

AFJHAR

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ONE DREAM



ONE TEAM!



President's Letter

Dear friends,

As we reflect on 2023, I am thrilled to share this report of the remarkable accomplishments and milestones that AFJHAR helped Journey House Actions (JHA) achieve. It was a year of expansion and continued transformation, made possible by the unwavering support and dedication of individuals like you who believe in our mission.

In the past year, JHA experienced significant growth, enabling it to extend its reach and impact in the Gashora community. Key highlights include:

PROGRAM AND FACILITY EXPANSION: Through strategic planning and collaborative efforts, JHA expanded its programs and facilities to address emerging needs in the Gashora community. JHA drilled another solar-powered clean water well, expanded its dairy and piggery farms, and began construction on a second early childhood development center, girls and boys dormitories and a new kitchen and dining area.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: Building strong partnerships has been instrumental in JHA's success. JHA values its partnerships with organizations like Badger Meter, Inc., Opportunity International, Colors of English, University School of Milwaukee, Marquette University High School, the Segal Family Foundation, Friends of Doug, and the Joseph Rauenhorst Family Foundation.

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS: Our advocacy efforts gained momentum, leading to increased awareness and support for JHA's mission. In June, we held a "Meet and Greet" event with Rogers Kimuli at the Baird Conference Center in Milwaukee, which was attended by more than 150 friends, family, and donors. In November we held four Information Sessions on Zoom to update our benefactors on recent activities in Gashora. More than sixty people attended these sessions. Four of our AFJHAR board members and some of their families visited Gashora during the year.

FINANCIAL STABILITY: Thanks to the generosity of our donors and supporters, AFJHAR helped JHA achieve greater financial stability, enabling JHA to invest in programs and infrastructure for long-term sustainability.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of the JHA staff, volunteers, AFJHAR board members, and our supporters. Their hard work, passion, and commitment to our mission have been the driving force behind JHA's success.

We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and remain committed to our mission to help support and fund the work of JHA. Together, we will make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve and create a brighter future for the children and families in Gashora.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment. We are truly grateful for your partnership as we embark on this journey of growth and transformation.

With gratitude,

Greg Herrle
President, AFJHAR



Message from Rogers

Dear friends,

First and foremost, this year has been a year of blessings and big impact on our community thanks to the support of our AFJHAR family. I mentioned before that we have 1,500 children on the waiting list for our early childhood development (ECD) center. However, something happened this year that we will not forget – a second ECD Center was added thanks to the generosity of the Ingui Family of Scottsdale, AZ. This new ECD Center will take in more than 300 more children. We are grateful and humbled that the waiting list is coming down.

Secondly, our new girls' and boys' dormitories are being constructed, which will provide a safe and loving environment for more than 70 children previously experiencing homelessness. Some of these young boys and girls never slept in a bed before and now they will have a bed to sleep on. We are grateful to the Friends of Doug and the Pagel Graphic Arts Scholarship Fund for their investments in this impactful project. We can't wait to see the smiles on our children's faces.

Thanks to investments from Badger Meter, Inc. and the Joseph Rauenhorst Family Foundation, we drilled our second solar powered freshwater well that will serve more than 5,000 people in our community.

We now have more than 50 cows and calves on our dairy farm. Milk is a critical part of our Food Basket. The direct impact of this program has grown from 1,200 to 2,000 people. The indirect impact has grown to 6,000 community members.

Last but not least, my coming to Milwaukee in June was another great blessing. My vision for JHA all started back in 2017 when I spent time at Journey House in Milwaukee. This year I had the opportunity to meet the amazing AFJHAR family in person. I will tell my grandchildren about all the beautiful people I met at the "Meet & Greet" event held at the Baird Conference Center.

Thank you again for the support of the whole AFJHAR family.

One Dream. One Team!

Rogers Kimuli
Executive Director, Journey House Actions

Expansion Highlights

New and separate girls and boys Seeds of Love homes that will provide safe residences for more than 72 children experiencing homelessness. Funded through AFJHAR thanks to generous gifts from Friends of Doug and the Pagel Graphic Arts Scholarship Fund.

