

SEPTEMBER 2024

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DIFFERENCE



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Breaking cycles of violence

The 2019 Violence Against Children survey in Kenya found 46% of females and 56% of males have experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional violence during their childhood.* This alarming statistic reinforces BEAM Kenya's desire to work in partnership with schools, communities, families, and other organizations to create the safe environments all children deserve.

We recently hosted a team of 25 people from a neighboring city to train on child safety. The purpose of BEAM's child safety training is to increase awareness, empowerment, and transparency. We began our time by focusing on the problem of child abuse and discussing the prevalence across all races, genders, religions, and continents. We engaged in thoughtful conversations about the relevance of this issue in our local contexts and the impact abuse has on the development of a child.

During the second half of the training, we talked about the power we have at an organizational level to protect children. Some of the key ways an organization can minimize risk of abuse is to ensure proper governance, create clear expectations for staff through a code of conduct and well defined policies, understand and manage the risk within the organization, and train both staff and children on child safety.

Our hope is that—through dialogue, partnership, awareness, and training—communities, individuals, and organizations will feel empowered knowing that they have the tools needed to break cycles of violence and protect children.

Together in hope,
Colleen Costigan
Founder & International Director

*Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Kenya, Department of Children's Services. Violence against Children in Kenya: Findings from a National Survey, 2019. Nairobi, Kenya: 2019

EXTRACURRICULAR FUN



Brian & Chess



Dan & Volleyball



Farida & Soccer



Harriet & Singing



In seventh grade, Brian learned how to play chess. Throughout his freshman year of high school, he competed in school tournaments but didn't advance very far—something he took as a challenge to improve. This year, he competed in the Kenya National Schools Championship to face off against other chess players from all over Kenya. Brian won six of his eight games, placing 29th out of 500 students and qualifying to attend a chess championship in Brazil.

Initially, Dan wasn't very interested in volleyball and had little experience with the sport. But this past January, the volleyball coach at his school saw something special in Dan, encouraging him to give the sport a try. Dan began practicing and competing with his school. At the end of the season, Dan and his team received certificates from the Kenya Primary Schools Sports Association for being first place in the boys' volleyball sub-county championship.



Farida is a soccer star and regional soccer champion. Her athletic prowess and stellar performance at the county level led to her selection as a defender for the Uasin Gishu County team. This meant her traveling to another county and spending five days competing in tournaments. Although her team didn't qualify to continue to the national level, the growth that comes from this experience is immeasurable.

Harriet didn't realize she had a talent for singing until she joined a singing club when she began high school last January. The singing club practices weekly and mastered three songs—*Equity Anthem*, *Hongera Kwa Wanamitandao*, and *Afadhali Yesu*—for the county competition, where the club placed second and qualified for the regional singing competition.



BEAM HIGHLIGHTS



Student highlight

Yvonne is being raised by a single mother who struggled to pay for her and her siblings' school tuition by brewing illicit alcohol. Yvonne worked hard in the public education system and excelled as the top student in her class. She was given a scholarship through BEAM to join high school. Yvonne stayed focused and scored an impressive A- grade on her Kenya National Exam for secondary school. National exams are quite arduous and have implications on a student's higher education trajectory.

Not only is Yvonne the highest performing high school graduate BEAM Kenya has had so far, she was number three in the county, which earned her a laptop. Because of her strong academic performance, she has qualified to study pharmacy at a well known university in Kenya.

Mumbi* is a 15-year-old girl in seventh grade and the firstborn of three children. Both her mother and stepfather struggle with alcohol addiction, and she has no knowledge of her biological father—something that has impacted her greatly.

While still living with her mother and stepfather, she used to witness them fighting, verbally and physically abusing each other. Her mother exhibited other inappropriate behavior at home, leading to Mumbi stepping in as caretaker for her younger siblings. Her mother denied her the right to basic needs, including education—and because she could not keep up with school tuition fees, Mumbi often was out of school.

After one particularly physically and verbally abusive incident, Mumbi's mother chased her out of the house around midnight. She ran to her aunt's home for safety, but her aunt could not take on the extra expense of supporting her. Mumbi felt hopeless and emotionally unstable, locking herself in the house and unable to socialize with her peers because they were in school. She experienced suicidal ideation and stayed out of school for a long period of time.

Mumbi finally had the opportunity to pursue an education without worrying about the financial burden of tuition when she was given an academic scholarship through BEAM Kenya. Currently, she attends ongoing counseling sessions to work through her childhood trauma and support her healing journey. She has been able to focus more and begin to dream again, like any other teenager.

Mumbi aspires to be a musician in the future and hopes to touch the lives of other people through her music.

* Name changed for privacy



Counseling highlight



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Words of thanks

"Your sponsorship has not only alleviated the financial burden of my education but has also allowed me to focus more on my studies and pursue my goals without hesitation. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities your sponsorship has provided me. It has enabled me to access resources, participate in meaningful experiences, and engage in activities that have enriched my learning experience beyond the classroom. Your investment in my education is an investment in my future, and I am committed to making the most of it."

Ruth, who recently completed her associate degree in social work and community development

Interested in visiting Kenya?

Last May, we welcomed back Barbara Costigan, dedicated advocate and mother of BEAM's founder, Colleen. She was the first donor to give toward a scholarship to the late Faith Cherop, and she has seen BEAM grow to what it is today: an organization that supports academic scholarships for 100 children and mental health services for thousands.

"Every trip to Kenya has been magical for me—each one for different reasons," Barbara said. "My last trip in May was the longest, one month, and my goal was to tag along with Colleen and her family as they worked and played. The work that BEAM does continues to amaze me. They continue to grow and rise to the challenges presented. I love that each child in their program is treated as the unique individual they are. The staff are hard workers with big hearts. Everyone is so hospitable and welcoming. Arrange a visit, and you will fall in love with Kenya and the Kenyan people."



Interested in a visit to Kenya? We would love to welcome you!
Contact Colleen at colleen@beamkenya.org to hear more about visiting us and even go on a safari. *Karibuni sana!*