

Rich Tarro, Kenya – Fall 2023

Dressed for success

In the opening chapters of the Bible, God creates the world and brings us forth to participate in the unfolding of God’s creative plan. The Catholic Church teaches that in work, a person exercises and fulfills the potential inscribed in our nature. It follows from this that everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for their life and that of their family, and of serving the human community.

While the focus of the HOPE Project is the education of orphans and vulnerable children, our end goal is for our students to have jobs so that they can earn money for themselves and their families and have happy lives. In support of this goal, we give every student the opportunity to get a post-secondary school education to develop marketable job skills. We have students studying everything from architecture to hairdressing.

With the difficult job market in Kenya, many of our students are not able to secure stable, reasonable paying jobs, even with the benefit of college or vocational training. Given this, the only way to enable our students to break out of poverty is to help them start their own small businesses, which is what we are now doing.



Eunice working at her sewing machine



Eunice at her graduation, with Florah

Eunice is 23 years old. She lost her mother when she was only 12, and she and her brother Ian began living with their maternal grandparents. Eunice’s father remarried a few years later and took Eunice and Ian to live with him. Eunice and Ian had missed their dad and were excited to be reunited with him. Unfortunately, this part of the story was not meant to have a happy ending. The stepmother was abusive to Eunice and Ian, often depriving them of food and refusing to pay their school fees, which caused them to be sent home from school.

It was at this point that the HOPE Project became aware of Eunice and Ian. Ian began boarding school (secondary school) and Eunice returned to her grandparents and started a course in fashion and

design at a vocational school, which the HOPE Project funded.

In the second semester of her course, Eunice started losing her voice and experiencing bad headaches. We took her to a doctor, and our worst fears were confirmed. Eunice had cancer of the larynx. We supported her cancer treatment, which consisted of five chemotherapy sessions and 33 sessions of radiation therapy.

Despite having to travel many times to Nairobi and being fatigued by the aggressive treatment, Eunice was determined to finish her fashion and design course. Because she missed so many classes, she was delayed in taking her certification exam. When she finally sat for her certification exam in April, she emerged with the second highest score and was awarded a distinction.

At the end of June, we helped Eunice start a tailoring business. We provided her with a new sewing machine and other tools and equipment as well as enough materials and supplies to get her business started. Our goal, as with all our small business initiatives, is to empower our students to get their business up and running, but then make them responsible for the ongoing operation and success of the business. Eunice is doing a great job with her new business.



Eunice measuring me for pants and trousers. In the background, outfits she has made.

Eunice's graduation ceremony was at the beginning of September. When giving a speech at the graduation ceremony to her family and friends, Eunice thanked the HOPE Project. She said that HOPE gave her her life back and that the HOPE Project was her family.



Eunice modeling a dress she has made.

Eunice is planning to take her grade 2 level fashion and design certification exam later this year. She is now in the process of practicing and preparing for the exam. We know that she will give it her best effort, even while continuing cancer treatments.

Eunice is an amazing young woman. Despite all the adversity she has had to overcome and continues to face, she is always cheerful and does not dwell on her disease. It is not hard to see why she makes friends so easily. She is also very focused and loves her job.

We really admire Eunice's courage and determination. We are so proud of what she has accomplished, but even more so, how she lives her life and the person that she has become.

God is good. Please consider contributing to our efforts to help more young adults like Eunice start small businesses. It is the only way to help lift them out of poverty.

Please consider supporting my mission work at the HOPE Project with a donation. To **donate by MAIL**, please return the bottom portion of this letter with your payment in the envelope. You can also **donate ONLINE** at tinyurl.com/hope-project-2023.

I also invite you to **walk with me as a "COMPANION IN MISSION."** Companions in Mission are friends and generous donors who give financial gifts on a regular (usually monthly) basis. For more information, visit mklm.org/become-a-companion-in-mission. Thank you so much for your generosity!

More about HOPE Project at mklm.org/tag/rich-tarro/, HOPEgivesHOPE.com, or facebook.com/rich.tarro.

TEAR

Thank you for supporting both my HOPE Project ministry and the Missioner Sustenance Fund that helps to keep me and my fellow lay missionaries in mission.

As a thank you for being a friend of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, we are delighted to offer you an opportunity to create your legal will. It's 100% free to you, and most people finish in 20 minutes or less. Visit freewill.com/mklm.
Maryknoll Lay Missioners is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization.

YES, I would like to make a gift of \$_____ to support Rich's ministry and sustenance.

I wish to make this a recurring gift: Monthly Quarterly Annually

Enclosed is my check made payable to Maryknoll Lay Missioners; the memo is **Rich Tarro**.

Please charge my credit card: Visa Master Card Discover AMEX

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