

DOWELL HOME



"Agape is excited to be part of a larger team leading the way in the field of family reunification."

AN INTENSE AND BUSY JANUARY AND EXCITEMENT FOR THE FUTURE

This past month has been so exciting for us! We arrived back in Kenya the first week of January and were excited to be reunited with our sweet staff and children on campus. We're grateful for the amazing team that God brought to us here in Kitale. Having only opened on July 1st, it was difficult for us to leave for a whole month so early in our operations. However, our Kenyan team worked so well together during our visit to the States, solving problems, managing cases, and truly striving to do what was in the best interest for each child that came on campus during the month of December.

Things on our Kitale campus continue to move along smoothly. Since opening, we've worked with over 185 children. It is truly humbling and amazing that our staff have been able to speak truth and love into the lives of so many children. We've seen children come to Christ, and we've seen lives and families transformed by God's love. Even since returning just a few weeks ago, we've heard stories about children's family members being found through what can only be described as God's miraculous provision and timing.

(continued...)



Brenda with Madison



In early January, our outreach team worked with and rescued a girl who was living on the streets of Kitale disguised as a boy because she felt it was too dangerous to be on the streets as a girl. Since coming onto campus, she's helped us identify and start working with two other girls who are still on the streets disguised but still incredibly vulnerable. God is doing some big work here, and we are watching the streets of Kitale slowly change. Story by story, child by child and family by family, we are excited to see God transform the lives of each of the children currently living on the streets of Kitale.

As we returned back to Kenya, we were overjoyed to bring Brenda, Jonathan's mom, back with us. She spent a month with us here in Kenya. We've had a busy month (read on to hear more about our big activities for January), so it was so incredibly helpful to have her here helping out with Madison. As soon as we landed, we hit the ground running, and Brenda has been an incredible help to us. From watching Madison while we were at work to helping with the cooking and keeping up with the house, she absolutely was the reason why we made it through a very intense and busy January. We are so blessed to have such supportive family members.

Late last year, I shared with you a story about our youngest boy on campus, Sangy. We think Sangy is around 5-6 years old, and he was already on the campus of this facility when we took over operations and opened on July 1st. Based on what we've heard, we think he was found by police in March/April 2018 on the streets of Kitale and has been in a children's home or on Agape's campus since then. We have spent countless hours and time and energy searching for his home, but so far we have not been able to trace his relatives and Sangy can't remember enough about his home or family to help us find the way. We have decided as a staff to place Sangy in the home of one of our staff members in a foster care situation as we continue searching. Sangy, being so young, really needs to be in the care of a true family at home and going to school. He's missing out on so many foundational things living here on campus, so our staff truly feel foster care is the best solution for him until his biological family can be found. Sangy spent a few weeks in the home of his foster family over December and enjoyed his time very much, so we will move forward with his placement and enroll him in an

elementary school near his new home. Please pray that his biological family can be found and pray for Sangy as he settles in his new home and school and adjusts to his new family life. We are going to miss our "last born" here on campus, but we truly feel this is what is best for him.

Our big news from January is that at the end of January, Agape, in partnership with Chosen and Dearly Loved Foundation, hosted a Family Reunification Workshop in Kisumu. This was a five-day event that drew nearly 200 attendees from 13+ countries around the world. The goal of the workshop was to share how Agape transformed from a standard orphanage model to a reintegration model embracing family reunification and family-based care. Our goal was to encourage other organizations interested in moving towards family-based care and teach them about our process and Agape model for reintegration and help them see how it can be implemented in their own organizations. It is truly exciting to see the change that is happening in the care of orphans and vulnerable children world-wide, and Agape is excited to be part of a larger team leading the way in the field of family reunification. We were so blown away by the eagerness and desire of so many people to learn about what we do. It was also such a blessing to be able to empower some of our own staff to share and teach during the conference. It is such a joy to hear them share their stories and hear their passion for their job and calling at Agape and to see them share so expertly and wisely with people from around the world who are just starting to consider family-based care. It made me proud to see our staff up there teaching on their topics.

As we look forward to the future, we are excited to not only keep moving ahead with plans to open more Agape locations in Kenya, but also to encourage and walk alongside organizations around the world that are ready to consider the Agape model of reintegration. It's an exciting time with LOTS of unknowns, but we know and trust that God will continue to lead and guide us in the directions that He is calling us. Thank you for your continued support and prayers for us. We value each one of you and your dedication to the work God is doing through Agape. We are so excited to see His plans unfold this year!

In love,
The Dowells



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