a year ago, we implemented the 'Reading Companion', a wonderful online program developed by IBM to help younger kids improve their language and math skills. IBM Kenya not only made this program available to HHFL but also donated the required headsets necessary to follow the computerized program. Thank you IBM Kenya and Teacher Isaiah for getting this program up and running!

In 2015, there were 6 primary school graduates who have just received their invitation letters to join high school. This is a difficult feat as the competition is fierce in Kenya - we are very proud!

## **High School**

Our 24 high school students continue to do very well indeed. All our kids take this stage very seriously. No complaints here from Mama Hanne, Lucy or Isaiah! We have to admit, most of our teenagers are easy peasy!

In November 2015, 3 bright young men and 3 bright young women graduated from high school. Yes, Mama Hanne is celebrating! The final grade results will arrive this month.

Jane is known as a math wiz, who remains undecided between a career in IT or banking. She is hoping for a B+, which would grant her a government scholarship!

Sharon is a very well rounded kid with many talents and excellent leadership qualities who is focused on a career in IT.

Elsy, due to unfortunate family problems, experienced a drop in performance over the past two years; but again, she is a very smart girl whose leadership qualities and determination will land her on the right track. IT seems a good choice for Elsy as well.



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All 3 boys are solid; they are still searching for the right career, except for Paul who knows he wants to become a baker. Stay tuned. They are home (in the project) helping with the little ones and hoping to get a job during their gap year, or better still, get a chance at an internship in one of Asilia Africa's camps in the Masai Mara.

Contingent on availability funding (HHF is working hard on this front), we are hoping to be able to ship all six grads off to post-secondary in September. Not likely, but one can always hope!

### **Post secondary**

The post-secondary group is flying high. To date, we've produced 21 self-reliant kids who have successfully graduated and are now gainfully employed. These young adults formed the HHFL alumni club – "We Are One" – also known as WAO.

Pride comes to mind when watching the passion and proactive enthusiasm of these young people. They recently established the WAO scholarship, which they are funding themselves by donating 5% of their monthly salaries. They remain actively involved in the project and in mentoring the young ones.

Presently HHFL has 13 post-secondary kids enrolled in various institutions. With some luck, Esther, Albanus and Philomena will join them this February. They have been sitting 'on the bench' awaiting funding since they graduated from high school in 2014.

Esther wants to be a chef. Albanus managed to enroll himself in an IT college last September (paid for by his savings from a barista job but needs help this year) and Philomena is starting a computer program in hardware and web design at Don Bosco Training Center. This will bring the total to 16 post-secondary enrolled - huge achievements for HHF and one we are extremely proud of.



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## HHF Alumni

In 2015, we proudly added 3 youth to the growing list of successful HHF Alumni! Brian, Alice and Carol finished their post-secondary studies in the hospitality fields.

Brian is already employed while Alice is hoping to hear the good news this coming week after just having finished a promising interview. Carol, while presently on maternity leave until end of February (oops! yes, another one of those "little life surprises"), she has a job offer to return to Kipinski Hotels in March. Fingers crossed!

This year, we will add yet another 4 youth to the HHF alumni list. Magdalena is finishing a 2-year diploma as an administrative assistant, Sarah finishes a diploma in sewing and Samson completes his food production diploma. Mercy will be graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce from Strathmore University in November. She is a formidable student, strong role model and budding entrepreneur!

And this, our dear friends and supporters, is where we stand today! I cannot thank each and every one of you for not only agreeing to embark on this wild ride with us, but more importantly by staying the course! Without your ongoing and continued support none of the above could have been possible.

Ted and I salute you and want you to share collectively in our pride and joy. I hope you agree that this journey and the kids we serve make it all worthwhile! Wishing you and your family's fulfillment, joy and abundant good health for 2016.

Cheers and Happy Days,

Hanne and Ted