

Celebrating 20 years of Sunshine



Twenty years ago, Footsteps trustees Martin and Mary Print accompanied Rev Simon Kinyanjui to a rubbish tip behind a hotel in Naivasha, Kenya, where a gang of street boys was sniffing glue and raiding the dump for leftovers.

The boys talked of their dreams for security, a warm, dry place to sleep,

and the opportunity to go back to school. The Sunshine Centre made their dreams come true.

Fifty-five needy street boys joined the newly-opened Centre in 2004, since when nearly 400 boys have passed through our care.

At a special 'Sunshine@20' service and celebration on Sunday 3rd March, 2024, we gave God thanks for

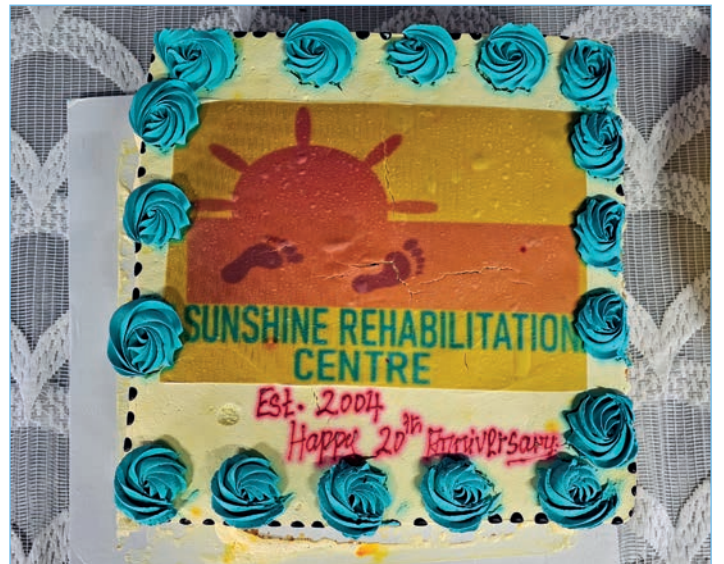
His providence, and recognised team members, including Rev Simon (photo below left) for 20 years of faithful service.

We were moved by a success story from Juma, one of the first intake of boys, who is now an expert welder and has a wife and three children. And, we had a lot of fun with the boys we currently care for.

See page 3 for more photos



Rev Patrick Muruga congratulates Sunshine Centre co-founder Rev Simon Kinyanjui for his 20 years of faithful service to street boys.



Street boys: this is my story...

Harsh economic conditions in Kenya have driven more children from home to the streets to try to survive. In January, we took in 29 new street boys, 25 of whom have chosen to stay at the Sunshine Centre. Here are some of their stories...



Derrick Thibiro (age 13)

“The house with no door was my home,” Derrick tells us. The house is a single room 10 feet square, with a concrete floor littered with used plastic bottles and containers. “The landlord took the door away to force us to leave, but we stayed here for two years,” he explains. “During that time I went to the streets to

find food.” Derrick’s eyes fill with tears as he recounts this awful story.

We discovered that his mother brewed illicit alcohol, and Derrick used to spend his days wandering the streets collecting bottles for her to fill. She also drank her own brew, so, fed up with her behaviour, the landlord removed the door to drive the family out.

Derrick then took us to the house where his mother and two sisters now live. There was no-one at home.

Derrick said he had never lived at this home because he came to the Sunshine Centre before his mother moved. There was a bed, and a couch with a bag of used plastic bottles that his mother had collected. A neighbour told us she was still drinking...



Stephen Kihuria (age 12)

“My mum does farming and other casual work and gets 250 KShs (£1.50) a day. Sometimes she only gets work on two days a week and sometimes she is paid with food instead of cash.”

Stephen’s mum Leah told us that her husband beat her and chased her from

her home, but her sister helped her find a place to live.

Stephen explains, “My mum couldn’t pay my school fees, so I went to the streets of Naivasha to collect scrap and plastic to sell. It took me four hours to walk there.”

Leah told us how worried she was because Stephen often stayed away

several nights in a row. The police found him on the streets and he was referred via the District Children’s Officer (DCO) to our Sunshine Centre. He is now in Grade 6 at Karai Primary School.

We asked Leah if she was happy that Stephen was in Sunshine? “Yes,” she replied, “education is more important than money.”

Fun@Sunshine@20...

