

# Welcome to our Matanya's Hope Newsletter



Website: [www.matanyashope.org](http://www.matanyashope.org)

## MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER



**Michelle Stark, President, Matanya's Hope  
A Season of Gratitude**

“Dear Friends and Donors,  
As we enter this Thanksgiving season, I am filled with deep gratitude for each of you—our dedicated sponsors, donors, volunteers, and partners—all who make the Matanya's Hope mission possible. This time of year invites us to reflect on the blessings in our lives, but it also calls us to remember the children and families who continue to face unspeakable challenges of hunger, neglect, abandonment and homelessness, often without the resources or support they so desperately need”.

**“Thanks to your generosity, we are able to bring hope and opportunity to thousands of children who are working hard to overcome their obstacles to a brighter future. Whether it's through providing warm-nutritious meals, shelter, tutoring, mentorship, bicycles, or essential school supplies, your kindness transforms lives.** The impact of your contributions goes far beyond what we can measure—it reaches the hearts and minds of children, empowering them to dream bigger and reach higher than they ever thought possible before you touched their lives.

This Thanksgiving and Holiday season, as we gather with loved ones and share in the warmth of the season, let's also take a moment to acknowledge the strength and resilience of the children and families we serve. Their courage in the face of adversity is an inspiration to us all, and it's an honor to walk alongside each one of them on their life journeys.”

“In a world that often feels divided, we have the power to come together to make a difference. Your unwavering support makes it possible for us to continue our work and expand our reach to some of the most desperate children in need.

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## MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER CONTD.



**Simon**



**Wilcresta**



**Abdi**



**Mercy**

### Children at Matanya's Hope : Expressing their Gratitude to All Donors and Sponsors!

Please consider extending your generosity through a donation that provides comfort and care to those who need it most. **You can help sponsor a warm holiday meal for a university student for just \$25, or provide a family with holiday food for \$50-\$100, or one of our 2 safe houses for children with a family meal for \$175.** If you are looking to make a lasting impact, consider supporting our **Porridge Program with an annual donation of \$1,500 (\$125/month)**, ensuring that 250+ hungry children start their school day for an entire year - with a nourishing meal that fuels their potential. Your donation in any amount is appreciated.

**On behalf of everyone at Matanya's Hope, thank you for your kindness, your belief in our mission, and your commitment to making the world a better place for children who need it most. We are truly grateful for you.**

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm and joyful Thanksgiving & Holiday Season.  
With heartfelt appreciation."

**Michelle Stark**

**President & Founder, Matanya's Hope**

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## CELEBRATING KINDNESS DAY: TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO GIVE BACK

In a world that often emphasizes receiving, Matanya's Hope Kindness Day stands as a reminder of the importance of giving back. It's dedicated to teaching our children that kindness is not just the powerful force that has changed their lives; it is also a powerful force that they can share to help others. As we guide the next generation, we must encourage them not only to seek kindness but also to be its source.

**Kindness extends beyond material gifts; it is about sharing time, listening to others, offering a helping hand, and being there when someone needs a friend.** When children offer a smile or an encouraging word, they begin to understand the deep, intrinsic joy that comes from making someone else's day brighter.

**Kindness is more than giving.** It's also about learning. We've designed Kindness Day to teach our children the importance of sharing their own stories, whether through a kind gesture or a conversation. By encouraging them to speak of their unique life experiences, we foster empathy and understanding. When they hear the stories others share with them, they learn about different lives, and about the needs we all share: love, respect, and hope.

**A simple act of kindness can ripple outwards, encouraging others to act with compassion.**

Your support helps our children realize that their actions matter and can have a very powerful impact. Each donation, big or small, helps ensure Kindness Day continues to inspire and grow our children.

Giving is about cultivating hope, building stronger communities, and helping children realize the power they have to make a difference. By nurturing kindness, we teach our children to **"be the change they wish to see"** in the world - Mahatma Gandhi.

**We simply can't do all that is needed without you. Every contribution strengthens our efforts.**



Please click this [link](http://www.matanyashope.org) or above QR code to see how our Matanya's Hope children touched the lives of others in need.

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## A STORY OF SUCCESS: THE MATANYA'S HOPE PORRIDGE PROGRAM

### Why We Started...

Twenty years ago, I looked into the eyes of Kenyan children suffering from hunger and malnutrition. It was clear—hunger was stealing hope and destroying lives. It was robbing children of their vibrance, their energy, and their potential. I vowed to help, and the Matanya's Hope Porridge Program was born. Today, 20 years later, Matanya's Hope is feeding thousands of children in 8 schools across Kenya. More children come to school; they learn and receive a warm, nutritious meal to help them grow and thrive.



### You Can Make a Difference Today.

For less than 4 cents a day, you can provide a meal that nourishes both the body and the mind. Every meal we serve helps children come to school ready to learn. When children are well-fed, their academic performance improves, and their hope for the future grows stronger. By donating, you are giving more than just a meal—you're giving children the chance to succeed. Your kindness ensures they are nourished, focused, and empowered to build a brighter future.

