



# jitegemee

\jee-teh-geh-may\ v [Kiswahili:sustain yourself]: empowering street children through education.

## Letter from Jitegemee by Michael Kimeu

The Jitegemee scholarship program is a very unique program. Under the program, we identify needy children at a very young age and reach out to them with nurturing and assistance. We ensure that they remain focused and motivated in pursuit of academic excellence. We believe it grooms a child at very early age to succeed at school and shapes both their present and their future.

In order to motivate these children to work hard in school, Jitegemee has committed itself to paying for secondary school, and in some cases, college, for those who achieve excellent results on their exams.

Last year, our class eight candidates disproved any one with a notion that street kids cannot excel in their exams. Our six candidates performed so well nearly



all of them were admitted to prestigious schools. One boy in

particular, Peter Muasya, posted second in the division and joined one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in Kenya: Starehe Boys Center. Agnes Kavita, a child who has come through very difficult circumstances, could not be left behind; she scored high marks and joined Makueni Girls High School, another prestigious institution. It is amazing that Agnes scored the highest of all our girls, even after her mother threw her out of the house at a young age. Throughout her childhood, Agnes found refuge in Jitegemee. The Jitegemee Board chair in Machakos, Terry Mutuku, a former school inspector, took Agnes into her own home. We strongly believe

*(Continued on page 2)*

## My Life in Jitegemee Kivua Kiilu by Michael Kimeu

Years ago, primary education in Kenya was not free and mandatory. Many children from poor backgrounds were unable to receive an education. Many problems forced these children out of school - broken families, hunger, poverty, and lack of money to pay school fees.

One of our sponsored children frequently hung out with a very jovial boy in tattered clothes. This boy, a smiling kid named Kivua Kiilu,

appeared very comfortable in the streets. He did not have anywhere to go, anywhere to sleep or any one to depend on. But Kivua looked healthy and kept smiling. Mandi Musyimi, one of Jitegemee's former street children, introduced Kivua to the program.

Kivua had been kicked out of the house by his mother before he was even eight years old. His mother, a single par-

ent with other children, is a casual worker who often spends her meager earnings on a traditional brew. With no monetary or emotional support for his education, Kivua was unable to continue in primary school. Kivua stayed in the streets for four years before Jitegemee identified him. Despite his circumstances, each time Mike Kimeu met him, Kivua shouted loudly "all I want is to go back to school. I left school many years ago but I

*(Continued on page 3)*

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A benefit concert

October 20, 2007

First Church  
11 Garden Street  
Cambridge, MA  
8pm

Tickets: \$25

For information or to buy tickets:

[www.jitegemee.org/concert.php](http://www.jitegemee.org/concert.php)

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(Continued from page 1) - Letter

that Terry's mentorship contributed dearly to Agnes' success. Kisilu Maweu, George Okoth, Mutheu Muia and Mandi Musyimi performed well too and joined Mwaani boys, Machakos Boys, Masii Girls and Kitonyini Secondary School respectively. Their academic success shows that street children with a will to succeed just need a little support to remove the obstacles that prevent them from attaining their educational goals.

The introduction of Jitegemee's hot lunch program has contributed to the success of the primary school kids, most of whom walk from their schools to our center daily to eat a nutritious meal. The result has been striking: This year, there were no drop-outs from primary school. Children in our program no longer look gloomy and unhappy due to hunger. The head teacher at St. Mary's Boys School once commented that "Jitegemee scholars are always very smart." This has been a dream for the program to ensure that our very disadvantaged children - many of whom are orphans or are from struggling single-parent families - don't feel neglected and different from other children.

Jitegemee started another exciting program this year to help Jitegemee's older students understand the needs and requirements of the work environment. We began an internship program that seeks to link high school students and recent graduates with professional mentors to prepare them for employment after graduation. After interviewing students about the fields they aspire to pursue, Jitegemee partnered with various institutions including the local hospital, a law firm and government departments, who provided internship opportunities to five of our students during the spring vacation. The internship helped students sharpen their skills and develop in their respective areas of specialization. The program has so far started to yield fruits, with the students saying that they are seeing life in a different dimension now. Muthoki Kiilu, a

third-year high school student, said her internship at the district office of the Ministry of Information changed her view of her own future. "I did not know I



*Jitegemee students playing with blocks during school vacation.*

can make it until I worked in the District Information Office," she said. "This is a kind of eye opener to me in the field I want to specialize." Jitegemee hopes to expand this program to allow additional students to participate.

Jitegemee is also making great strides in the vocational training program. We have recruited a new class



*Jitegemee students learning to use computers.*

of 25 students who are currently learning life and business skills in our classrooms. In the coming months, we will pair them up with local mentors who will teach them hands-on skills in trades such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, hair dressing, and mechanics. More than 75 youth

have benefited from Jitegemee's vocational program, attaining the skills required to kick start their lives by either venturing into their own small business or by getting employed.

To help our vocational graduates get started in their new trades, Jitegemee has begun a partnership with a local microfinance group who will lend our skilled students small amounts of money so that they can access raw materials to begin their businesses. At the moment, some vocational graduates are working on commission basis, while others have secured jobs and are acting as mentors to younger kids as they continue acquiring skills and experience. This is realizing Jitegemee's dream of street children teaching other street children. Now that we have accessed money for materials for the skilled youth, the next step is to have a pool of larger tools that Jitegemee's vocational graduates can borrow as they launch their own small businesses. Your donation will go a long way towards making this a reality and seeing more Jitegemee children become self-sustaining adults. **d**

## Global Friendships

This year, Jitegemee students began a pen pal program with students from Lincoln Middle School in Brookline, Massachusetts.

