

# Africa's memories

KenToledo Social Service Club Newsletter

Issue 01.01 – December 2018



*Valter Baldaccini Foundation beneficiaries during a counselling session at*

For more than a decade now **KenToledo Social Service Club** has been in operation serving the needy of Mathare slums of Nairobi. The idea was borne out of the scripture *“whatever you do to this little one you do it unto me”* and the fact that the situation in the slums was dire and

needy. Those leaving in these informal settlements lack the basic amenities like

toilets and clean running water. It is because this are unplanned settlements that have been put up on government land to provide cheap shelter for the unskilled work force in Nairobi for many jobseekers. All the jobseekers that would

want to venture in the neighboring city estates find cheap housing here either by squatting with a friend or relative and or paying daily rates to landlord until they can afford a monthly rent. The risk of fire is too high in this area and the intervals of fires burning the houses increases with the landlords wanting to evict



*Mathare slums, KTSSC's area of operation*

the tenants so that they can hike the rents after reconstruction of new shanties.

The unpredictability of life in Mathare makes the residents live a day at a time with no assurance of getting the next meal. It creates a desperate situation where those who do not get a job to earn turn to crime. This leaves the children living here vulnerable and exposed to criminal activity to supplement their family's needs. Many youths become pickpockets and muggers as they join gangs while the young girls turn to prostitution as a way of earning their daily bread. The result has been many deaths occasioned by extrajudicial killings and infection of the young generation with STI's and HIV and AIDS. This is a cycle of poverty that KenToledo Social Service Club has sought to break through the education program in partnership with other major stakeholders like UMBRAGROUP and Valter Baldaccini Foundation.

On a visit to Kenya the then UMBRAGROUP President Valter Baldaccini had a chance to visit Mathare slums and experience the life as it were. From then he started supporting the slums children in education and we always remember his words *"education is the best gift that you can give to a child"*. Since his first visit, that was more than a decade ago, we have received great

support to the education support program that is running up to now.



*Aerial View of Mathare slums, Kenya*



*Poor sewerage and water drainage*

Today Valter Baldaccini Foundation is the main sponsor of our education program. They have supported the program through sponsorship of boys and girls identified by KenToledo & Missionary Sisters of De Facuald as deserving. KTSSC does not work alone in their selection of the needy cases to support. We work hand in hand with the Missionary Sisters of De Facuald who deal with the sick in Mathare. From their interaction with the sick they are able to sieve through cases that are most needy.

The Mathare slum lacks formal schools and it is dotted with many ramshackle private schools that are mainly baby care centers to allow the mothers go seek for money by doing laundry. Infrastructure to implement what is called free primary education that is offered by the



*KTSSC staff with the beneficiaries after receiving new uniforms*

government is lacking with only two public primary schools in the whole of Mathare slum that holds a population of more than half a million people. Though we are told that the government is offering free primary education, but what we are never told is how to get a child to school without uniforms, school textbooks, shoes on their feet and at least a meal to keep them in school. This is where our educational support sponsorship program has come in very handy with Valter Baldaccini Foundation as our pioneer partner currently sponsoring 43 children across the country. They range from grade two at the primary level to form four at the secondary level. Most of our students need special care because of exposure to the vice of commercial sex by their mothers and therefore boarding school is ideal for them. Valter Baldaccini Foundation and all her donors have been very instrumental in supporting us to achieve on this front.

moved to the Technical Training Institutes where they acquire knowledge for the labour market. Over the time we have seen others join Universities to follow their dreams. Many who have passed through the Programme are now grateful to KTSSC and its partners at large for opening them up to opportunities.

Valter Baldaccini Foundation has supported many youths who are now role models in Mathare slum. Of the supported youths, 6 have made it to the universities, 3 to tertiary colleges, 10 to vocational training institutes.

There have been efforts to keep all the children going in school, but the basic needs that should spur their interest in school have been lacking even with the middle class of Nairobi struggling with such needs. The joblessness of the Mathare single mother, and the harsh conditions that they live in with some affected with the scourge of HIV Aids, makes the situation worse.



