

**Rich Tarro, Kenya – Fall 2022**

**One family's struggles**



*Sister Pauline Andrew and HOPE Project's Florah Mwandoe visit Kahunda and her family outside the family's home.*

I visited the U.S. for the month of July — my first trip home since arriving in Kenya almost four years ago. I had a great time. I got to see my family and many of my friends as well as visit Newport, Rhode Island; and Washington, DC. I ate lots of food, like lasagna, that I can't get in Kenya.

I also got to personally thank a number of the people who so generously support my ministry in Kenya and without whom my work would not be possible. My time in the U.S. went by very quickly, and I unfortunately didn't get to see everyone that I had hoped to see. However, I'm happy to now be back in Kenya continuing my ministry work.

Upon returning to Kenya, I realized how quickly I had become re-accustomed to the creature comforts of home — running hot

water, air conditioning, a washer and dryer, a dishwasher, no power outages, high speed internet and cable TV. Upon arriving back in Kenya, I again came face to face with the stark realities of the conditions in which most of the children of the HOPE Project live. Before I left for my US visit, we had accepted 31 new students into the project. Many of their home situations are heartbreaking.

I often feel overwhelmed by the immensity of how many people need help and how much help they need. As I reflect on my ministry work, I see clearly the importance of humility. I don't mean humility in the sense of modesty, but rather accepting that I cannot do everything and trusting that if I do my best, God will do the rest. God uses willing vessels, regardless of our capabilities.

Kahunda and Thomas are the parents of two of our HOPE students. Neither Kahunda nor Thomas are able to read or write as they both grew up in poverty without the means to attend school. They moved to Mombasa 10 years ago in search of a better life. Kahunda washes clothes for a living, while Thomas performs manual labor, digging boreholes. However, as boreholes are now primarily dug using machines, Thomas has had no work. He resorts to going to the market every day to pick throwaways left by sellers — like bad fruits, vegetables, and potatoes, to bring home to feed his family.

They live in a one-room thatched structure with a mud floor that has no water or electricity. They have an outside toilet, which is constructed with sacks for walls and is in bad shape. The house caught fire

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previously (as thatched structures are prone to do) and the family lost what little they had.

Kahunda and Thomas are blessed with six children — three of whom never attended school. Juma is 22 years old and works at a construction site, where he earns \$2 per day. Many weeks he is only able to find work one day a week. Sometimes he goes a month without getting any jobs. Saidi is 20 years old and also works at a construction site.

Charo is 18 and works as a night guard. His salary is supposed to be \$15 a month, but his employer often does not pay him the full amount he is owed. Sometimes Charo is only given half that. The fourth-born, Juliet, dropped out of school after class 8 as Kahunda and Thomas could not afford to send her to high school.



*The family home (with attached toilet)*



*Florah providing HOPE Project food to Kahunda*

Their fifth child, Safari, is 16 years old and in Grade 8, and the youngest, Happy, is 14 years old and in Grade 6. The educational needs of both Safari and Happy are now supported by the HOPE Project.

The money the family earns is not nearly enough to feed themselves. They depend on the generosity of others to survive and whatever unwanted produce Thomas can scavenge from the market; many days the family is forced to go without food. The HOPE Project has begun providing them food as part of our monthly food distribution. The family sleeps on the floor because they lack mattresses. We are hoping to purchase mattresses for the family as we have done for the families of other HOPE students.

Kahunda and Thomas are grateful to the HOPE project for agreeing to support Safari and Happy in school. Kahunda says her prayer is that Safari performs well academically so that he can proceed to high school and get good grades that will lead to a good job. She hopes Safari will change their lives. We will do our best to help Safari succeed in school, but that is a lot to expect from a 16-year-old boy who is only in eighth grade.

God is good!  
Rich ([rtarro@mklm.org](mailto:rtarro@mklm.org))

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----- TEAR -----

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