

**Mission...what we do**

Provide education and support for Nairobi children living in poverty whose families are affected by HIV/AIDS so they can transform their lives. Friends of Ngong Road pairs each sponsor with a specific child allowing for a mutually beneficial relationship to develop.

# Friends of NGONG ROAD Newsletter

**Move to New Office Creates Improved Library Space**

Libraries are a fixture in communities of every size in the U.S. Not in Kenya! In all of Nairobi (a city of about three million), there are only three lending libraries and all of them are affiliated with universities.

**First Attempt in 2008**

We have been working since early 2008 to develop an inviting lending library for the children of Ngong Road. After we received a generous anonymous donation in January of 2008 we found a room at City Prime Academy and established our first library. We used our initial funding to buy the supplemental books used for instruction along with a few pleasure books. However, we observed that few students were using the library. There was no structure for borrowing books and the Kenyan staff could not envision how this would work. When asked whether they had ever borrowed a book from a library only Peter Ndungu, our Executive Director, was able to say yes. And that was when he studied in the U.S.

**New Start in 2009**

We realized we needed to do more work! In March 2009 we added over 400 pleasure reading books which we carried to Kenya. And with leadership by Rachel Durfee, a young volunteer from the U.S., we re-launched the library. We read to the children,

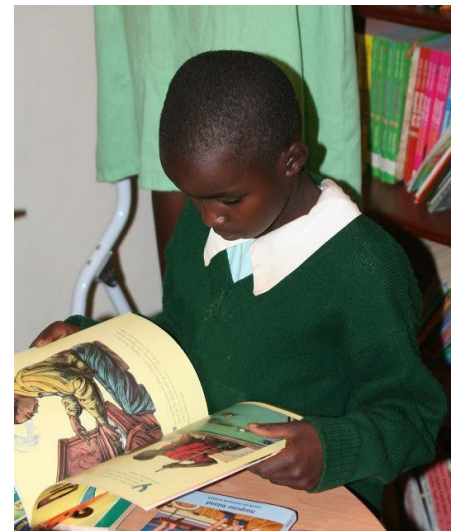


Beatrice helping children in the busy new library

taught them the rules of a lending library and allowed older children to check out books. We were thrilled to learn that all the books were safely returned.

**New Space = Tighter Control**

In May, Ngong Road Children Association moved into a larger office space and has allocated a room for the library. We also received another donation that allowed us to buy additional furniture and bookcases. Children are now able to visit the library on Saturdays to borrow a book to read for pleasure or school. We expect to expand the library over time and thereby build a reading culture in our program.



Reading is fun!



Paula and Leonora

**The Leonora Appeal Was A Success. Thank You!!**

In our last newsletter we told you about the plight of Leonora Akinyi, a young girl with a severe heart condition who needs surgery. The cost of this surgery is beyond our budget so we turned to you, our sponsors and friends, for help. Our goal was to raise \$2,000 which we quickly achieved.

Leonora is now preparing for her surgery. We have secured our grant from a charity for the costs beyond the \$2,000. Her surgery should be conducted in the next few weeks. Thank you very much for making this possible. And Leonora thanks you! **Page 1**

## Larger Student Population Leads to New Staffing Approach



Back (left to right): Veronica Mwangi, Naomi Kamanda, Mary Muriu, Peter Ndungu, Jackson Katunzi, Grace Akinyi  
Front (left to right): Margaret Njeri, Beatrice Theuri, Mercy Waiyego, Jackie Matarimo

Friends of Ngong Road now supports 225 children in Nairobi's Dagoretti area. Our staffing philosophy is to add staff slowly, using volunteers as extensively as possible both in the U.S. and in Kenya. We continue to do 100% of our work in the U.S. with volunteers allowing us to send all of the funds we raise to Kenya. However, when Board Members Karen Bohn and Paula Meyer visited the program in March 2009, they found a staff that was struggling to keep up with the workload. We worked with Executive Director Peter Ngundu and the entire staff in Kenya to develop a new approach.

### New Case Worker Teams Formed

Rather than have everyone responsible for all the children we have now pushed responsibility for all dimensions of the children's lives to four case worker teams. Each team is accountable for 50 to 60 children. Their job is to know each child's situation thoroughly, ensure follow-through on medical and educational issues, assist with letter-writing and communicate with each family about the program.