**Together, We Can End Childhood Hunger and Create Lasting Change.**



Matanya's Hope is striving to feed families and school-aged children. Help us fight hunger! Please watch 'the video of Hope' by clicking the link [here](#) or by using QR code above.

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## A STORY OF SUCCESS: THE MATANYA'S HOPE PORRIDGE PROGRAM

The Matanya's Hope Porridge Program is more than a meal—it's an investment in education and opportunity. With your help, we can continue feeding children every school day, breaking the cycle of hunger and paving the way for a better tomorrow.

When you donate any amount, you're not just helping us feed a child—you're helping a child unlock their full potential. Join us today, and be a part of this life-changing mission.



### A Message from Kithingiririni Primary School (Porridge Recipients)

*"Hello to everyone at Matanya's Hope. On behalf of my school, Kathingiririni Primary School, we wish to thank you in a big way for your continued support with porridge. Many lives have changed. Due to this porridge, the population in school has increased and we, the children are ever waiting for break time to take the porridge. Many of us are children who come to school having taken nothing for supper the night before - or for breakfast in the morning. I am one of them. We come and wait for the porridge. Thank you for making it possible for us to have hope and energy to learn".*

*Muthoni*



**Excitement of Children and their gratitude at the Kathingiririni Primary School**

can be viewed in the video  
[Click here for the link](#) or  
 use QR code above

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## PROGRAMS IN NEED!

### SAFE HOUSING FOR OUR AT RISK YOUTH

Matanya's Hope's needs are changing. The urgency to continue housing our at risk young children and teen girls remains critical. We need your DONATIONS to provide these healing environments for children who have no one else to care for them. Some Kenyan families sell their young girls to older suitors, looking to offload them and to gain wealth in exchange. The girl child is rarely considered to be of value in many of the very rural Kenyan areas. Many of the boys born into abject poverty are often set free to roam without the support of food, structure and guidance. They don't go to school; they must do manual labor in exchange for food.

Please help us keep our children safe as we continue to love and guide them, teaching them of their incredible value as precious human beings.

**This is how you can help:**

**Rent \$2,340 / year (\$195 / month)**

**Food: \$200 / month**

**Utilities: \$65 / month**

**Clothing / toiletries: \$50 / child**

**Sanitary Pads: \$5 / month / girl**

If you would like to personally support one of these special children, please let us know by contacting:

[mstark@matanyashope.org](mailto:mstark@matanyashope.org)



**\$25 --> Helps pay for one counseling session or a single serving holiday dinner**  
**\$35 - \$50 --> Provides new clothes and shoes for one child**  
**\$50 - \$100 --> Food provisions for a hungry child or family**  
**\$250--> Laptops for university students**  
**\$500 --> 2 1/2 months rent for Safe House**  
**\$1,700--> Assists with the provision of Rainwater Storage Tanks where needed most**

Matanya's Hope is a registered 501 C3 organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law.

**How to Donate:**

**ZELLE: 708-822-4673**

**VENMO @Michelle-Stark-11**

**CHECK:**

**Matanya's Hope**

**PO Box 572. Homewood, IL 60430**

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## OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS !

### DISTRIBUTION OF PADS TO GIRLS ESCAPING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) & FORCED EARLY MARRIAGE



Girls running from forced early marriage and FGM - receiving pads



Matanya's Hope graduate, Jennifer Kisemei, speaks encouragement to girl children escaping FGM & Forced Early Marriage



[Click here to learn more](#) about our sanitary pad programs and FGM. Gratitude of girls receiving support from Matanya's Hope's founder and donors

### DONATION OF TWO WHEEL CHAIRS TO TWO CHILDREN NAMED LENKANASA NCHOE AND SAITABAIL NCHOE

Thanks to our sponsor, the Sharon, Massachusetts Rotary Club!



Before



After

Both boys suffering from muscular dystrophy live in extreme poverty in the Olooriri Village in a remote Massai area with their single mother. These children now could attend school with assistance of these wheelchairs!

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## OUR SUCCESS STORY: FEATURING JANET WATIRI WANJIKU

My name is Neil Dutta; I am a junior Board Member for Matanya's Hope. This past July, I traveled to Kenya and was privileged to meet and interview Matanya's Hope alumna, Ms. Janet Watiri Wanjiku and Fanwell Thurairara - along with Matanya's Hope High School student: Yvonne Kiong'a. I was thrilled to spend time with them all in the rural town of Nanyuki which is situated at the base of Mt Kenya.



Janet Watiri Wanjiku her son Denzel

### In this edition, I share with you my interview with Ms. Janet.

After just a few minutes of conversation, we became friends, and this greatly impacted the outcome of our interview. However, when I returned to the United States, I realized that the sound quality of our initial interview was poor and we decided to redo the interview via a Zoom call.

During this second interview, I also had the pleasure of meeting Janet's 1 year old son, Denzel, who was incredibly adorable.