After a four-hour thanksgiving service to celebrate the Sunshine Centre's 20th birthday, the boys were ready to have fun!

They enjoyed egg and spoon and sack races, keepy-uppy, crazy games and dancing.

The day finished with a football match which Sunshine lost 0-3, although, as the boys pointed out, the visiting team had provided the referee!



Fun@Hell's Gate, too..

The UK team's visit coincided with the school half-term holiday, providing an opportunity to take the Sunshine Boys to the beautiful Hell's Gate National Park.

The boys were very excited to see

giraffes, buffaloes and zebras (many boys had not seen them before). They were then given a guided walk to the gorge which is famous for being the setting that inspired the first Lion King film. This had little impact on the boys who had not seen

the film, but caused much excitement and discussion among the UK team members.

Rikke Bondi was inspired to sing the Hakuna Mata (No Worries) song with some of the older boys!



Peas on earth, and goodwill...

Former street boy John Wainaina has completed his college agriculture course and is farming 2 acres of land commercially, employing ten people part time to help him. Next time you visit the supermarket, look out for sugar snap peas grown in Kenya - John may have grown them.

We arrived at Ndunyu Njeru to find an area of rich farmland at the foot of the Aberdare mountains where we met former street boy John Wainaina. John came to the Sunshine Centre in 2009 and we supported him while he took a diploma in agriculture at Meru University of Science and Technology.



John escorted the team of UK visitors round his rented 2 acres of land on which he is growing sugar snap peas for the export market. He explained that he had chosen sugar snaps because they were disease resistant. However, they do need a lot of care and attention, as the leaves and peas have to be tied up off the ground,

and the soil has to be weeded regularly to stop the weeds competing with the peas.

John explained that he is hiring up to 10 workers to help him, paying them 400 KShs (£2.50) per day which is above the norm. The peas are collected by wholesalers who sell them into European markets.

John told us how poverty at home drove him to the streets at the age of 7. He had been on the streets for three years when he met Sunshine Centre's Mama Chege who asked him to tell his life story. "I had not eaten for two days, so I said to Mama Chege, 'Buy me food, then I will tell you my story.' So she gave me lots of food and I told her my story."

He told us that he always reaches out to the poor and needy, and he has given food and casual work to young men to stop them going to the streets in the way he did.

"I have a vision that one day I will have a farm of my own – the Sunshine Farm," he tells us as we say farewell."

Rikke meets her sponsored boys



Rikke and her family have been sponsoring two former street boys for several years, exchanging their news by letter.

In March, travelling as part of the UK team, she was able to meet and chat with both boys who were very interested to see the photos of Rikke's family, especially their skiing holiday in Norway.

Stanley (left) came to the Sunshine Centre in 2018; he is 18 years old but has only just started secondary school.

Brian (right) spent time on the streets begging for money and food before coming to Sunshine in 2009. He is now in Form 2 at Nyondia Secondary school.



Now we have hope and a future...

Street boys live a life of hunger and danger. Out of school, they have no hope for their future. Our Sunshine Centre changes all that. Here are four former street boys whose lives have been transformed by the care they received at Sunshine...



Juma (above, left) was one of the first street boys to come to the Sunshine centre when it opened in 2004.

Working with **Macharia** (another former street boy), Juma earns his living as a master welder, and has a wife and three children. The photo shows the young men finishing security rails for a new building project.



Joseph Kiiru, remembers being on the streets: "I used to sniff glue, smoke and take any kind of drugs in town. I was very hopeless, someone with no destiny."

Today he is working as a lab technician at Naivasha Day School. "I am married," he tells us, "but no children...yet!"



Samuel Kamau laughs as he tells us about the first customers at his barber's shop. "My first customers ran away because I did such a bad job on them. But now I have more skill!"

With no living parents and an abusive grandmother, Samuel spent several years on the streets before coming to Sunshine in 2012.

Solar energy cuts soaring electricity bills

People don't usually smile when they get their electricity bills.

But Sunshine Centre's Simon Kuria (below left) and Naivasha polytechnic's George Otieno (below right) have started to look forward to getting them as they are

showing that mains electricity costs have plummeted since the solar energy systems were installed.

Kenya's mains electricity costs have been rocketing in the past couple of years, but,

with the help of a generous donor, the newly installed systems are providing free power during the day, with batteries keeping the lights on at night (especially important for security).