A second Early Childhood Development (ECD) Center will serve 300 more pre-K students. Funded through AFJHAR thanks to a generous gift from the Ingui Family in Scottsdale, AZ.



A second solar-powered clean water well and ten 10,000 liter storage tanks. Funded through AFJHAR thanks to generous gifts from Badger Meter, Inc. and the Joseph Ravenhorst Family Foundation. The new well will serve more than 5,000 additional community members.

The JHA dairy farm has grown to 54 cows and calves and employs 66 full-time workers.

The JHA piggery farm now has 144 pigs and employs 16 full-time workers.

A larger, and cleaner kitchen and dining area near the new ECD Center. Funded by AFJHAR's Kitchen Appeal in Summer 2023.

1.6 acres of additional land purchased to support the addition of the new ECD Center, Seeds of Love homes and kitchen.



Visitor Views



Liz Kolb
AFJHAR Board Member

I had always dreamed of taking a family trip to Africa. However, life and other travel destinations always got in the way, until I became an AFJHAR board member, and the dream seemed like more of a calling. I knew we had to go to Rwanda once we brought up the idea to our kids, who were thrilled with the idea of helping others and seeing the work we had been supporting in Gashora. And as any volunteer knows, when you help others, you get back tenfold of what you gave.

The concept of "smilism" Rogers Kimuli has talked about in so many of our Zoom board meetings is truly what his community showed us the moment we landed in Kigali. Our first full day in Gashora, we took a tour of the community. As we walked, we were greeted on the streets by the children wanting to hold our hands and give us hugs. We walked to the piggery, school, agriculture farm, dairy farm, art studio, the new water well and the construction site of the Early Childhood Center. While each site was impressive, knowing that none of these places existed before Rogers and his vision was even more remarkable.

The project our family committed to was to improve the living conditions for one family living in a small "home" near the school. Over three days we dismantled walls, erected new ones, laid a new floor, painted the exterior and dug a new latrine. Each day offered challenges but the rewards were nothing short of extraordinary. Connecting with people even across language barriers is a joy when you are making a difference. The mother of the house was grateful for our time and energy and we were grateful for the opportunity to make friends and learn about the culture as we worked together.

On the flight back home, each one of the seven of us acknowledged the shift in ourselves that was created by the "smilism" in Gashora, Rwanda. Several months after we've left our new Rwandan friends, the impact they had on us continues. We are so grateful for the welcome the JHA team showed us and for the chance to make a small difference in their amazing community. It was the best family trip ever.

Liz Kolb
AFJHAR Board Member



Dawn Helwig
AFJHAR Board Member



Ubumuntu. It's a word those of us on the AFJHAR Board hear all the time, and it's a word that is regularly used as a greeting by Journey House Action staff and students. In the local language, it literally means "to be humane, to genuinely care about others, to be." I can't imagine a more appropriate word to describe the feeling my husband Ted and I had during our trip last October to Gashora, Rwanda.

The feeling of ubumuntu started immediately on our arrival into Kigali, when we were met by Rogers, Salaama, and 22 of our new closest friends, each of whom insisted on giving us big hugs. It continued when we got to Gashora (after 10 PM their time) and were treated to a big feast of rice, beans, fresh pineapple and avocado. Throughout the rest of our 5 days in Gashora, we were repeatedly made to feel welcome and to feel at one with the people and the children.

To our surprise, Gashora is a fairly large town (population 32,000) and is very spread out. On our strolls through the town over the next few days, everyone greeted us, and children ran up to us to give us hugs and to grab a hand and walk with us for a short distance. We visited every activity

that AFJHAR supports in the town, usually several times: the preschool (where the children couldn't wait to touch our hair and play with our Apple watches), the piggery, the dairy farm, the community garden, the new construction areas, the art gallery, and the sewing and basket-weaving rooms. Every afternoon, when the activity slowed down and we sat in the courtyard of the art gallery, one or more of the high school students being housed and supported by AFJHAR would come sit with us and ask us questions about the US and tell us their stories. In spite of our life differences, we found common ground with all of the children, teachers, and workers. For example, they were surprised that I felt at home in a piggery (my father was a pig farmer) and could milk a cow (albeit slowly!), and we were surprised with the advanced physics and math that the high school students were studying.