*Some of the beneficiaries of the program during a school visit*

### **TRANSITION**

The support by UMBRAGROUP over the years, and today by Valter Baldaccini Foundation, has had the effect of exposing the children to education and opening them up to face their world. Some of the young men and women have

The KenToledo Social Service Club is celebrating their 13th year in service for the less fortunate. We have majorly delved in the educational support for primary and secondary school based on the belief of liberating effect of education in exposing the slum children to new challenges in the modern world. Over a time under review we have seen many of our children grow up to become responsible citizens after our secondary school support program. Over the period we have had six cases that have gone to the university level and ultimately into the job market. Some of our children have come back to motivate their peers in the slums on the need to forge on and never give up on hope.

Just to mention a few:

- Maurine Atieno – Moi University Yala
- Peter Theuri – Nairobi University
- Mary Mukami - Nairobi University
- Baraka Matili - Jomo Kenyatta University
- Mary Gaturu – Maasai Mara University
- Frederick Wambua – Pwani University
- Leticia Achieno - KenToledo Volunteer
- Phelisters Nthenya – Nairobi Institute of Business studies
- Hellen Scovia – Course in Beauty at Maria House
- Simon Kilango – Apprentice mechanic
- Eugene Ngwiri – Apprentice mechanics
- Stanley Makokha – Kabete Technical institute.



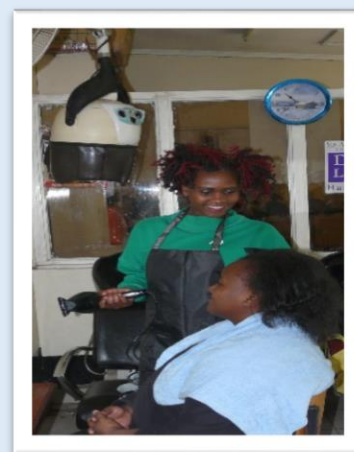
Middle: **Mary Waithera** during a practical in kitchen for catering course.



On the right is **Maureen Atieno** in class undertaking a Teaching course at Moi University, Yala Kenya.



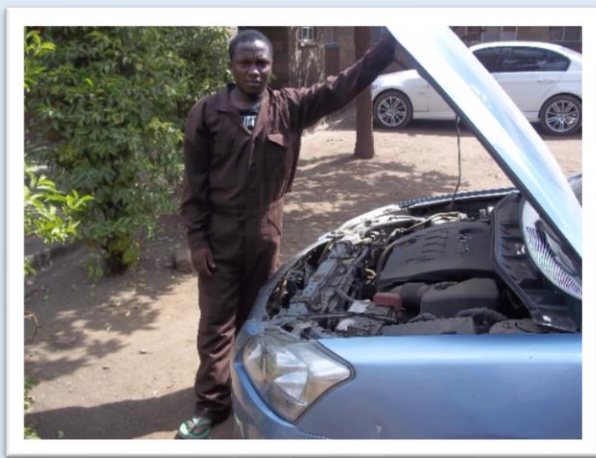
**Mary Mukami & Baraka Matili** were sponsored by Valter Baldaccini Foundation up to Form 4 but are now undertaking undergraduate studies at Nairobi University & Jomo Kenyatta University respectively.



**Hellen Scovia** during a practical lesson in hair dressing.



**Emmanuel Mwega** whom we lost in July 2018 after a short illness. He was undertaking a mechanics course.



**James Nyambuto** undertaking a mechanics Course.



**Mary Gaturu** undertaking a degree in international relations at Maasai Mara University, Kenya

## **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMME**

Currently, Valter Baldaccini Foundation provides educational support to 43 children who are in various primary and secondary schools in Kenya. Of which 20 are boys & 23 girls. The Kenyan academic calendar is divided into 3 terms[semester]: January – April, May – August, & September – December. The current beneficiaries are excelling in their academics since the problems of being out school due to lack of fees are now forgotten as a result of this sponsorship Programme.

## **VISITS**

The KTSSC staff often make scheduled school and home visits to the beneficiaries to assess their welfare and performance. Sometimes when the Valter Baldaccini Foundation volunteers visit, they interact with the beneficiaries and offer them gifts and presents. As we endeavor to support our target group we have identified several programs that we have sought funding and they have really boosted our impact on the society. This programmes entails capacity building, guidance and counselling programme, educational tours and vocational trainings.



*Valter Baldaccini Foundation volunteers Renato & Giovanni giving food stuffs to the children & their parents during their visit in April.*



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