

Sunshine eases survival struggle

Mother of 14 Jane Nyawera struggled to feed and educate her children, so Peter and Naftali went to the streets to survive. The boys are two of the nineteen street boys we gave places at the Sunshine Centre in January.

Jane Nyawira has had a hard life. After having 14 children, she left her abusive husband to try to survive as a single parent to her family.

Fracturing her hip in a fall made life even harder and Jane struggles to get to work packing vegetables, earning as little as 600 Kenya Shillings (£4) a week. Now she often sits at home in a plastic chair, in pain from her untreated injury.

Unable to pay school fees and struggling to buy food, two of her sons Peter (age 11) and Naftali (10) went on to the streets to try to earn money and find food. We asked them how much they earned working on the streets all day.

“Some days we might earn 50 shillings (30 pence); another day only 10 shillings (6 pence), the boys replied. “Sometimes we worked at night too.”

It was while they were scrounging for scrap metal to sell that Mama Chege - senior staff member at our Sunshine street boys rehabilitation centre - met Peter and Naftali, talked to them, and after hearing about the hardship they were experiencing at home, asked them if they would like a place at the Sunshine Centre.

“We said ‘yes’,” Peter told us. “We were on the streets with four other boys, but they didn’t come to Sunshine,” he adds.

What do you like at Sunshine, we asked the boys. “We eat well, we can go to school, we like football, and we have many friends,” came their reply. “And we like the playground, especially the swings.”

Turning to Jane, we asked if her older children helped her. She shook her head. “They only come if they are hungry and want food.”

As we got up to leave, Jane said quietly, “I am very grateful, and I thank God for caring for my two boys.”



Street boys: this is my story...

With the government children's department support, we gave places to 19 street boys in January. During their visit to Kenya in February, trustees Martin and Wendy Print visited homes to discover why young boys leave home to try to survive on the streets.



Brian Njuguna (age 15)

I was 8 years old when my mother died. My dad works on building sites and sometimes has to travel a long way to get work. If he can't find work, there is no food.

I dropped out of school in 2023, and then went to the streets to collect plastic. I earned 50 shillings (30 pence) a day. I like being at Sunshine. At school I like science and maths best.



Evans Ngugi (age 10)

My dad was very violent so my mum left him. Mum tried to look after me and my three sisters, but washing clothes doesn't give her enough money. We were often hungry.

I met Mama Chege when I was on the street collecting metal and plastic bottles. I could earn 20 shillings (12 pence) a day to buy small cakes to share with my family.

I am happy being in Sunshine. I like going to school, having shelter, having enough food and playing football. I like reading and writing. Mum is grateful and says 'Thank you, and God bless you.'

Wilson Kabuba (age 10)

It was a difficult visit for Wilson. When we arrived with him at his home - a mud and stick house with a rusty tin roof - his mother didn't answer the door.

Wilson went inside, and, after waiting 15 minutes, the door eventually opened, and Wilson's mother Peninah appeared bleary-eyed, leaning on the door frame for support. With slurred speech, she welcomed us inside, but was unable to tell us how she is managing, or where Wilson's other siblings were.

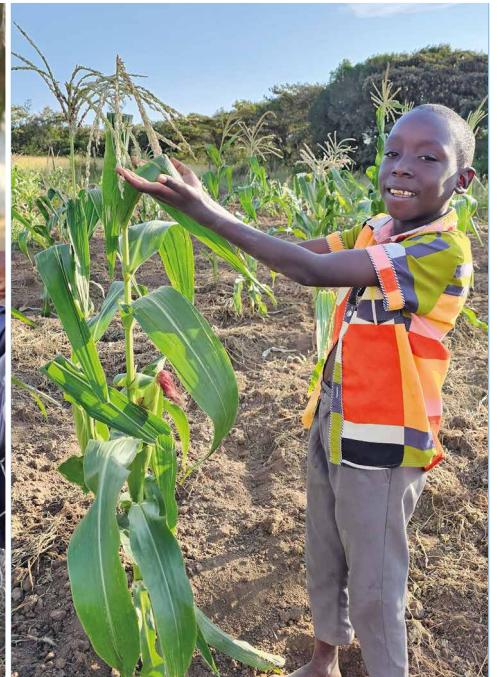
We encouraged Peninah to get out of bed and try to get some work to earn money for food for herself. She mumbled that she would try to wash clothes (we had seen some neighbours busy hand washing laundry outside in the yard while waiting for her to get out of bed). We weren't clear how she would manage to work, nor how she was managing to pay her rent.

