

A MESSAGE FROM ROGERS

It is with great honor that I will always be grateful for the journey that Journey House Actions and AFJHAR have taken together. Never in my life have I ever reached a point where passion is driving me more to wake up each day and lead a community that is transforming and becoming more peaceful and smiling, not just asking how people are just doing economically but also how they are becoming more joyful and happy. Growing up as a young man, it was always my dream that one day I would have a chance to eat food at least three times a day and not worry about access to food. I asked the Lord that if He blessed me to have a better livelihood, I would do something for the ones left behind, which is why we have Journey House Actions today. If I am blessed, can I bless other young people to build a transformed Rwanda?

Today at JHA, we impact more than 5,000 community members. When we started in 2019, we served 100 children. Today we transform the lives of more than 700 children in addition to the elders and young people and mothers that work at JHA. Personally, the transformation and positive energy that have come from this journey have given me so many reasons to look at life with a different perspective. I learned that life is about more than me. Sharing my life with other young people who share the same or worse experiences than me will give them the audacity of hope.

There are two things I talk about with our young people. Life is like an "echo valley." What you send down that valley will come back to you. My journey at JHA has made me more humble. It taught me not to complain about the material things I don't have. Even with the little things that we have, my mama taught us there is nothing too little to be shared. I also learned that there is nothing that is too big to be forgiven. Everything can be forgiven. This is the whole transformation I've had, and I want to share it with others. Walking through our village every day is a school and I am gaining my PhD. Thank you for sharing this transformational journey with me.

One Dream. One Team! Rogers Kimuli JHA Executive Director





PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hi friends,

We would like to thank our friends and donors for their kindness and generosity during 2022 in support of the work of our non-profit partner, Journey House Actions (JHA,) in rural Gashora, Rwanda. We are humbled by and most grateful for your support. Transformation is at the heart of JHA's mission – to help change lives and provide dignity, love, meaning and hope to the most vulnerable. Here are a few examples of how JHA is transforming the lives of individuals and the Gashora community:

- 'Taking in young homeless boys & girls and providing them with food, shelter, education and work (responsibility),
- Providing self-sustaining jobs to young mothers and youth (weavers, sewers, farm & piggery workers, etc.),
- Developing selfless young leaders (e.g., the JHA executive team donates their time for three years before receiving stipends),
- *Coordinating and leading community and peace building activities within the village,
- 'Sharing clean water, milk and food with the community (i.e., sharing beyond JHA participants),
- 'Stressing inclusivity by employing people of all backgrounds (e.g., victims and perpetrators of the genocide, mentally challenged people, former criminals, etc.),
- ·Hosting the largest playground in the Gashora District,
- Feeding students and non-students each day, and
- 'Sharing their joy, humility, generosity, love and culture with visitors and volunteers.

I hope you enjoy the stories of transformation in our 2022 Annual Report. Thank you again for your support.

One Dream. One Team! Greg Herrle President, AFJHAR



During our trip to Gashora in September 2022, I had a conversation with Rogers Kimuli about enhancements he hoped to make to the current Early Childhood Development Center. One of the items he listed was the playground, which at that time was essentially a small open dirt lot with a few old tires. We had some great memories of kids dancing, a graduation ceremony, and introducing baseball in this empty lot during our visit. At the same time, it was easy to see how creating a broader play area with equipment would facilitate better student mental and physical health.

After returning to the US, it was very apparent to me how important play space is to my own kids and their friends. With that in mind, I reached out to about 25 fellow parents at St. John Vianney School in Brookfield, WI. We had already received strong support from this community who sent over 100 eyeglasses for our trip and also provided moral support to my wife when our basement flooded while I was over 7,500 miles away. So, I proposed the idea that this great community could sponsor a new playground for our friends halfway across the globe in Gashora.





Within a short time, this group raised \$4,500 and we gave Rogers the "go ahead" to start purchasing materials and organizing the new playground. When Tracy Josetti (fellow AFJHAR board member) and I visited for the Thanksgiving celebration in November, nearly all the materials were purchased. While there, we helped clear trees and start painting the structures alongside local community members, many of whom were able to earn money by working on this initiative.

Tracy and I haven't been back to see the finished playground in person yet, but the pictures and videos look great, and Rogers assures us that it is officially the largest playground in the district! The joy and smiles on the children's faces is priceless. Please view this YouTube video if you would like to hear Rogers describe the transformational impact of the playground – <u>WATCH VIDEO</u>.

Gregory Herrle AFJHAR Board Member



"My wife, Megan, and I recently had the good fortune to spend several weeks in Rwanda, the bulk of which were spent in Gashora volunteering with Journey House Actions (JHA). After several years of learning about and supporting JHA from afar, it was absolutely wonderful to see the whole program in action firsthand, to contribute with my own time and labor, and to participate in the daily life of Gashora.