Feeding spiritually...



Sixteen Sunshine boys have completed the discipleship course run by Pastor Joseph Ndungu and were baptised at the AIC Agape church, Naivasha.

The day was bright and sunny, and before the baptisms commenced, Sunshine staff

member Kamau had to fish out a variety of wildlife that was swimming in the rather cool water of the outside baptistry.

As he pulled out a worm, one of our former street boys remarked, "I used to eat those!"

Several of the boys' parents turned up to witness their sons taking this step forward in their Christian faith.

The sixteen boys were awarded their baptism certificates later in the day during the Sunshine@20 celebrations.

Church on the Rock school students make Jesus 'come alive'



The children at Church on the Rock school entertained the UK team and their fellow-pupils with a series of dramatic sketches covering famous stories from both the old and new testaments.

Dressed up in colourful clothes and make-up, the children had been trained by Michael Mutinda, a former pupil of the school who benefitted from the free school meals we provided, and went on to high school and university.

He is now teaching at the school and was delighted as we congratulated him on the brilliant drama.



Feeding physically...

In Nairobi...



Footsteps provides funding for lots of children in Kenya, helping them grow strong and encouraging them to come to school.

The smiles show how much the 200 children from the kwa Reuben slum enjoyed the lunch served for them at Church on the Rock School, Nairobi.

In Naivasha...



Footsteps sponsors a boy - Barnabas - at Kabati school. He is one of the 998 students who come from a large informal settlement on the edge of Naivasha whose parents struggle



to pay school fees and put food on the table for their children.

To encourage the children to keep coming to school, we agreed with the principal



Mr John Muiru to fund school meals for all 998 children for one day. The children were extremely excited, and we promised to do it again in the next two terms.

...and in Mombasa



Kenya experienced a sharp rise in prices of basic foods, causing hardship for poor families. In response, we increased our support for the lunch programme at the Tumaini Schools in Mombasa.

Six hundred children benefit each day from a free school meal, and Footsteps is funding one week each month.

The free lunches are important for children who are not sure if there will be food on the table when they get home.



Trees provide a living memory of Mary Print



We planted trees at the Sunshine street boys' centre and at the Lake Naivasha Crescent Camp to remember Mary Print - co-founder of Footsteps International. These were two of Mary's most favourite places on Earth, and we chose jacaranda trees whose brilliant blue flowers she loved.

We promised the hotel staff and Sunshine Boys that would be back soon to check how they are growing.



Special help for special children

With help from a generous donor we provided craft materials to help the development of the children who attend the Special Needs unit at Tumaini school in Mombasa.



Simon - master of child care

Sunshine Social Worker Simon Kuria has been awarded a Masters degree in Development Studies from St Paul's University, Limuru.

His achievement was all the more impressive as he completed his degree while working full time as a key member of the Sunshine Centre.

Congratulations, Simon!



Virtual Kenya Marafun 15 June 2024



Anyone - Anywhere - Anyway

www.justgiving.com/campaign/virtual-kenya-marafun-2024

On 15th June, our former street boys will be running round a course near the Sunshine Centre and would love to know you were taking part too.

You can run, walk, swim or cycle any distance you

choose, anywhere you want, and at whatever speed you are comfortable with.


Will you join us? Last year 554 people in 6 countries took part in the Virtual Kenya Marafun. This year we are aiming for more participants


(and more countries).


Please send us a photo of your Marafun to share with the Sunshine Boys, and raise some sponsorship. The **QR code and URL** above lead to the Virtual Kenya Marafun fundraising page.





Footsteps International in Kenya

 Transforms the lives of 155 former street boys at the Sunshine Centre, Naivasha

 Cares for 20 orphaned and abandoned children at the Tumaini Centre, Mombasa

 Strengthens education of 250 children in Nairobi's slums

 Helps train 550 young people in life-skills

 Supports 6 ultra-vulnerable families in Naivasha

We are delighted to receive single and regular donations in support of our work.

We work with trusted partners to ensure that donations actually get where they are needed.

We do not discriminate against any needy person on the grounds of their religion, tribe or nationality.

Footsteps is managed by trustees who are all unpaid volunteers, committed to putting their Christian faith into action.

This newsletter was compiled following the visit to our projects by trustees Wendy McMahon, Barrie Francis and Martin Print in March 2024.

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