Throughout our conversation, Ms. Janet shared her remarkable story of hope, hopelessness and endurance as she recounted her childhood hardships, which to me, were unimaginable. Ms Janet was raised by her single mother, who was forced into prostitution to provide for her two daughters. Ms. Janet and her younger sister endured severe challenges, including abuse, school bullying, hunger, and neglect. When Ms Janet's mother was arrested, Ms Janet, still a child herself, was left alone to care for her younger sister. This caused her to fall behind in her education. However, Ms Janet's life took a positive turn in 2013 when she met Michelle Stark, who welcomed her into Matanya's Hope. With their support, Janet was able to complete her education and become a teacher.

While in college, Ms. Janet began volunteering at one of Matanya's local day schools. She also began helping Michelle with the Matanya's Hope porridge program which feeds thousands of at risk and needy children every day of school. Eventually, Ms Janet became a teacher and guardian at one of the organization's safe homes for teens. In this role, she tirelessly supports at-risk and vulnerable girls, working hard to meet their basic and emotional needs. She is now happily married to a fellow Matanya's Hope alumnus and teacher. During our interview, Ms. Janet emphasized her personal motivation and left a powerful message: "Never lose hope."

Learn more about Janet Watiri Wanjiku inspiring story, her journey with MH and her incredible support to our children by clicking the link to his interview [HERE](#) or using QR code below.





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## A TRIBUTE TO MARIE ELLEN



**Marie Ellen**

**December 8, 1949- October 6, 2024**

### Michelle Stark, Founder, Matanya's Hope

I am blessed to have shared Matanya's Hope with Marie Ellen as a devoted sponsor of the Matanya's Hope Porridge Program and to Moreen and Kennedy, two students she sponsored academically until her final days. I am blessed to call Marie Ellen my friend. She imprinted countless lives, including my own, with her welcoming spirit, her incredible strength and her loving heart. Marie lived her life's passion every day, loving and healing those around her. Her love was especially felt by Moreen and Kennedy, (sponsored by Marie), and by Ronny (sponsored by Marie's son).

To you, Marie, I miss you dearly my friend. I carry your essence with me in my heart. Your compassion transformed my life. Thank you for being a guiding light. Rest peacefully, dear friend. Your legacy of love will endure lifetimes.

### *Marie Ellen Changed My Life.*

*My name is Moreen Makena. As a child, I had no hope of going to school. Through Matanya's Hope, Marie Ellen sponsored me and changed my life. She made me feel loved and transformed my heart from feeling hopeless in life to feeling as if I could become somebody of substance.*

*Marie: I will always remember you for the change you made in my life. I was a desperate girl from an impoverished background. I qualified for university education, but my family could not afford to send me. We prayed and God sent you Marie, as my destiny helper. You loved me, cared for me and provided my school fees. Every time Michelle came to Kenya, you sent her with gifts for me. You always included my mum, my little sister and my brother. You wrote me letters updating me about your son and Daughter and the grandchildren. I always loved when you sent me pictures. We were across oceans Marie, but I felt so connected to your soul. I still do. Because of you, Marie, I was able to finish my university education. I am now working and able to support myself and others. I have a little son. What I give him is a result of all you have given me, the greatest of which is hope and love. I thank God for you Marie.*

*May you soul rest in perfect peace Peace. Blessings to your son, daughter and grandchildren.*

*Your Kenyan daughter,*

*Moreen Makena*

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## A TRIBUTE TO MARIE ELLEN CONTD.



**Marie Ellen has touched countless lives and brought joy and smiles to the children of Matanya's Hope with her thoughtful gifts, which include bracelets, blankets, school supplies, shoes, and shirts**

*"Today, I celebrate the life of my guiding light. She was more than an angel to me. She believed in my dreams when I hardly believed in myself. Mom Marie was my unwavering support.*

*I felt invisible, lost and uncertain about my future; but she was there.*

*Dear Mom Marie,*

*You saw potential in me when I could not even see it in myself. Your belief in my dreams, your encouragement and your generosity became the light that guided me out of the darkest moments of my life. I was a small village boy without shoes and dressed in torn clothes. I was unable to attend school due to poverty. Others saw a hopeless boy, but you saw potential in me.*

*You gave me Hope. Every accomplishment I have achieved since you sponsored me is part because of you. Your kindness opened doors I never thought I would walk through. Because of that, my life has transformed in ways I could never have imagined.*

*Today, I am in university, actively and passionately pursuing a teaching degree. I stand on firmer ground because of you. I am constantly reminded of where it all began - with your faith in me. Thank you mom Marie, from the bottom of my heart, for being my rock, my sponsor, and my unwavering support. You have changed my life!*

*I know that if you were here, you would tell me not to grieve for too long, not to lose hope, but to carry on the work you believed in so deeply; spreading love, generosity and kindness. I will honor your memory by teaching these lessons to others who are where I once was. I will lift them up Mom, just as you lifted me.*

*I will ensure that your spirit lives on through every step I take, every life I touch, and every success I achieve. Your legacy will live on in me.*

*Rest in peace dear Mom Marie. I shall honor you always"*

*Your Kenyan son,  
Kennedy Muthomi*