



Jitegemee

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

Letter from Jitegemee by Amelia Kaplan

Dear Friends of Jitegemee:

At the most recent Jitegemee board meeting in April in Boston, we had the exceptional experience of meeting with three other small non-profits working in East Africa who have similar goals and face similar challenges. Our intrepid executive director Farah Stockman and Michelle Brooks, our dedicated board chair, brought these groups -- Jifunze, Mathari Children's Fund, and TOTOS -- together to share and learn from each other's successes and mistakes.

This meeting embodied what is so special about Jitegemee: from small amounts of thoughtful and well-placed effort, a

lot can grow. *For approximately \$100 dollars, you can keep an elementary school child in school for a*



Peter Muasya

year, and for \$500, you can keep a high school student in boarding school for a year. We are a grass-roots non-profit working to maximize small amounts of money in large ways.

There are many new things on the horizon for Jitegemee. We are continuing to sponsor additional students and grow our vocational program. Our staff and local advisory board in Kenya are taking on more of a leadership role in our programmatic decisions. We now have a talented program director, Mike Kimeu, an office, and a unique vocational program that is modeled after a vision of the Jitegemee scholar giving back to others. This vision is already becoming a reality: One student, Mbithi Musyoka, a welder, has begun to mentor other young people. By the end of 2005, our program will support 106 former street children and youth with educational opportunities,
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Camping with Jitegemee by George Stockman

After hearing about Jitegemee for several years and seeing only glossies of the kids and staff, I finally got the opportunity to make the visit and see it all for myself, in August of 2004. I wasn't disappointed.

We arrived in Machakos to find the program's small

classroom of energetic students on the first floor, nestled amongst other quieter businesses.

A class of 25 vocational students were convened in the classroom, where they were learning about things important to business -- communication, business models, honesty, working

on goals, being groomed, being on time, etc. The staff has done a good job on this -- students who once couldn't even look anyone in the eye can now stand and talk about things, some even in English. They plan to be mechanics, hairdressers, tailors, welders, etc. and the
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Jitegemee Board

Executive Director
Farah Stockman

Board Chair
Michelle Brooks

Secretary-Treasurer
Cathy Mosca

Program Director
Michael Kimeu

Board Members
*Helena Halperin
Murage Njoroge
Kate Aksadi*

By Numbers

Children served:
over 100

2005 budget:
\$39,000

Percent spent on direct program expenses:
85%

Years Jitegemee has sent street children to school:
9

Jitegemee thanks founding board members David Woods, Njeri Gichohi and Amelia Kaplan for their years of friendship and continuing support.

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Amelia with Jitegemee parents

counseling, and basic health care for the student and one caregiver per child.

Since we are so small, the help you give goes a long way. We need all kinds of donations, so we are creating levels of participation in Jitegemee — so that those of you who have expressed interest can become more involved. Please send us an email at info@jitegemee.org, telling us if there is some skill, service or in-kind donation you want to contribute to Jitegemee.

Here are some ways you could help.

We urgently need:

- New dedicated board members who can attend two board meetings a year in Boston and help us carry out the goals of the organization.
- Volunteers to help us regularly update our website.
- Experienced volunteers who are interested in working in Kenya with the kids.
- Friends to host cocktail parties that can spread the word about Jitegemee.

We are also searching for in-kind donations of:

- Age-appropriate and culturally-appropriate books for our library in Kenya.
- Medical and first-aid supplies.
- A digital camera.
- A video camera.

I have been truly transformed by my involvement with Jitegemee. I traveled to Kenya with the Jitegemee Board, a trip that changed my life. I

was able to see firsthand how crucial health care, food allowances, and uniforms are to removing the barriers to education for former street children in Machakos, Kenya. Our program may be small, but for this community, particularly for the street children who have few other options, it is a vital bridge to a brighter future.

This last board meeting was my final one, as in a few months I am moving to California. Yet I am not ending my involvement with Jitegemee. I plan to host small gatherings for Jitegemee to introduce more people to the program and raise funds. *You can help grow our network by having or attending our small gatherings and spreading the word about our organization.* We can provide you an event kit to help you host one in your home.

We hope that you will join our network, contribute what and when you can, and come sometime to Kenya with us to meet the kids.

News from Jitegemee

by Farah Stockman, Executive Director, and Mike Kimeu, Program Director

Last year, our new vocational class was a collection of shy youth struggling with poverty, prostitution and drug use. This year, these same 25 young people are confident, reliable workers immersed in their second phase of training. Each morning, they go to work as apprentices to carpenters, welders, tailors and hairdressers. Every lunch hour, they eat together as a class and share experiences. Once a week, they meet Jitegemee staff for counseling, learning and support.

Mike Kimeu, our program director in Kenya, says this one-on-one mentoring provides a better education than more expensive, formal training, because youth get real-life on-the-job experience and build relationships that will help them earn a living in the future. Some students are already earning a commission from their labor.



Jitegemee students preparing for a camping trip

“Taking kids to mentors in the field is working better than taking kids to vocational schools for training,” Mike says. “They are doing really well because the learning is practical.”

It is a testament to the dedication of these young people - and to Jitege-

mee’s staff - that not one student has dropped out of this program. Mike and his fellow teachers are now recruiting the next class through outreach workshops that Mike holds for the town’s street kids. This new class will be guided under the same principle as the last: once you master a skill, you will repay the program by serving as a mentor for another generation of youth.

Jitegemee’s primary schools students are also thriving, thanks to government-subsidized lunch, which has prompted a great improvement in their grades. “This term, the results are quite encouraging,” Mike says. Jitegemee plans to continue to provide free lunch for all our primary school children when this vital subsidy runs out.

