

NEW HOPE EDUCATION CENTRE

Soweto, Kenya.

Newsletter

February, 2026



Above: **GEOFFREY OKELLO**

Deputy Head Teacher at New Hope Education Centre.

See his letter printed in this newsletter.

Eighty two children have a sponsor so that their school fees are paid but there are many others whose parents are unable to pay for school fees.

Some of these are at New Hope school but there are hundreds more living in the slum district of Soweto who don't go to school. \$35 - \$45 per month will ensure these children a place at New Hope Ed Centre.

If you would like to donate to any of the needs mentioned in this newsletter or would like to sponsor a child, please contact:

Janet Thornthwaite

Ph: 0438 606319 or

janet_thornthwaite@bigpond.com

Thank you!



NEW FACES AT NEW HOPE: L-R: Emmanuel, Reagan, Philistas and Sarah

These young students were enrolled in other schools but unable to attend last year due to unpaid school fees. Ps Edward says "Reagan and Philistas have come from the village where they were living with their grandmother but she is unable to care for them due to lack. Their parents have died, as have Sarah's parents, and they are now all living with their Aunt Beatrice." School Director, Edward has offered them a place at New Hope school. "We have been offering them food because they have been going hungry during lunch time since they joined us. They are all praying for a sponsor". Meanwhile, they are being lovingly included in the New Hope family as they adjust to their new lives.

JSS children transfer to High School for Grade 10, 11 and 12:

School Director Edward Owino says: "I have met with all the students to help them navigate their way forward in transferring to Senior High School. Some were offered boarding schools several hundred kilometres from Nairobi. They will all return to New Hope and their families at the end of each term. Others have been enrolled in the best 'day' schools around Nairobi. All continue to be mentored and counselled by the Ps Edward and New Hope Church.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES have now received their exam results and have gained their Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education Edward says, "We are deeply thankful to every donor who chose to sponsor a child. Together, you helped us celebrate a major milestone. You are part of the New Hope family and we deeply value this connection. Three students, Sheila Atieno, Adrian Ndereba and Jane Thomas (pictured right) attained grades that will ensure them a place at University later in the year. Others are looking at courses to help them gain skills in the hope that they can become independent and find sustainable livelihoods.



Empowering Women with Practical Skills

PRISCIA is hoping to support herself and her children after receiving a donation of \$100 to start a business selling Mandezi cakes.

BEATRICE MAPESA is busy with many sewing projects after receiving her new sewing machine. She also hopes to start a 'liquid soap' business.

Other mothers who have been unable to find regular employment, are hoping and praying for an opportunity to also start their own business.

I asked Pastor Edward if one of New Hope's teachers could write an article for this month's newsletter, to tell us about any changes they may have seen over the past few years. I am so pleased that Teacher Geoffrey has responded to the challenge. He has given us his thoughts in this inspiring and emotive letter. It gives us a glimpse of his life as a teacher and his love for the children who are learning at New Hoped Ed. Centre. Janet (My notations in red)

Dear Mrs Janet

I joined New Hope Education Centre on 10th January 2020 as a teacher. When I came to the school, the building construction had not been completed. We had difficult times with learners during rainy seasons as some classrooms were leaking due to the roof not being completed. We now thank God for the completion of the building. At that time, the payment for teachers was very low. I was earning just 9,000 Kenyan shillings (\$98 per month) but because I had such respect and love for the children I taught, I was happy to serve with this little pay.

When the corona virus pandemic was announced in Kenya and schools were closed, I was worried about how I would survive and pay my bills. But our School Director, Apostle Edward stood with the staff and other families that were affected. He managed to pay my rent of Ksh 3,000 (\$33) every month and he supported us with some food shopping for almost two years.

As the years went by, Edward took me as his son. He started mentoring me in different areas so that I could fill his position whenever he was not around. Now New Hope is in my blood. The school has grown and has become admirable in our society. Staff payments have increased, (I am now earning 180,000/- (\$190 per month). Parents are bringing their children to our school because we have spacious classrooms, a very clean environment and committed teachers. With the commitment Apostle Edward saw in me, I was appointed as the school Deputy Head Teacher. He helped me get my college certificate by paying my college fee arrears from 2021 to 2025. I thank God for that miracle.

At the moment we have a project introduced in school to feed vulnerable families. It is a pleasure to be in charge of the project for seven months now. We give rice, cooking oil, soap, maize flour and milk to children suffering from malnutrition.

The school also has a lunch program but I find it difficult when I see many children who are without something to eat. This situation forces our School Director to stretch out his arms to feed some children who cannot pay anything to support the program (60 cents for lunch). It pains me a lot seeing a child coming from home without food, staying hungry from morning to evening. As a school we are praying that God will give us more donors who can support our lunch program.

We also have children who come from far away, trekking for almost 1 hour to get to school. They arrive tired and exhausted. We are also praying that help will come for us to buy a school van and even making the school have sustainable payments for teachers. I have a dream of buying a car that I can use to get some extra cash so that I can also support needy children.

I desire that one day God will help me to support needy children the way Apostle Edward does.

Thank you and the Australian supporters very much for your continued support for all these years. Your love and passion for us has not been in vain. I assure you that I will serve the school with dignity for as many years as possible if God allows.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Okello
Deputy Head Teacher



MILK SUPPLEMENT:

Two young girls, Precious and Sarah, who have both shown signs of malnutrition, will be given a carton of milk to drink three times a week. Ps Edward says there are other children who "appear weak" who will be added to the program. Pictured above: Precious has yellowing and thinning hair, indicative of malnutrition.



Above: Sarah is in Gr 6 but has not grown due to poor nutrition.



GDG is a Brisbane-based, Australian government development organisation providing management, together with our Australian partners, Janet and Mark Thornthwaite, for New Hope Ed Centre Projects J786N and J786NA.