Our first day in Gashora, Rogers introduced us to many JHA staff and volunteers, and led us on a grand tour of the "Journey of Success" Early Childhood Development (ECD) Center, the Dairy Farm, and the basket weavers, painters and tailors in training. Visiting Teacher Agnes in her classroom with almost one hundred 5-year-old students, I saw how far we are making so little go. Having taught elementary school in the U.S. for more than 30 years, where a large class is 25 to 30 students, my understanding of the possible was turned on its head. I saw attentive and patient children awaiting their turn with pencil and paper while their classmates gave it their all, the entire class learning a new language (English) communally, and a masterful teacher, who knows every one of her student's strengths and challenges, lifting them up.

Later that day, we participated in the lunch feeding. Three hundred children waited patiently while a team of volunteers efficiently worked as a unit distributing a bowl of rice and cabbage to every child.

That first visit to the ECD and other JHA departments was no specialty performance for the important visitors. During my lengthy stay, I blended in with the daily routines, and saw the same community building in action every day.

The highlight of my sojourn was working together with a crew of young men building the furniture for the ECD's computer lab. I've spent much of my life teaching woodworking to both children and adult learners, and I had brought many hand tools with me. During the next four weeks, we built the work surfaces for the prospective computer lab at the ECD, furniture for the homes of the team members with some of the leftover lumber, and a workshop space for the team to continue building shelves, tables, chairs and other items for JHA. We spent most of every day together. The crew learned a little bit of woodworking from me, and I learned a great deal about life in Gashora, as well as Kinyarwanda (their language), from them. Most importantly, we became fast friends. Entrusting each other with knowledge of our lives and hopes, sharing laughter and stories, we created more than furniture together. We became like family, often ending our workday with a long stroll that included some birdwatching, visiting with neighbors in the fields and villages, and lots of children running out to greet the "umuzungu," and a promise to do it all again tomorrow.

Alex Brede AFJHAR Friend & Donor



"I had been considering ways to get involved in philanthropy internationally for a few years. I am a cabi clothing stylist, and cabi's partnership with Opportunity International to support education in Rwanda inspires me. I also read the autobiography *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust.* I was touched by Immaculee's story of love, courage and perseverance in the face of suffering and despair. When asked to join the AFJHAR Board, I accepted, and I couldn't feel more blessed to enhance my global perspective.

A few weeks before Thanksgiving, I learned that another board member, Gregory Herrle, was going back to assist with the playground project he put in motion thanks to the generosity of St. John Vianney parishioners. My family was supportive of my impulsive decision, and I quickly made plans to join him on this trip. Fast forward... this visit was a 5-day whirlwind that has truly changed my life. Indeed, I was motivated to go and help the people of Gashora, but they left imprints on my heart far greater than I benefitted them. I was struck by how welcoming and authentic everyone was – from the smiles and hand holding to the in-depth, passionate conversations about education, economic reform, and community reconciliation post genocide.

There are so many people and experiences I'd like to highlight. The learning center's kitchen staff are among the heroes I met, preparing a celebratory feast for more than 1,000 people, while also conducting their daily food-prep duties as usual. They had a very modest, dangerously small kitchen, including three wood-burning stoves and poor ventilation. This remains on my mind as I consider ways to support my Rwandan family going forward.

Re-entering my life back in the U.S. has been interesting. Of course, I am happy to return home to my supportive husband and teenagers and our full life together, yet I also want to reflect on and incorporate learnings from my time abroad. What I do know is that I've been given a gift of worldly connection and love, and I know my relationship with my friends from Gashora is just beginning."









Provided access to clean water for more than 5,000 community members

Produced over 7,000 liters of milk

Employed 175 youth, young adults, and single mothers

Fed over 1,100 families from JHA's six acre "Seeds of Love" farm

Built over 60 kitchen gardens at individual residences

Sheltered, clothed and fed over 50 homeless girls & boys in JHA "Seeds of Love" homes







The Dairy Farm is JHA's most successful project to date. The Dairy Farm started in 2021 with two cows (Victoria & Wisconsin). Thanks to the generosity of AFJHAR donors and others, today there are around 30 cows and calves and one bull. The animals are insured. JHA employs a full-time veterinarian.

The Dairy Farm produces more than 200 liters of milk each day, which supports the children at JHA's "Journey of Success" Early Childhood Development Center, formerly homeless boys & girls living at the JHA "Seeds of Love" homes, JHA staff, guests, volunteers, workers and the elderly in the community. Ten percent of the milk goes to the elderly. The Dairy Farm has transformed the lives of children by reducing the malnutrition rate by over 80%. It provides over 50 hands-on jobs to young Gashorans, which create meaning, foster responsibility, and reduce crime in the community. Access to food and jobs removes the reasons many young people engage in criminal activities. JHA provides cell phones to key workers (stealing phones is a common crime on the streets). The Dairy Farm transforms the community by creating jobs, reducing the number of criminals, reducing violence, eliminating malnutrition and stunted growth among children, supporting the elderly and offering a better livelihood.

Please listen to Rogers Kimuli describe the transformational impact of the Dairy Farm - Dairy Farm Video



The JHA Piggery now has more than 70 pigs and is growing fast. The goal is to grow the piggery to 500 pigs. It is intended to become a key economic engine for JHA by birthing, raising and selling pigs.

