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29 June 2020

**Your sponsorship for SOS Children's Village Eldoret**

Dear Sir or Madam,

Greetings and I am happy to thank you for your generosity towards SOS Children's Village Eldoret. We have accomplished our goals for the first half of the year.

The daily lives of families around the world have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The families living in the village are no different. SOS Children's Villages Kenya is following the guidance of the World Health Organization and national authorities to protect them.



Samuel feeding chicken

At the time that this letter was prepared, travel to the villages was restricted as a safety measure. In this letter, I would like to tell you about how the children and families have been adjusting to these changes.

My beautiful home

Seneipei\* who speaks on behalf of the other children tells me, 'Our mothers have taught us that if you cannot go back and change your beginning; you can start where you are and change the ending.' I thought 'wow' what a challenge and motivation for us children, she adds. Thanks to the SOS mothers who are doing a great job in teaching the children many things including the COVID-19 pandemic precaution measures.



Children and their SOS mother enjoying an afternoon together

It was hard at the beginning for the children to remember about social distance, wearing the masks, and washing their hands. However, they have now learned how important it is for them to take preventive measures. I would like to assure you that all the children and young people are keeping safe and following the government's directives.



### Learning from home

It has been a time where children are warming up to a new form of learning, which, they have found everything interesting. Thanks to online platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, emails, and video, the teachers can continue with their termly lessons. Through this medium, the children sat for the end of term examination.

On the other hand, they miss their classmates; occasionally they can call each other. For sure, this is a moment where life is teaching us that action is the best teacher. John's\* mother tells me, 'The new online learning is good; children actively do their homework and send it to their teachers for marking. Once the responses have been sent back, they all surround me anxiously waiting to hear what the teacher has said.'

### My free moments

It is a pleasure for me to say children's playtime has been full of fun. They have been able to unwind from their busy school schedule. Reading storybooks, watching children, and teen programs. By the way that is not all, there are physical games and playing with Legos which they find enjoyable. Arts and crafts have also been part of their daily program.

Others have ventured into their hobbies as per their interest. Some of them are spectators in various activities and you hear lots of laughter from outside. You can imagine the stories they share once they are back home. John\* calls out his SOS mother as he enters the house and says, 'I am back, oh my legs are tired, today I have enjoyed playing football and scored many goals.'

### A gift for my children

Teaching the children in the village basic life skills is an important and sure gift. The mothers and the children have been working in their kitchen garden. So far, they have planted maize, beans, carrots, vegetables, and potatoes. Furthermore, some of the families are rearing chicken.

John who is 17 years old loves farming and often tells his SOS mother, Mum I love the Chinese proverb that says, 'learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.' When the schools open, I will be the champion for my farm project. Thank you, mum! A million times you have taught me a lot.'

The following story is about the children we support in the community. It happened at the end of 2019.

### Beaming with Joy

The greatest gift the children had was a Christmas party. Dick beaming with much joy said, 'Oh what a day, for the first time I swung on the swing and monkey bar, these playthings I see from a distance. I enjoyed my time away from home, I feel relaxed. The food was



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yummy! I have kept my bar of chocolate, which I am taking with me so that I can share, with my mother and siblings.'

While to most of us, it seems normal to have a party that was not the case for the 42 children who attended the party. By the way, did you also enjoy the Christmas party when you were young? The children were happy and went home overjoyed. Thank you for touching the hearts of these children.

The village funded 42 children in areas of education and psycho-social support. I am happy that children living in the community enjoy the support received from the village. With the help that you have extended to us, we can give them a better chance in life and for this, we are grateful.

#### Child's best interest

Child care reforms are becoming an increasingly important trend worldwide. Many countries, including Kenya, are discussing child care reforms and quality community-based alternative care for children without parental care, or those at risk of losing it. The government is reviewing child care legislation and has conducted a care system assessment which has highlighted gaps to address.

SOS Children's Villages Kenya is working with the government and other organizations on this care reform strategy. This will mean that, if it is in their best interest, children in our care may return to live with their families and communities of origin. Each case will be considered individually, and support will be offered to families and communities. We will keep you informed if this affects your sponsored child.

You truly made a difference in the lives of 150 children here at SOS Children's Village Eldoret, and I am extremely grateful!

\*For privacy reasons, we have changed the names of the children.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gladys Mumbi'.

Gladys Mumbi  
National Sponsorship Co-ordinator