

jitegemee

\jee-teh-geh-máy\ v [Swahili : sustain yourself] : empowering street children through **education**.

Dear Friends,

Jitegemee scholars are always inspiring. I recently received a new collection of letters, so I have seen the progress our students are making from one year to the next, and read their descriptions of how their own lives have changed with the help of our program and donors like you. I am proud to be helping them. I hope you are too. Let me share with you some excerpts:

“If I had not been in school I would have been caught stealing and jailed or died of drug taking. . . . The best thing about being a Jitegemee scholar is that now I feel I am part and parcel of society. I am now educated and can do the things other children are doing without being discriminated or looked down upon by other children.”
Miriam Mutindi, high school freshman

“Jitegemee has the best teachers I have ever met. They are caring, polite, encouraging, motivating and they give me a lot of support and love.”
Anthony Kimeu Maingi, vocational scholar

“I have been dreaming about being in school, especially secondary, and Jitegemee has made the dream come true.”

Lilian Syokau, senior at Machakos Girls high school

“The program has greatly improved my health through the medical checkups.”
James Mwema, senior at Tala Boys high school

This has been an exceptional year for the Jitegemee. We now have five students in college, 56 students in elementary school and high school, and an additional 55 who are in stages of vocational training. Our fourth annual class of vocational scholars is currently preparing to get hands-on training in trades like mechanics, welding, hairdressing and tailoring from tradespeople in the community.

We have also started both a tool lending program and a microfinance program. Fourteen former vocational students have formed a mutual support group and taken \$50 loans each to purchase tools and establish themselves as independent businesspeople. Several have already repaid their loans in full, while others are struggling to do so. If this pilot program is a success, we will continue it for our next batch of vocational scholars.

Street Kids International, a Canada-based organization, has been excited by our work with young entrepreneurs and chosen us as a partner program. They have seen our outstanding work and decided to help our kids with training in microfinance lending and some funding for loans.

The year 2008 has also had some setbacks. Thanks to the generosity of our friends, we went to Kenya prepared to buy the building we are currently renting. We were shocked to learn that the landlord changed his mind about selling it, and that we only have about three more years there before we have to leave. Initially, it was a big disappointment, but now we realize that it has presented us a chance to dream even bigger, start from the ground up and obtain or build a building that is better suited for our needs. Our Kenyan staff, kids and advisory board are currently evaluating space needs so we can start planning to accommodate future program directions. As we approach this exciting challenge, we are grateful for your generous and continued support,

Helena Halperin

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Board Chair