

## FACING THE FUTURE MAKES STRIDES IN 2021

Despite constraints during the pandemic, we are so very pleased to share that FAFU has continued to make positive strides in various areas. These areas include:

- All students in Kenya must take a high school entrance exam. In March 2021, the 24 FAFU 8<sup>th</sup> graders that sat for national exams passed with sterling marks and were all admitted to high schools, with the majority joining prestigious schools all over the country. Their performance index placed FAFU 7<sup>th</sup> out of 52 exam based schools in the sub-county. We are so proud to announce that FAFU is now considered one of the top ten academic giants in the sub-county.
- Establishment of FAFU's technology program aimed at converting classroom learning to technology-oriented instruction through use of Powerpoints and internet research.
- FAFU has installed one of the strongest WiFi connections in Nairobi to boost its online learning and research as well as enabling exchange programs. Funds are currently sought to equip the Computer Lab with furniture.
- FAFU has also undergone a facelift through construction of a security guardroom, security wall, and upgrading of both children and staff toilets.
- FAFU's medical clinic has been of great help to the surrounding community and children at FAFU. Availability of accessible, affordable, and reliable healthcare service has been indispensable in improving the health conditions of the people in the Kibera slum. The facility offers free medical education to the community, children, and teachers to create awareness of the need to prevent non-communicable diseases and measures to curb COVID-19. Although the medical clinic offers a wide range of services, FAFU is hoping to add a lab to enable their medical team to make clear diagnoses for proper medications.

**These accomplishments & improvements were made possible by the support of our FAFU donors and we thank you very much!!**



## A MESSAGE FROM SIMEON AJIGO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER OF FACING THE FUTURE

After ten months of no direct learning in Kenyan schools due to COVID-19, the government of Kenya ordered all schools to resume learning in early January 2021. This was after the partial opening of schools in October 2020 for only Grades 4 and 8. FAFU, therefore, fully resumed its operation in the midst of uncertainty: COVID-19 prevention protocols, economic constraints, increased costs to sustain implementation of the new curriculum (Competency Based Curriculum) and temporary overhaul of the school calendar. There was fear as waves of the pandemic were still raging. We had to take care of 375 children: feeding and educating them while ensuring their medical care.

Many children shared feelings of stress, depression, isolation and anxiety which they linked to lack of contact with their school community. The teachers were at risk but opted to put their lives on the line for the sake of these children. This overwhelming compassion was touching. At that time, the government was yet to roll out a vaccination program. The teachers had set up a prayer room and an intercessory team. We were facing an unknown scenario with the large population of children and staff at FAFU; yet, we were armed with your moral support and generosity. This added strength to our confidence.

Due to loss of income caused by the pandemic, there has been an exodus of several families from Kibera slum to the countryside. The New Canaan YMCA and sponsorship families' generous donations for relief food to cushion vulnerable FAFU families from starvation and malnutrition indirectly halted the exodus of FAFU families from Kibera to the countryside. Your intervention, therefore, helped FAFU families stay in their homes within Kibera.

On behalf of FAFU staff, FAFU Board, FAFU children and their families, and on my own behalf, I wish to register our appreciation to the Y team for your significant support and bond of partnership that has grown in strength for the last 15 years!!! Our thoughts and prayers are always with you.

We wish you all the best during this challenging time,

Simeon



# GRADE 4 SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE



The 2021-2022 school year found the New Canaan YMCA successful in reaching our goal of securing sponsors for all 39 fourth grade students at FAFU! The generosity of our sponsors has provided these vulnerable children with educational opportunities, school supplies, medical care, and two meals per day.

Many of our sponsors also have been generous with their time, enthusiastically engaging with their sponsored child through exchanging letters and virtual meetings. For both parties, these engagement opportunities have been meaningful experiences, creating positive memories to treasure forever.

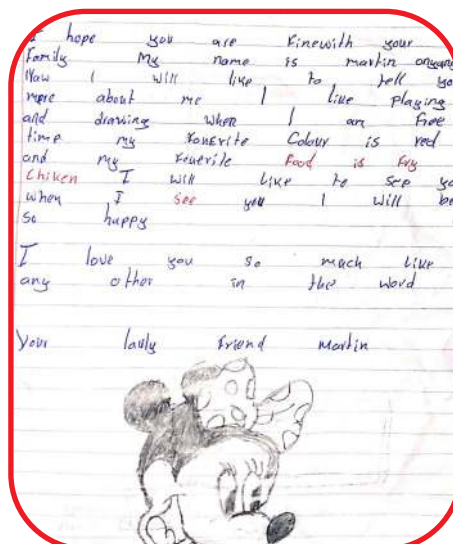
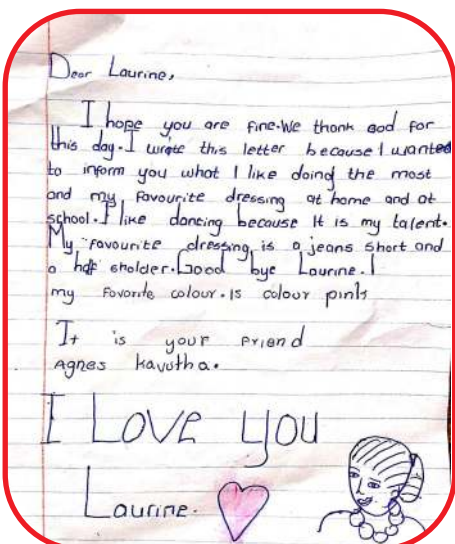
We are so very grateful to our compassionate sponsors for their time and financial support so critical to building a better future for these precious children. Thank you!