We all have the same goals and dreams. One Team One Dream as Rogers Kimuli likes to say! Ubumuntu indeed!

Dawn Helwig
AFJHAR Board Member



USM teachers meeting
with Rogers Kimuli

This team of five University School of Milwaukee teachers were lucky enough to spend a day with Rogers and all the people at Journey House Actions Rwanda in Gashora in July 2023. We had written a grant several years ago to travel to Rwanda, inspired by the memoir by Josh Ruxin, *A Thousand Hills to Heaven*. We were eager to learn more about how the country had successfully navigated reconciliation and rebuilding post-genocide. As part of our preparation, we met with Samantha Goldberg the Director of Education at Milwaukee's Holocaust Education Resource Center who had done her graduate work at Uppsala University, focusing on Rwanda. She "virtually" introduced us to Rogers and encouraged us to connect and visit.

We are so glad we did! We experienced a full day of joy and learning and fellowship with Rogers and his entire team of young people who are working hard to build community, resilience, and healing through art, education, and purposeful work. During our tour we met the young

artists working in the studio, toured the school and village, met farmers at the dairy farm and pig farm. We were eager to learn more about how all facets of the community are harvesting the invasive water hyacinth plant from the nearby lake and repurposing it for making paint and feeding livestock. After our tour, we ate a delicious lunch and chatted with the international interns working at JHA; this is when we committed to more long-term relationships with Rogers and the young people he is mentoring to make a change for themselves and to better their local and national community.

In the spirit of JHA, we at USM acknowledge our common ubumuntu and hope this partnership grows in mutual understanding and care.

Kate Gay
English Teacher
University School of Milwaukee

Partnership Updates

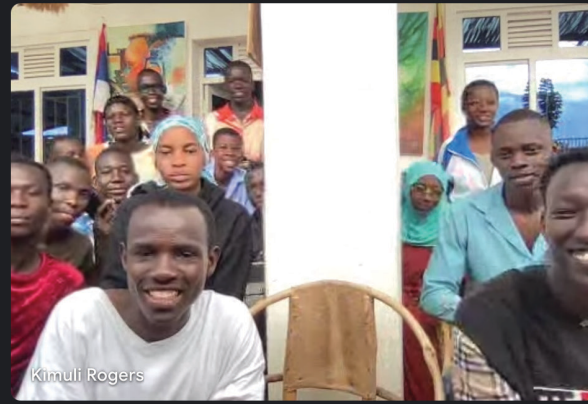


The Colors of English

The Colors of English is a U.S. company that provides materials and a methodology to teach young learners the fundamentals of the English language. JHA is the first application of Colors of English in Africa. JHA began using the curriculum with its Young Leaders Group to enhance their English reading, writing and language skills.

Opportunity International

JHA is participating in a 3-year program offered in person by Opportunity International designed to enhance the skills of JHA's caregivers (teachers) and co-caregivers inside the JHA schools. This program has been transformational for both the caregivers and the parents of the students. The caregivers receive certificates as they complete different levels of training.



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University of Milwaukee Book Club

Students from USM in Milwaukee and JHA participate jointly in a weekly book club on Google Meet. The students exchange experiences they have done before and things some others may not have done in their lives. They discuss what they learned from the books. It opens the possibility to consider a future that some JHA students may not have thought possible. This program may lead to an exchange program where USM students visit Gashora and JHA students visit the U.S. someday. Comments from some USM students follow:

From Lucy (10th grade): I got to be a part of an amazing book club over Zoom with Rwandan kids. It was such an eye-opening experience to see how excited they were to be there. I got to learn so much about their school, culture, and personalities in such a short time. Everyone was overjoyed to talk about the book, and it was fun to see the different interpretations.

From Sydney (10th grade): "The Alchemist Book Club was a collaboration with Rwandan kids around our age who read the book "The Alchemist" and had a sit-down open conversation through Google Meet. There we got to share our interpretations of the book and opened my eyes to the different views and perspectives of people from different countries. It really brought me to the realization that due to different cultures and places where you grew up, you can interpret different themes of a book to bring us all to realize and come to a bigger idea. It was eye-opening, with the interactions and how joyful and open they were with their ideas as we got to learn about them and what their aspirations are, what their dreams are, and what the cultural meaning behind their names were. The Alchemist Book Club enabled me to learn about a different culture and meanings of the novel."