Wilson was very sad and couldn't wait for us to leave and get back to the Sunshine Centre. "I am very happy at Sunshine," he told us.



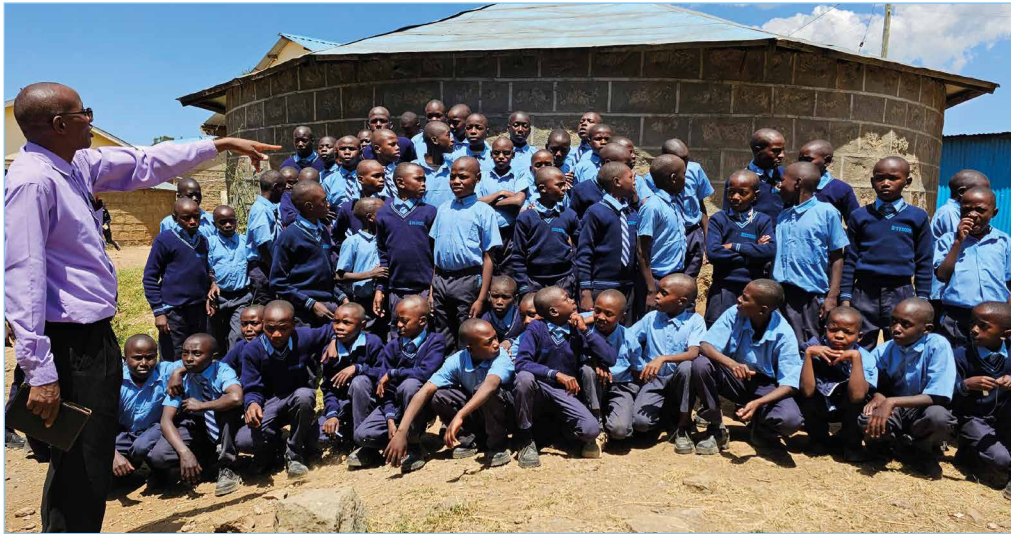
Sunshine is their happy place...

In February, we celebrated the 21st birthday of our Sunshine Centre. Since we opened, hundreds of street boys have found security, acceptance and loving care. Asked what they like best, the boys usually say the food and opportunity to go back to school. They also learn valuable life skills, doing their washing and helping on the farm.



Education for street boys...

Dropping out of school is usually the first step to being on the streets. Families with very little income have to choose between paying school costs or feeding their families. Food comes first. As boys grow and need more to eat, they spend their time on the streets looking for discarded food in the market and selling scrap metal and plastic to try to buy something to eat. Out of school, their long-term future is bleak.



Mr Charles Ngigi is an inspirational head teacher. As we talk to him, he excitedly tells us his plans to make his school a centre of excellence.

We were visiting Karai School, which is about a mile's walk from our Sunshine street boys rehabilitation Centre. 75 of our boys attend the school (it is important that they go to a local school so that they aren't isolated from the community).

Charles arranged the Sunshine boys in front of the school water tank for a photo. "We have never lacked water at this school since the [Christ First church] UK team provided this wonderful tank for us. The gutters let us collect lots of

water from the roofs when it rains," he explained.

We continued our tour of the school grounds as the head teacher told us of his plans to grow mango, avocado and lemon trees, and to develop an agricultural plot to teach the children how to grow useful crops. "We will grow aloe vera and herbs for curing illnesses," he enthuses. "We have water, and we can use drip hose to water the plants efficiently."

Former street boy Samwel Njihia (above with Sunshine staff member Father Dorm) is thriving - he is number one in a class of 107 at the school.

Vocational training for life skills...

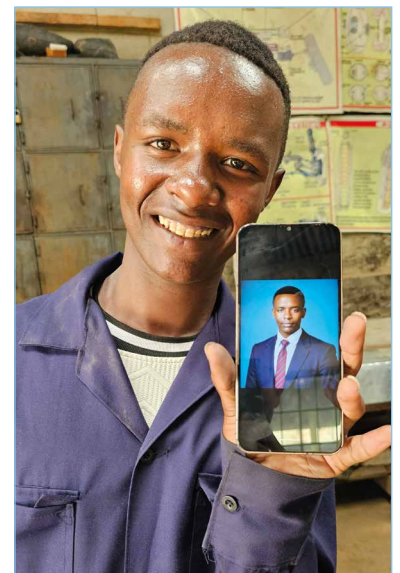


When our former street boys at the Sunshine Centre complete school, we don't cast them adrift. Instead, we support them into further education or training, giving them the best opportunity to succeed in the job market when they leave our care.