The students in Brookline wrote letters to Jitegemee that described life in the United States. They also sent cameras to the Jitegemee kids to take pictures of their daily lives. In Kenya, the children enjoyed reading and responding to the letters from their American friends.

"Writing letters to kids in the US really helps our kids learn about other cultures and improve their English," says program director Mike Kimeu.

# Reflections on Progress by Lucas Kimang'a

Joining the Jitegemee board gave me a chance to share the little I have with my fellow Kenyans. The problem of street kids in Kenya has been a sore spot for many years and very few solutions have worked as well as Jitegemee has. Credit should be given the founders and all those who made the Jitegemee idea a reality.

None of us can truly understand what a street child goes through: lack of food, abuse, crime, drug use, among others. Growing up in Nairobi, I remember the conflicting emotions that street kids evoked! They were dirty and bothersome, often asking for a few coins for drugs or food. At the same time, I remember feeling real empathy for these children who had no-one to look out for them. It is with this background that I find myself on the board of directors for Jitegemee - I have some understanding of the conditions of the

*(Continued from page 1) - Life in Jitegemee*

am sure there is fun in school and a good future.”

Today, Jitegemee has sponsored Kivua and identified a guardian, who is not even a relative, for him to stay with. Kivua is now in class six at St. Mary's Mixed Primary School. In the beginning, Kivua experienced a lot of problems learning the English language which he did not understand at all. But he adjusted quickly and within a year is performing quite well in school. Now, Kivua can both write and speak in English. Despite his earlier difficulties, Kivua is always among the top 20 in his class.

“All I want is to go back to school.”

street children and a good understanding of the educational system, its stringent requirements and the less-than-adequate resources available for needy students.

In addition to our proud moments, we have had some challenges; these include peer pressure faced by our teenage students which can lead to negative behaviors. To deal with this challenge, we have hired a new staff member whose sole purpose is to provide the necessary care and counseling for our secondary school students.

This year, we hope to begin a capital campaign to help us launch into the next phase, which will include purchasing the building that we currently rent for our program. Acquiring the building would enable us to expand our programs and to do major improvements on the building to better fit our needs. We believe our students need a library that is well equipped with books

Kivua's future has brightened considerably since he became a part of Jitegemee. Your support makes it possible for him to receive an education and basic care. **d**



*Kivua Kiilu is now in the top 20 of his class at St. Mary's Primary School.*

and internet access which will expose our children to the outside world and help them expand their horizons. Once complete, our library will be the only library in the town. We also hope to update our workshop space, improve our kitchen facilities, construct a water storage tank and perhaps build accommodations for children who don't have an adequate place to live.

I am looking forward to updating you on our achievements this time next year. The entire Jitegemee family sincerely appreciates and values your support. **d**

## Jitegemee Computer Lab

At the end of last year, Jude Ndambuki of the Help Kenya Project donated four computers and three printers to our school. This has seen the initiation of the computer lab where kids prepare for the future by becoming computer literate.

Help Kenya is now installing some anti-virus software and training one of the teachers who will be teaching the children computer skills and how to access the Internet.

The children appreciated the donation and planted trees as a reminder and a form of environmental conservation. During their school vacations and free time, the kids play computer games and use educational software.

## Jitegemee Library

Jitegemee has established a small library where our children come to read during their free time. Equipped with books donated by friends of the program, it is the only library in Machakos. Your support will help us expand the library for the future.

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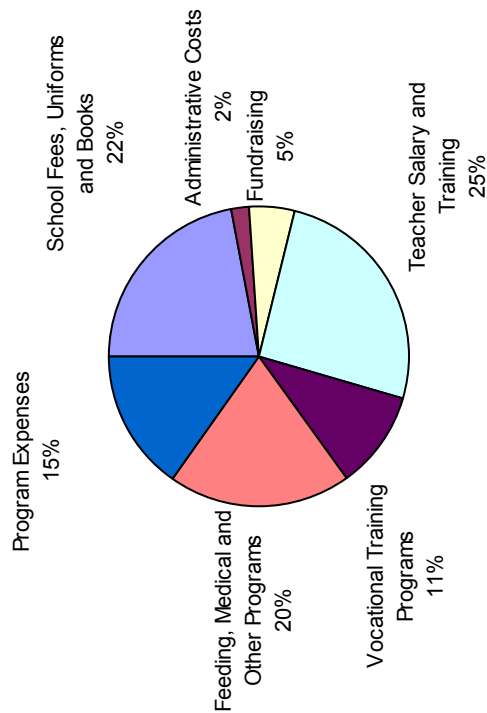


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## Jitegemee Program Expenses 2006



**Expenses 2006: \$50,957**  
**Budget 2007: \$59,390**

Thanks to your generosity, our fundraising efforts are on track to meet the needs of our expanding program.

### Jitegemee At A Glance:

- Total Number of children served :140
- Number of children sponsored to elementary schools: 41
- Number of children sponsored to high schools: 16
- Number of children sponsored to vocational training: 79
- Number of secondary school graduates: 4

### Our Goals For Next Year:

- Enhance microfinance offerings for vocational trainees
- Purchase and expand program building in Kenya
- Sponsor 10 more children in elementary school
- Sponsor 25 more boys and girls for vocational training