## Fostering Connections Across the Globe



Through letter writing and virtual meetings, FAFU students and their sponsors have the opportunity to learn about and connect with one another.

These thoughtful interactions fill the students with great affection for their sponsors, whose caring attention and encouragement is life-changing for these children. We are very proud of the nurturing connections being made across the world by this meaningful global initiative.





## GRADE 4 SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE



Many thanks to the very talented singer-songwriter and New Canaan YMCA member, Nick Depuy, for his energizing presentation on American folk music shared with FAFU's fourth graders last fall. So inspired by Nick and his music, the students performed songs for Nick as well. The classroom was filled with such joy that the students asked Nick to return. We are so delighted and appreciative that Nick agreed to do so and met again with the children in February 2022.

Fourth grade is a transition year for our friends at FAFU as the students move from the Lower Primary level to the Upper Primary level, considered part of middle school.

"Being a transitional class, our fourth graders are coping well with the new environment. They are doing several practicals in all learning areas which they were not doing in their previous grade. They are really enjoying," shares teacher, Dancan Ndegwa (pictured on left with his students).



### Thank you to our 2021-2022 school year sponsors!

As the Kenyan school calendar continues to shift back toward its pre-COVID schedule, FAFU's new school year will be held from April 2022–November 2022. Help us ensure that every 4th grade child at FAFU has a sponsor by committing to a one-year sponsorship at \$360 per child. For less than a dollar a day, you can provide a FAFU student with:

- One year of education and school supplies
- Two meals per day
- School uniform
- Medical supplies and routine check-ups

As a sponsor, you will be offered opportunities to voluntarily engage with your sponsored child through letter writing and video calls during the school year. Become someone special to a child in need across the globe. Sponsor a child and change a life!

## 2021 COMMUNITY SUPPORT



### Craig Panzano High School Scholarship Fund

Established in 2017, this high school scholarship has been awarded to eight FAFU students, funding their attendance to prestigious high schools. Pictured on the left are the 2021 scholarship winners, Erick Okiela and Margaret Kalekye.



### FAFU Holiday Table & Coffee for a Cause

Due to the pandemic, our annual Holiday Bazaar - a favorite event at the Y - was scaled down to a table in 2021. Despite this modification, our Y community was overwhelmingly supportive, purchasing jewelry handmade by FAFU's single mothers and teens, greeting cards designed by FAFU students, cookies home baked by Y staff members, and bags of Kenya coffee (which were also sold throughout the holiday season). Thanks to the support of our Y community and Zumbach's Gourmet Coffee of New Canaan, the Holiday Table and Coffee for a Cause fundraisers raised over \$1,800 for FAFU!



### Child Sponsorship Program

Designed to sponsor students in Grade 4 each year, our sponsorship program enables every child at FAFU the experience of a sponsorship. Thanks to the generosity of 30 New Canaan YMCA families, all 39 fourth grade students at FAFU had a sponsor during the 2021-2022 school year!



### LemonAID Stand Project

Stay tuned for details on this popular family fundraiser returning in Summer 2022!

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## ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIP

Since 2007, the New Canaan YMCA has proudly partnered with FAFU, a preschool-grade 8 child development center in Kibera, Kenya - Africa's largest slum. Through donations and service trips, we have helped transform a one-room school into a life-saving oasis with multiple classrooms, a library, a computer center, playground, and medical clinic; providing education, healthcare, extra-curricular activities, empowerment programs, school uniforms, and two meals a day to over 350 children who would otherwise have no hope.



**The Kibera Slum,  
Outside FAFU**



**Inside FAFU**

For additional information about our partnership with Facing the Future or to donate to Facing the Future through our Y's Annual Support Campaign, contact Diana Riolo at 203-920-1653 or at [driolo@newcanaanymca.org](mailto:driolo@newcanaanymca.org).