Godwin Wakoko (left) struggled at school, but is loving his automotive engineering course, proudly showing off the spark plug spanner he has just made (it worked - hence the big smile!).

Samwel Njuguna is enjoying the same course, and showed us a photo of himself in a neat suit and tie when we met him at Naivasha polytechnic.

Street boy? What street boy!



Free lunches help needy school kids...



Sheri (photo left) is a special friend. She attends the special needs unit at Tumaini School in Mombasa, and when Martin Print met her for the first time last year, she patiently taught him to count to three!

During February's visit, we met her as she was joining the queue for a free

school lunch - a delicious mix of beans and rice served by school cook Everlyne.

Footsteps funds the school lunches one week each month, helping Sheri (and 549 other children) stay healthy.

...and bursaries help too



Head teacher Mr Fondo brings a smile to the faces of Form 4 students at Tuamini school in Mombasa by pretending to be one of them. Most, but not all, of the students have a sponsor, ensuring they can complete their education uninterrupted (children whose parents or guardians haven't paid fees are sent home in Kenya).

To help reduce the risk of interrupted education, Footsteps provides bursaries for students such as Ramadhama Dzila and Paul Ochieng who both come from

challenging family backgrounds. With their final exams looming in November, they can be sure their education won't be disrupted at this critical time.

Juliet (photo right) benefited from sponsorship at the school, and has recently completed a diploma in Library and Information Science at Greta University, Thika.

"I am now looking for work," she told us. "I am happy to take anything to get started on my career."



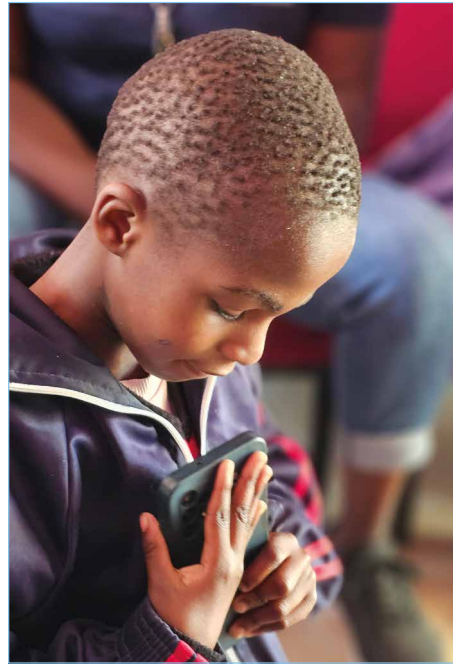
Special boy...special needs.....



Before she went to work each day, his mother locked Levis into the house and left him alone until she returned in the evening.

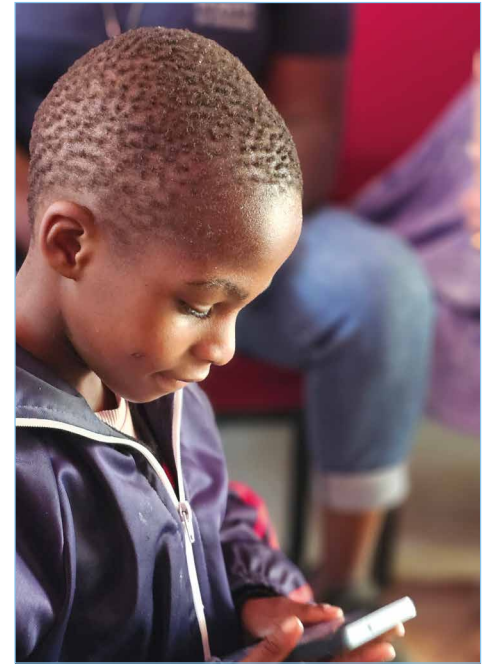
Not because she didn't love him. Quite the reverse.

Levis is autistic and non-verbal, so in the mornings, Eunice had to lock Levis inside their home for his own safety and for her own peace of mind,



and go to work in her little shop to earn money for food, rent and the basics of life. Being a low wage earner, she could see no way out of this spiral of life.

With his mother's approval and thanks, our disability specialist Irene arranged to have Levis assessed and then admitted to Pangani special needs boarding school in Nakuru.



When we visited, Levis was very excited to see Irene, who gave him her phone with a picture of his mother on it. Immediately his eyes lit up and he quietly cradled the phone to his chest. It was very moving to see.

He obviously misses his mother but is happy at school, and the staff assured us that he has settled in very well with the other children.