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Jitegemee plan is to help them by finding working mentors and lending basic tools. In exchange for their training, they are expected to help future Jitegemee vocational students.

On our second day, we met the parents at a picnic in St. Mary's schoolyard. Introductions were done, thanks were given all around, programs were discussed, problems were brought up, and songs were sung to blend it all together. Some of the parents are attending classes and some are making strides in speaking English. It was a great idea to get the parents involved, and an even greater idea to take them camping with the kids so they could help with the heavy task of food service!



George Stockman with Jitegemee Kids

On a Wednesday about 100 students, parents, and staff met at headquarters to board two buses for the 4 hour trip to Nakuru. We were going camping to see a million flamingoes and other animals, to sing, run, jump, dance, write essays, and mostly to bond to each other and our common goals. It could have been a tough trip with all the glitches, but there were few complaints. The students were very well-behaved. Biting safari ants chased us out of our first campsite and we arrived at the new site when it was getting dark. But, it was a better site, and the parents were good at cooking in the late evening and the older boys were skillful at pitching the tents. Puzzled baboons convened around our camp each morning to study how well our group got along.

There are lots of photos and video documenting a good camping trip.

Some of you may have seen the story of Muli Kieti, an orphan, on Jitegemee's Web site. Here is an update. Muli is no longer 10, but 16, and is near the top of his class in a prestigious academic boarding school in Machakos. He is studying physics, math, and chemistry and hopes to be a surgeon someday. I'm happy to take some small part in this and so should you be. Muli gave me a tour of his home and neighborhood and guided me to two other children's' homes as well. He even learned to use my video camera, and to shoot footage himself.

Muli is just one of several students I got to know during the visit. I also got to know Agnes Kavita, Muthoki Kiilu, and Muthoki Masive, who are doing well at that school. Muthoki Kiilu has the top rank in the school and wears an orange badge on her blue uniform to show that. Of course, each Jitegemee student has his or her own character, interests, and accomplishments. Many of them are doing well.

We have a great staff in Machakos and are getting good support from parents. Contacts and alliances are being made and we are trying to acquire new quarters. A larger classroom is needed for our classes and to keep all our students together, especially for a mealtime each day. (A hungry kid has trouble concentrating.) We dream of getting a few computers on the Internet as well - I'm sure that students themselves can learn to keep such a facility going. They can help cook too.

I enjoyed the Jitegemee kids more in real life than in the photos and am more confident in the program having seen it in action. I hope to go back in the future to continue to look after our investment in these kids. And, probably Muli will fix my bad knee.

George Stockman is a professor of computer science at Michigan State University and a generous donor to Jitegemee. He is also Farah's dad.

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Jitegemee is also developing internships for our secondary school scholars during their vacations. We hope that our students will soon volunteer in hospitals, law offices, or other institutions to prepare themselves for life after graduation.



Jitegemee girls learn how to make clothes

Jitegemee would like to offer a special thanks to a group of interested professionals in Machakos who have formed our local advisory board, providing guidance, advice, and support. We would also like to express our deep gratitude to Safaricom, a Kenyan cell phone company that has given us a grant to help fund our vocational program.

A huge thanks, too, to all the donors who contributed in winter of 2004, and the generous foundation that offered a matching grant for those contributions. We can't thank you enough for this crucial gift.

2005 is still full of challenges. Our greatest difficulty is still the search for a permanent site for our classroom, office, library and kitchen. We thought the hunt was over in the fall, when the municipal council promised us a building. But the place they had in mind is too far away. We found another place, which is perfect, but the price is steep at \$250 a month. We are continuing to explore all options. Your donations will go a long way to making this move a reality.

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MY LIFE IN JITEGEMEE

Eric Mutaki Kabwere, age 17, vocational program – carpentry

When I was in the streets, I used to be a drug-seller. I sold drugs such as bhang (marijuana) and other illegal drugs. But now I stopped that illegal business. Before I joined this vocational training, I was a deadly thief. I could snatch handbags from ladies and run with it. But now I changed that behavior. When I was in the streets I did not know how to communicate without hurting anyone. But now I can communicate without hurting anyone. I hope to make my living by making and selling furniture. I chose this work because I am interested in it. In fact, it is the favorite job which I do feel inside my heart.

Sarah Mwelu Joseph, age 17, vocational program – hairdressing

When I was in the streets I had a difficult life e. g. lack of food, lack of protection. Even I used to sleep there in the street. People used to abuse me, also I used drugs like marijuana, etc. But now I'm feeling good here in vocational because of free lunch, free education and free trips and now I'm rehabilitated. Now I help my family by showing them how they can work together and how they can talk to young persons like us. I hope after completing my training that will make me live a better life in the field of hairdressing, which I personally like with my whole heart.

Muasya Peter, age 14, St. Mary's Mixed Primary School

I hope in my life to be a doctor, but this will happen only when I put more effort in my education. After completing my primary, I want to go to a national school. Then after completing my secondary I wish to go to University. After completing my university, I wish I will get employed in a hospital and I will be helping other people. (Muasya is first in his class.)

Kyalo Johnstone, age 18, Ngelani Secondary School

In school, boredom is not necessary because all the time one thinks of reading, revising the work given by teachers and even engage in games to relax the mind. Since I have no family, I have some relatives whom I help on the farm and, at the end of the day, I'm paid in food which I take back to my grandmother because she is the only one I'm left with.

Wavinya Musyoki, age 13, Iluvya Primary School

The best thing about being in Jitegemee is...the love I receive from Jitegemee staff members.