

Rich Tarro, Kenya - Lent 2021

Educating Fred

Our HOPE Project provides students like Fred with educational opportunities that they would otherwise not have. Fred is taking full advantage of these opportunities and is working hard to build a better future for himself and his family. It is students like him who make our work so rewarding.

Fred is 24, the third in a family of four children. His father passed away when Fred was only 4. After the death of his dad, his father's side of the family took away all the family's belongings, leaving them with next to nothing. His mother, Jane, was forced to do odd jobs to help the family survive.

By 2003, life had become unbearable and Jane had no choice but to leave their up-country home. With the four children, she moved to Mombasa, where she found work as house help. Over time, Jane was able to save some money and started a small business selling fried potatoes.

Fred and his siblings entered school late because Jane did not have the money to send them to school. Fred started first grade when he was almost 8. Financial difficulties also kept Fred's siblings from completing their educations. His oldest brother, Alexander, was forced to drop out of school in seventh grade, while Victor dropped out of secondary school. Nancy, the youngest left school when she got pregnant at the age of 16.

Fred achieved decent marks on his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam (which is unfortunately not the case with most of our HOPE students — something that we are working hard to change). That opened secondary school opportunities for him. However, the reality of paying for secondary school threatened to kill any chance of him actually being able to attend. Fortunately, we were able to help Fred at this critical point. He was accepted into HOPE, and our financial support allowed him to complete secondary school.

Upon completing secondary school, Fred had a secondary-school diploma but no marketable job skills (a challenge that all our students face).

Our hope is to eventually be able to send all our HOPE graduates to post-secondary school education to better prepare them for jobs and careers. Unfortunately, we currently do not yet have funding to do this. But we do have funding to at least send a few select students to post-secondary school education. Fred was one of the students we chose, based on his effort and commitment to success.

Since he was a small kid, Fred always dreamed of working on cars. As a child, he would make toy cars from tin cans. After completing secondary school, Fred enrolled in an auto mechanics program. He completed the one-year course and did well on the certification exam—in fact, so well that we decided to give him an even



Fred helping with his mother's food business.

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greater chance for success and competitive advantage by sponsoring him for a second year of training. Fred is currently finishing this second year of training, which was interrupted by COVID, and is hoping to take the certification exam in August.

Fred is a part-time student. In addition to going to school, he helps his mother with her business of cooking and selling food at construction sites. He also has a small business selling laundry soap.

After finishing school, Fred is hoping to find employment at a motor vehicle mechanic shop. Unfortunately, the job market and the level of corruption in Kenya (you often have to pay people off to get a job) will make this challenging. If Fred cannot find a job, we are hoping that he can start his own business. Another one of my dreams is to be able to provide seed money to HOPE students like Fred to start small businesses after completing their education.



Fred -caption here.

Fred is so happy that he will be able to earn money repairing cars. Once he has a job and is earning money, he wants to help his mother expand her business. He also wants to help his siblings finish their educations and get jobs.

Fred's family lives in Bangladesh, one of Mombasa's informal settlements, where waste-filled ditches snake between huts of corrugated iron. Bangladesh is plagued by violence and drugs. Once he begins earning money as an auto mechanic, Fred hopes to be able to move his family to a better living environment.

Fred says that HOPE Project has brought light into his life and made his dreams come true. He said he would not be where he is now without HOPE. At HOPE, our goal is to give our students the opportunity for a brighter future by empowering them through education. Fred is a great example of what is possible.

Please consider a financial contribution to help other students like Fred realize their dreams.

God is good. *Mungu ni mwema.*
rtarro@mklm.org / richtarro.com / HOPEgivesHope.com / facebook.com/rich.tarro



Fred -caption here.

Please consider supporting HOPE Project and our continuing distribution of urgently needed emergency food assistance during this pandemic. Read more at mklm.org/tag/rich-tarro/

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