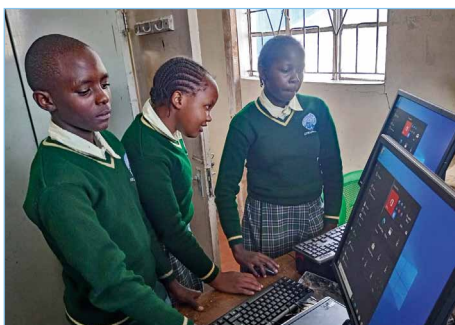
Sun-powered learning at Church on the Rock School

"Solar power is one of the best things that has happened at our school," directors Bernard and Ruth Ndeti exclaimed.

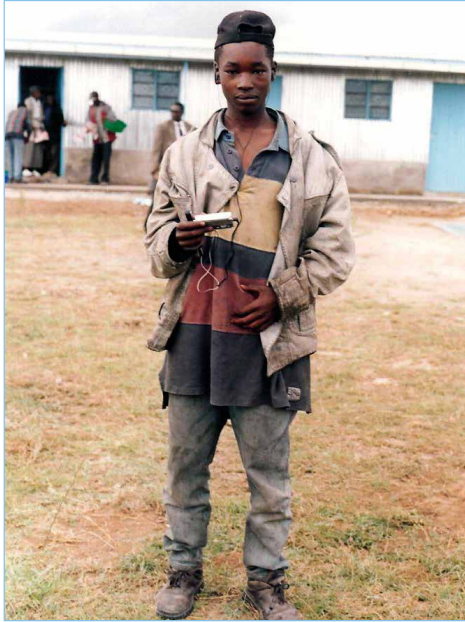
Church on the Rock School serves an extremely poor area of Nairobi where thousands of children live in the small, tightly-packed corrugated iron houses in streets with open sewers.

With the help of a UK Rotary club, we funded the installation of solar panels, a storage battery and the school's first two computers.

"For the first time, our classrooms have light, and our learners have access to the computers they need to meet the new curriculum," Ruth told us. "We even have electricity to spare to light our church across the road!"



Joseph Karanja...transformation complete



Joseph Karanja was among the first group of street boys we admitted to the Sunshine Centre when we opened in 2004.

He dropped out of class in his first year of primary school as his family couldn't afford to pay his school fees.

On the streets, Joseph used drugs and sniffed glue, and was even jailed twice.



As he had missed so much school, we supported him while he trained as a tailor at Naivasha polytechnic, and he was delighted when, in 2006, he secured his first job making school uniforms at a shop in Naivasha.

Today he has his own business, and is married and has two children. A regular church-goer, Joseph loves singing in the choir.



As an expression of gratitude, Joseph made a beautiful blue, woollen suit for Martin Print, and then presented him with a second, equally well-made, suit made of deep burgundy material.

Why did Martin need a beautiful suit?

Keep reading....!

...a wedding celebration, Kenya style!

The Sunshine Boys and staff turned out in force to celebrate the marriage of Footsteps trustees Martin Print and Wendy McMahon.

Although already married in UK, Sunshine director Rev Simon Kinyanjui felt that a 'proper' Kenyan marriage blessing was needed, which was duly delivered with much singing, dancing, excitement, and...cake!

The Naivasha Technical Training Institute Food and Beverage department rounded off the event with a delicious meal for all (some of the Sunshine Boys managed to eat third helpings!).



Sunshine Boys' lakeside camp



We took 80 former street boys for a one-night camp to beautiful Lake Elementaita.

Tents, a camp-fire, singing, games, and a hike around the lake made this a unique

and memorable experience for the Sunshine Boys and staff. Wonderful!



Children's unforgettable safari

We treated forty 3 to 5 year olds from the Imani pre-school in the Kibera slum to an unforgettable visit to Nairobi National Park.

the children were very excited to see crocodiles, giraffe, ostriches (lots of them), monkeys, a tortoise, zebra, and, best of all, a lion.


then had a photo shoot on a rocky outcrop with a rickety fence which was tricky for the kids to reach (Kenyan health and safety rules applied), but we got a lovely photo of the children!


It was beautiful and green following good rains, and


We stopped at a picnic spot for a snack and drink and





Footsteps International in Kenya

 *Transforms the lives of 150 former street boys at the Sunshine Centre, Naivasha*

 *Supports 27 orphaned and abandoned children in Mombasa*

 *Strengthens education of 250 children in Nairobi's slums*

 *Helps train 550 young people in vocational skills*

 *Supports 53 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 Martin and Wendy Print in February 2025.

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