

2017...WHAT A YEAR

Dear Hamomi Family,

2017 was a year of some real tests. Uncontrollable forces shook up our norms and we needed to rise to the occasion. Kenya had a year of intense inflation, food shortages and political instability. These all took a toll on our budget and security. Yet so many of you stepped up to contribute to the matching pool this summer, and we made it through the Fall.

Hamomi has a strong history of making difficult decisions. We always keep our longevity in mind and that has allowed us to be agile enough to survive this difficult year. Not only survive, but thrive! Some of our major wins include:

- Our **first university graduates** – meaning first students to complete our programs from primary school graduate to college graduate.
- Collins Muthoki and Harriet Kagai stepped into their roles as Hamomi Primary School Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster. They have been **excelling and building relationships** across the community.
- Hamomi **parent engagement** is at an all-time high. Our long-term vision includes sustaining upkeep as a volunteer community. While that sounds like a simple utopian concept, to many living in poverty that sounds insane. We're funded by foreign people who all have (in their minds) bottomless amount of money, and we're asking them work for free?! Building a volunteer community takes trust and buy-in. This year was a turning point in that work. We developed high expectations for our parents. We empowered them on a whole new level. This year, parents attended parent-teacher conferences every term, they arranged getting their children to and from school every day, and they worked with us on many occasions to resolve community issues. Parents are learning that Hamomi's success relies on their active involvement. In January 2018, we launch the **Hamomi PTA**.
- Tender Mercies Kenya **saved us during a food crisis** through food donations. We are seeking long-term partnerships with organizations like theirs who will help us eliminate our reliance on fundraising for our feeding program by donating the food directly. This was an excellent start.
- One of our high school graduates qualified for the **National Youth Service**, which is a government program to teach trades like carpentry and plumbing to academically low-performing youth. A young man who was set up to be left behind is now thriving and certain of his ability to earn a living.
- **Four** of our high school graduates earned HELB grants, which means they are now **attending university for FREE**. They sure earned it with stellar performance both in Hamomi Primary School and through high school in the Hamomi Scholarship Program. We are so proud of them (and our teaching staff).

We don't think of the above wins as financial wins, because these are children's lives we're talking about. *However*, it is exciting that our wins have been designed with a vision of sustainability. Each of these wins lowered our operating costs, making us more able to sustain as difficulty in Kenya creeps up.

Visit www.Hamomi.org to learn more and to donate by card or e-check.

It's our
TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Join us in celebrating that milestone on Feb 10, 2018.

Consider being a Hero
by being a Table Captain

Let's fill up that room and launch Hamomi into 2018

Donate early to reserve your seat at a discount!

A fun note on donating early
~25% of our annual costs are paid in the first month of the year. It's a calendar year school year, so in January we pay for all scholarship fees & Primary School supplies.
Donating early
MEANS THE WORLD!

That creeping difficulty has been intense though. Nobody has felt the pressure of it stronger than our Executive Director, Joy Nafungo. Some months this last year we cut it close, making our budget just barely. Struggling to pay our teacher's salaries, buy our medical clinic supplies, pay our scholarship school fees. And still, Joy remained calm, clear-headed and ambitious.

Joy made a strong decision this week. With money tight, we entered our 2018 budget planning sessions with some of the hardest choices we've ever had to make. Would we end our feeding program? Would we ax some scholarships? Would we close the medical clinic? Would we stop running our programs on Saturdays and holidays? We discussed this from many angles all year, and the time finally came to make the cuts.

The night before our first session, Joy sent me an email and in it she wrote:

"I have been thinking of how best to do this without kids losing out, especially after so much progress has been made the past 2 years. I'm still nervous about letting any of the teachers go, because that would mean some classes will have no teachers. That will definitely affect learning in a big way. I really don't want us to go down that route for now Susie...the kids need these teachers so much. As I told you earlier, I had no plans of accepting the UNICEF offer. However I'm looking at where we are financially and I'm thinking perhaps I should just accept the offer as we continue to grow Hamomi. I'm ready to continue working for Hamomi as a volunteer starting January. That way, Hamomi will not pay me next year and we can cut down the budget

"As a volunteer, I will still commit to providing as much support as I can to Hamomi. Collins and Harriet are capable of running the day to day activities at the school. I will oversee and support them in ensuring they have all the necessities. I will continue working closely with high school and college students, ensuring their fees are paid and doing mentorship workshops with them. People in Nairobi are becoming aware of what we do at Hamomi and I oversee several partnerships cropping out of this next year. I have been attending several networking meetings to speak about what we do. I plan to continue doing this. Basically the only thing that will change is I will not be at the centre on a daily basis, however I will still be ensuring everything runs smoothly."

After much discussion about logistics, it's official. Joy will become a volunteer Executive Director in 2018. Joy's sacrifice is in the company of so many sacrifices over the years. Sacrifices made by many of you reading this letter right now. You have seen and felt the same thing we do, and joined us. And the more we all make these sacrifices together, and encourage others to join us, the less the burden is on any one of us individually.

In solidarity with Joy, I pledge to cover 50% of the Hamomi Benefit costs out of pocket to drive down our overhead to as low as a tax-deductible project can possibly get (5%). Your donation will continue to be an investment directly into the dream of Hamomi.

As you make your end-of-year decisions, we hope you will consider us.

In Love and Solidarity,

Susie Marks
Board Member and Founder



Visit www.Hamomi.org to learn more and to donate by card or e-check.