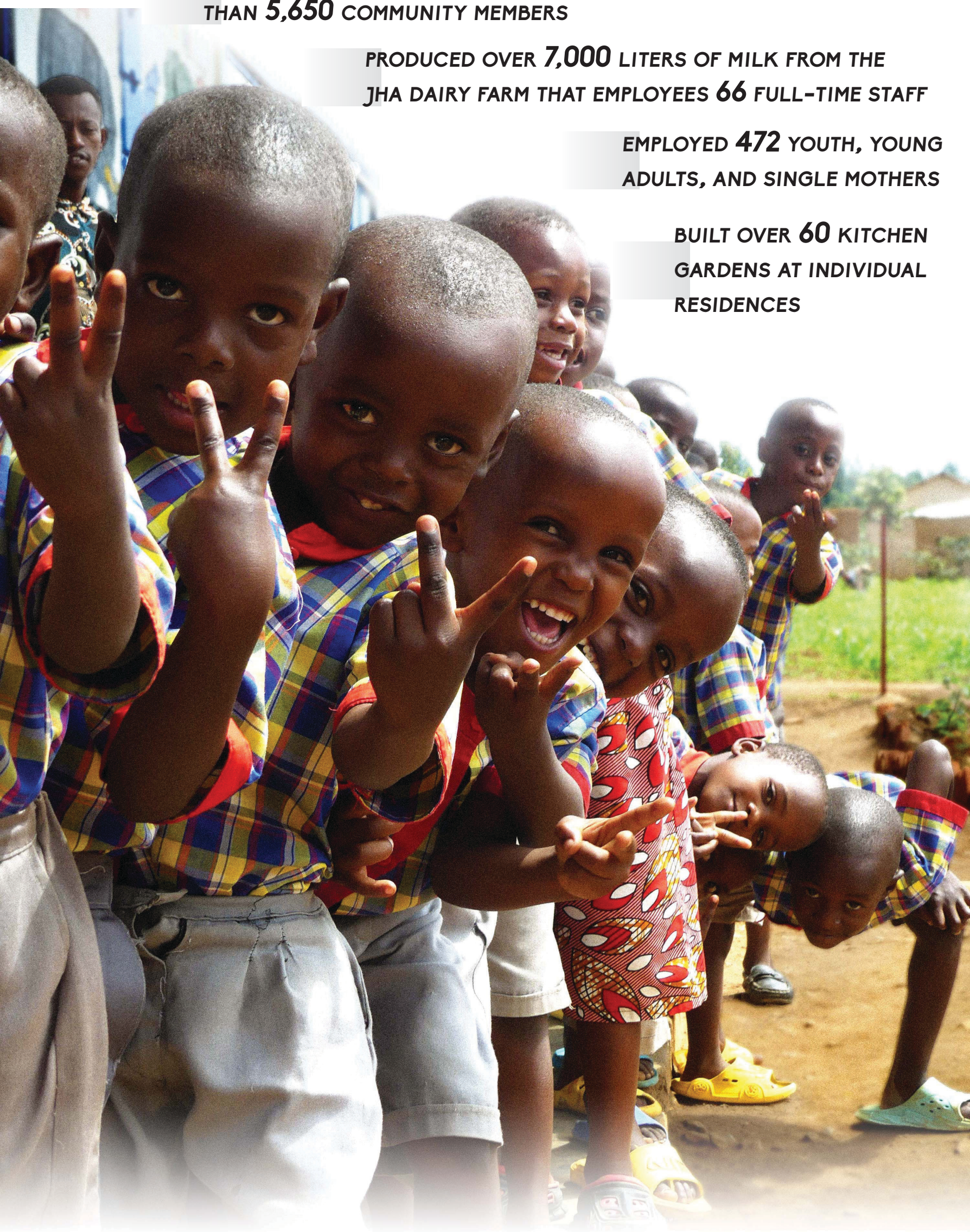
JHA'S 2023 Impact

PROVIDED ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER FOR MORE THAN **5,650** COMMUNITY MEMBERS

PRODUCED OVER **7,000** LITERS OF MILK FROM THE JHA DAIRY FARM THAT EMPLOYES **66** FULL-TIME STAFF

EMPLOYED **472** YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS, AND SINGLE MOTHERS