The project will also provide economic opportunity for young people to own some of the pigs. 20-year-old Evode manages the Piggery. Several years ago, Evode was a young man living on the streets of Gashora but now he is thriving within JHA.

His transformation is one example of many young people who are given significant responsibilities at JHA. Evode now owns 11 pigs himself. AFJHAR donated the initial set of six pigs in early 2021. Since then, the Friends of Gashora (FROG), our sister organization in British Columbia has become a major investor in the program.

FROG sought investors to provide seed money to expand the project. The investment (principal only) will be returned to the investors when the Piggery starts to make money and becomes self-sufficient.





"I am Nabatanzi Agnes Muweebwa, a 37-year-old Ugandan. I am a single mother of 3 children, two girls and one boy. My first born is Bernadette Joyce Nakaakawa. My second child is John Rocks on Kayongo and my youngest child is Ann Carolyne Nakandi. Before I came to JHA, I was traumatized, hopeless, homeless, and poor with a heart full of bleeding wounds, crying every day.

I came to know JHA through my friend who works here. I was searching for a job. Rogers was looking for an English teacher and we talked. Later, after one week, Rogers invited me to join Journey House Actions. He welcomed me like a sister because he knew my bad story. Rogers told me to forget the past, start smiling, I am not alone and that my children will go to school.

Journey House Actions has changed my life and that of my children. I get a stipend each month, which I send to my mother in Uganda to help pay school fees and buy food for them. JHA is my hope, mentor, councilor, and family because I am really at home here. JHA has affected me in behaviors, mentors, loving and giving joy to others.

Murakoze (thank you)."

Agnes
JHA School Teacher







AFJHAR's Virtual Store opened in November 2022. The purpose of the virtual store is to sell baskets and art produced by artisans in JHA's workforce development programs, which create meaningful jobs for the community and provide a "living wage" so the artisans can support their families. Young mothers work at the JHA Gallery each day while their children are enrolled in JHA's "Journey of Success" Early Childhood Development Center. These talented weavers are specialists in weaving baskets of the highest quality and their stunning bowls, trivets and containers stand out among others because of the care and time they take in crafting each one. Each item is a work of art and an original. 100% of the proceeds are used to support educational and nutritional programs & other programs offered by JHA. By purchasing a basket, you help transform the lives of the weavers and the most vulnerable children of Gashora by providing them with self-sustaining & fulfilling work.

Thank you for your generosity. Please visit us at VIRTUAL STORE.

The baskets and art can make wonderful presents for Mother's Day, birthdays or other special occasions.



JHA's Ikirebe Art Gallery is designed to train aspiring artists, offer trauma therapy for youth and provide a revenue stream to support the programs of JHA. Twagirimana jean de Dieu ("Junior") is the resident artist. He shares his story below.

"I am the third of five children in my family. I was born in a poor family in Gashora. My father, Emmanuel, and my mother, Immaculate, are farmers. My parents worked hard to pay my school fees, because they never went to school, and they wanted to give me the chance that they lost. I started primary school in 2003 but I finished in 2010 because of sickness. After primary school, I joined GS Dihiro where I met a teacher, Charles, who encouraged me to join art school because he had seen my drawings. He inspired me to develop my art. When I passed my Ordinary Level exam in 2014, I was accepted to join Nyundo Art School, the only art school in Rwanda. I spent my three years there following my line of studying art. After art school, I got a government scholarship in IPRC Kigali, where I studied digital media production. Now I'm at JHA's Ikirebe Art Gallery, where I am an artist and teacher. I help Rwandan youth develop their talent, especially in art. Even though I am not a political person, I can express political thinking through my painting. I wish to tell the world that art can transform, heal and change your daily life."







Thanks to the kindness and generosity of our friends and donors, AFJHAR raised over \$130,000 during its Second Annual "Seeds of Love" Appeal to support the Food Basket Program at JHA. The JHA Food Basket Program provides nutritious food daily to over 300 JHA "Journey of Success" Early Childhood Development students, several hundred non-students, JHA staff & workers, guests, and volunteers. In early 2022, AFJHAR provided a grant to JHA to purchase over 6 acres of agricultural land next to the JHA Dairy Farm to grow vegetables such as onions, green peppers, amaranths, tomatoes, and cabbages.

JHA supplements its own vegetable production with quarterly purchases of rice, corn maize and beans (at a cost of about \$30,000 USD per quarter) made possible by AFJHAR's Annual Food Basket Appeal. Food scarcity and rising costs have been a big problem due to COVID and the war in Ukraine. The annual "Seeds of Love" Food Basket Appeal helps transform health and nutrition in the community.

The excitement of the children upon the delivery of the Food Basket can be seen in this video – <u>Food Basket Video</u>.



TOTAL REVENUE \$564,000

DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS FOR JHA PROGRAMS \$342,604

UNDESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AFJHAR BOARD MEMBERS \$221,396





TOTAL EXPENSES \$349,711

GRANTS TO JHA \$329,120

<u>ADMIN EXPENSES</u> \$20,591

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