**Peter Ndungu** remains Executive Director of the program and **Beatrice Theuri** is the Office Administrator.

### Our New Case Worker Teams

**Naomi Kamanda** has been with the program since its inception.

She has completed high school and received certification in a program designed to enhance her skills as a case worker. She has also completed computer training. Naomi is assisted by **Jackson Katunzi**. Jackson is working to complete his high school education and has also been with the program since its inception as a volunteer. He leads many of the activities at the Saturday Program and helps with planning the vacation camp.

**Jackline Matarimo** has been an employee of the program for 18 months and worked as a full-time volunteer for a year before that. Jackline graduated from high school, received training in computer skills and is now enrolled part-time in the same case worker training program Naomi completed. Jackline is assisted by **Mercy Waiyego** who has been a volunteer for three months. She has completed high school and volunteered in a church-based project called Heart to Heart Orphans Ministry which works with the vulnerable children as well as rehabilitation of street boys.

**Mary Muriu** joined us in May this year. Before joining us she received certificates in community health care and in counseling psychology. She has taken computer courses as well as courses in food and beverage sales and service. She has also

completed a first aid course. Mary has volunteered at Rafiki Aids Ministry and also at Masaba Hospital as a health assistant. **Margaret Njeri**, has completed high school and volunteered with us for three months. She has been involved with promotion of B52 energy drink and volunteered as a church school teacher. She is currently enrolled at Kenya Polytechnic where she is studying accounting. She is also studying to complete a certificate in social work and community development.

**Veronica Mwangi** finished high school and then attended Inter-Global Training Institute to pursue a diploma in social work with the Kenya National Examination Council where she also learned computer skills. She has worked as a volunteer in the Ministry of Health on vaccination against polio and administering vitamin A. She also volunteered in vaccination against measles, voluntary counseling and testing. **Grace Akinyi** assists Veronica and has been involved with the program since its earliest days. All three of her children participate in the program. Grace has completed high school, is HIV+ and has received community AIDS worker training. She is most helpful in working with families whose members are infected with HIV/Aids.

# Notes from Paula

Friends of Ngong Road continues to grow and evolve as we work to provide education for children living in Nairobi's poor communities. We have two exciting new developments to report this summer and want to ask you to mark your calendars for this fall when Peter Ndungu will visit us here in the United States.

**Intern Program.** We have two interns from the U.S. in Nairobi, working to assist our staff in Kenya for about seven weeks this summer.



Paula with Emily



Lukas Olynyk has just completed his freshman year at Drake University in International Relations



Paul Walters has completed his first year at the Humphrey Institute, working on a masters degree in Public Policy.

Lukas and Paul both found grants to pay their travel and living expenses while in Kenya; our Kenyan board members have agreed to provide lodging. We hope this experiment will accomplish three objectives:

- Increase our capacity in Kenya
- Provide a rich learning experience for the interns
- Build lasting positive relationships between these interns and the people involved with Ngong Road Children Association

We'll report results in our next newsletter.

**Leaving City Prime Academy.** One of our focus schools, City Prime Academy, failed to live up to their obligations and was not providing a quality educational experience for our children. We have therefore dropped it as a focus school. The children who attended City Prime have transferred to newly-founded Nelson Mandela Academy. We have already seen an improvement in the quality of the education these children are receiving. And the administrators are eager to work with us and further improve their school.

**Endowment Fund.** Friends of Ngong Road, through a generous gift from an anonymous donor, has launched an Endowment Fund. The purpose of the Endowment Fund is to support operations of the program, although for the next several years we expect to allow the fund to grow. Although we are very early in the life of the organization, our Board of Directors concluded that building a financial structure to enhance our long-term ability to support our mission is a priority.

You too can contribute to the long term viability of our organization. When you review your will please consider making an estate gift to Friends of Ngong Road.

**Executive Director Peter Ndungu's Visit to U.S.** Peter Ndungu will visit the U.S. from September 14 through October 11. We plan to keep him very busy. Our goal is to have him meet every one of our sponsors in the U.S. The theme of our visit will be Voices of Ngong Road. We want to bring Ngong Road to life so you can get a clear idea of the profound impact your contribution is having! Please refer to the calendar of activities below and mark your calendar. If you would like to host an event when Peter is in the U.S. please contact me at [info@ngongroad.org](mailto:info@ngongroad.org).

Thank you,

**Paula Meyer, President,  
Friends of Ngong Road**

## Save The Date!

### Sponsor Updates Featuring Executive Director Peter Ngundu

Mona, Iowa	Wednesday, September 16	Evening
Decorah, Iowa	Thursday, September 17	Evening
Madison, Wisconsin	Friday, September 18	Evening
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Saturday, September 19	Evening
Minneapolis, Minnesota	Thursday, September 24	Early Evening
Minneapolis Student Event	Tuesday, October 6	TBA
Boston, Massachusetts	Thursday, October 8	Evening
Boston Student Event	Friday, October 11	TBA

More details will be coming soon. Please mark your calendars!