BUILT OVER **60** KITCHEN GARDENS AT INDIVIDUAL RESIDENCES



FED OVER **1,500** FAMILIES FROM JHA'S SIX ACRE "SEEDS OF LOVE" AGRICULTURAL FARM

SHELTERED, CLOTHED, AND FED OVER **200** HOMELESS GIRLS & BOYS IN JHA "SEEDS OF LOVE" HOMES

PROVIDED OVER **320,000** NUTRITIOUS MEALS TO SEVERAL HUNDRED CHILDREN NOT ENROLLED IN THE JHA ECD CENTER

OFFERED SELF-SUSTAINING JOBS TO OVER **60** BASKET WEAVERS AND SEAMSTRESSES



MANAGED A PIGGERY WITH OVER **144** PIGS AND **16** FULL-TIME STAFF

RAN A SOCCER PROGRAM WITH OVER **100** BOYS AND GIRLS AT VARIOUS AGES

PROVIDED MEDICAL INSURANCE, FIRST AID & SUPPLIES TO CHILDREN & PEOPLE IN JHA PROGRAMS (OVER **600** PEOPLE)

PROVIDED ACCESS TO INTERNET & DIGITAL SERVICES TO MANY IN THE COMMUNITY AT JHA FACILITIES



Meet Derrick Rugemera



Derrick (right) with fellow JHA employee, Kiki

It has been our privilege to have known Derrick Rugemera since 2019. We met him when he was 14 years old and living with JHA in Gashora. His family had fallen on hard times and to reduce the stresses on their scant resources he voluntarily left the family home. His high standard of ethics is one of his many attributes.

This young Rwandan man speaks excellent English and is very intelligent. His interpersonal skills are impressive, humble, and yet engaging. His affability is as welcomed by street kids as by his teachers. We were so impressed by his potential that we decided to sponsor him by funding his studies at The Riviera High School, one of Kigali's most prestigious private schools. He stood out from the crowd from the very first day.

As Rogers Kimuli likes to remind us. "When I took Derrick through the gates of the school on his first day, the security guard wondered who these two strangers were who rolled up on the backs of motos amongst the Benz's and BMWs."

Our faith in Derrick was well justified. He was determined to do whatever it took to reach his goal to become an aerospace engineer, frequently rising at 4:30 in the morning to prepare himself for the day's studies. His efforts were rewarded, his marks were excellent and his social acceptance seamless.

Graduating this summer his search for an undergraduate placement begins. He hopes to attend a university in Canada or the United States, should financial support or scholarships become available. He is presently waiting for the Rwandan scholarships to come out. Derrick was offered the opportunity to go to Dubai for a two-month course for computer skills. He raised most of the money he needed to get there himself.

We must remember that this is not just about Derrick's dream, it is also about the hopes and dreams of all the people who he has engaged with on his journey. When he succeeds, all those others can see what is possible with hard work and a helping hand. He will be a role model, a source of pride and a reminder of what is possible.

Gabriele Matheson
Friends of Gashora



2023 Financials

Total Revenue

\$599,311

Designated contributions for JHA programs

\$411,431

Undesignated contributions from
AFJHAR board members

\$187,880

Total expenses

\$617,049

Grants to JHA

\$576,294

Administrative expenses

\$40,755



Third Annual Food Basket Appeal

Each year end, AFJHAR holds an appeal to support JHA's Food Basket for the following year. The Food Basket is used to support the operations of JHA's dairy and vegetable farms and to supplement the farm production by purchasing rice, corn maize, and beans. Nutritious food is critical for the cognitive development and wellbeing of our children. Without food children can't learn and develop.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we raised \$165,324 USD during our Third Annual Food Basket Appeal ("Smiles are Brighter When Stomachs are Full"). We are deeply grateful for your kindness and generosity.



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