



FRIENDS OF THE KAREN STREET CHILDREN  
[www.karenstreetchildren.org](http://www.karenstreetchildren.org)

## Christmas Newsletter 2020

### Keeping Things Going



2020 has been an extraordinary year for everyone, wherever you are in the world and whatever you do, but maintaining contact and continuing the children's education during the pandemic has been particularly demanding. As ever, our friends and donors have risen to the challenge. Laptops and iPads have been donated, including by Finn Grammaticas who gave up his old school iPad so that the children were able to access online learning.

Our very own Benson was tasked

with cleaning up the donated appliances and with any reconditioning needed, before they were handed over to the children. The Vanessa Grant Girls' School very quickly set up a superb Zoom programme which our students were able to access on their new computers, but sadly most other schools were not so organised.

To fill the gap, our undergraduates came to give lessons in their specialist subjects to the younger children. We are very proud that they stepped

up to the plate; a great example of how committed our older students are to the continuation of the programme. Joyce, who is studying Geology with Petroleum Studies, took on science and maths and Anne, who is already a graduate teacher taught English and Kiswahili, while the form 4s taught the form 1s, and everyone just got on with it.

**"It's Not Whether You Get Knocked Down, It's Whether You Get Up." – Vince Lombardi**

## A Bright Future



Daniel Muranga came to Karen Street Children in 2011. His parents had separated and he was living with his mother and two sisters, but his mother was struggling to cope. After a brief and ill-advised stay with his father he returned. We were able to enrol him in Githiga High School after he scored an impressive 354 in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education and he completed high school with a mean grade B+, joining Rongo University in September 2015 where he studied for a degree in Microbiology.

After graduating, Jim Tozer, Managing Director of Kenchic, gave him his first break with an unpaid internship in their laboratories. He immediately impressed with his hard work and dedication – he was the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at the end of the day. Jim says he was keen to learn and had exactly the right attitude, so it was an easy decision to offer him full time employment. And that's where Daniel is today. He finds the work fascinating, and really enjoys the lab work, including preparing media, processing samples and interpreting the results of tests. Daniel says what he loves most is that each sample he looks at is unique and that science comes to life for him in the laboratory. Jim says if we have any more like Daniel – send them over!

## Christmas is Coming!



**smile.amazon.co.uk**

Christmas is on the way, and this year we'll be shopping online as never before. And while we are, there is an easy way to help the kids of Karen Street Children and their families.

Sign up using at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> or <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk> and whatever you buy for your loved ones you'll know that something is going to those much less fortunate.

## PRIZE WINNERS

Another casualty of the pandemic is our annual awards ceremony. Although there won't be a physical ceremony this year, we are still keen to recognise some of the outstanding achievements of our students. A special award goes to Lena Kasukari for the outstanding leadership she has demonstrated. She often deputises for Catherine at the centre and is always there for the younger children. Catherine tells us that she is completely at ease leaving Lena in charge.

Special mention must also be made of Faith Murage, Cynthia Njoke and Elizabeth Saneipei for the help and support they also provide to Lena.





## Karen Street Children Doing Their Bit

Oloolua Forest is 618 hectares situated 20 kms south west of Nairobi, bordering the suburbs of Karen, Rongai and Ngong. It is home to a range of small mammals, unique bird-life stunning waterfalls, and many indigenous species. More importantly, it acts as a lung for Nairobi. The forest is currently unfenced and under threat from deforestation due to the development of major roads, the new railway, encroachment and quarrying. There has been lots of illegal tree cutting and, now that the Ngong dump is closed, rubbish dumping; commercial rubbish collectors dumping in the forest at night.

On 3 October Christopher Muriithi, environmental activist, conservationist and key member of the Oloolua Forest Association, organised one of his many clear-ups and Karen Street Children provided a team to help. They turned out to be the group who collected the most. With increased investment, it is hoped that eventually the forest will host guided walks, bike and horse trails and picnic sites with tables and benches. One of our own, Enoch, is keen to become one of the scouts being recruited to police the forest and Christopher is keen to employ him, but because he was born in Tanzania has no local ID, a situation we hope to remedy. Meanwhile, he attends every clean-up and has become a useful member of the forest volunteer group.



## Green Fingers



It hasn't all been about lessons. David Njoroge helps to run the garden and the children have been busy growing vital vegetables that help to feed them and their families. Never has this been more important than in these difficult times, as families struggle to make ends meet which often means stomachs go empty.



## Reflections on the Pandemic

The children have looked back at the year and written some poignant account of how the virus has impacted their lives.

“My mother’s income from cooking for construction workers has dried up. It has been a tough time for us in the struggle to try to put something on the table to eat and to pay the rent”

“Like a sophisticated rifle, the virus has come and hit us on the head”

“I tried finding jobs like washing clothes for people, but that did not work. Until an idea came to me – since it is the tangerine season, I would start hawking them. The first day I nearly gave up, but I continued and cannot regret it! Now I have the skill of marketing.”

“It is hard to study through all this panic and stress. The number of people infected is rising rapidly and people are afraid.”

## Happy Christmas to our Sponsors and Thank you to Catherine

None of our achievements would be possible without the hard work and dedication of our wonderful and much-loved Administrator, counsellor and friend Catherine. We owe a huge vote of thanks to her from the Trustees, Committee members and all the students.

We wish all our sponsors, supporters and friends the happiest possible Christmas and renewed hope for the New Year.



And finally a quote from a Christmas card to Romi just received from KSC student David Njoroge.

**“It’s not the presents that make Christmas so special.  
It’s the presence of those you love whether they are with you in person  
or in spirit”**

## DONATE WHILST YOU SHOP!

For our UK based supporters, you now have the option to donate to KSC whilst you shop online at all of your favourite stores. And what’s more, the donation does not come out of your own pocket. It can provide us with valued donations without any cash input on your part - a Win/Win for us all

**Easyfundraising.org.uk** provides a FREE fundraising service where you can raise funds for KSC when you shop online with shops like M&S, John Lewis, Boots, Tesco Direct, Sainsburys, Boden, Crew Clothing amongst many!

**Smile.Amazon.co.uk** donates 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) of eligible purchases to the charitable organisation of your choice. Sign up and log on to the Smile.Amazon.co.uk website when you wish to purchase.

## Meet Some of Our Team



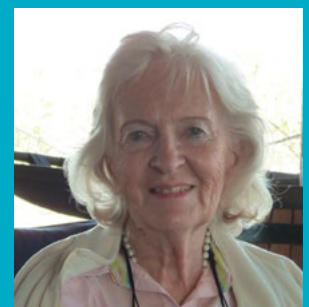
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