## **Letter From Nairobi**

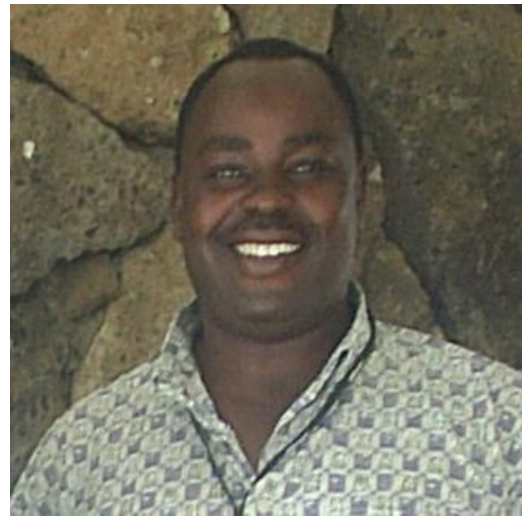
By Peter Ndungu  
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I have many good things to report from Ngong Road this quarter.

### **Move to new office and creation of the new library**

We are happy to start with a positive story. Ngong Road Children Association has moved to the new office. We now have our own compound which we have kept very well with some flowers growing in pots. It was a house made for a family use with three bedrooms and a large seating room area. The large seating room is now used as a reception area. The two other rooms which were meant for bedrooms are used as offices. One of them which is a larger room has office space for the four Case Workers and the other room is my office. The other final room is now used during the week for meeting with current guardians and parents and also new applicants. On Saturday it is used as a library for children to read and borrow books. Beatrice has been in charge of the library after having learnt the check-out system from Rachel who visited with Paula and Karen. We are very happy for the new office because it is serving us very well.



### **Intern program**

We are also glad to have the interns from U.S., Paul and Lukas, with us. We have organized so that they will stay in Board Member's homes during their two-month stay in Kenya. For the first two weeks they have been staying with me and now they will stay with Rachel Njeri who is a Board member for 10 days. They will later stay with Rose Lord for another 10 days and finally stay with Andrew Karani for 10 days after which they will participate in the August Vacation Camp and then head back to the U.S. This will give them a lot of experience as they stay with the different families since we have different cultures depending which tribe one comes from. So far they have been able to visit student's homes as well as sharing with the staff their knowledge of computers. They are looking forward to share more on use of the database, do a lot of photography as well as visiting schools to make video stories with the children and many more things that we expect them to do. They still have a lot to accomplish before leaving for the U.S, among them visiting boarding schools and helping with the Saturday Program. They are fun to be with and they have also integrated with life in Kenya very well.

### **New Case Worker teams and new approach to counseling**

Our Counselor Program has been changed to a Case Worker Program. We now have four Case Workers and four Volunteer Case Workers (VCWs). They are teamed up in groups of two. The Case Workers are full-time employees and the VCWs work eight days in a month. The VCWs normally come to the office on the days that they are scheduled and team up with their assigned Case Workers and visit each child's home and school. The teams will visit the between 50 and 60 children that they are assigned at least once within a given term. A school term is four months including the holiday months which are April, August and December. So far they have been able to visit about 100 homes and completed a few school visits. We have a staff meeting every Wednesday and the reports they are bringing is that the parents and guardians are very happy about their visits. The parents/guardians have also stated that they now understand our organization better than before since one of the reasons for the visits is to explain about our goals, learn about any concerns they may have and our expectations of the children that we are sponsoring. Work is so well organized that each Case Worker has their own computer and office space. We are thankful to Tom for coming all the way from the U.S last month to train the staff on the importance of the visits as well as the use of database.

### **My upcoming visit to USA**

I am very excited for my upcoming visit to the U.S. One reason for the excitement is that I will be able to thank those who have sponsored the children in our organization as well as being able to share about the work in Kenya and the importance of the sponsorship to the children. The lives of children in Kenya have been changed due to your sponsorships. I will be very happy to share stories and also be able to answer questions related to the work in Kenya. I therefore would like to take this opportunity to thank the Friends of Ngong Road family for the great efforts that have been done so far of saving one child at a time.

Thank you,

**Peter Ndungu**  
Executive Director, Ngong Road Children Association