

Annual Report

August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022

Assistance to the Mercy Project in Kenya



Message from Sr. Rose

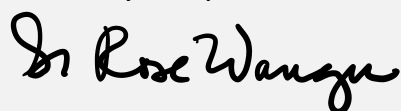
The Mercy Center Foundation has continued its efforts to support the completion of the academic campus and continued to respond to the most critical needs of the school this year. The Mother of Mercy Girls School is building a modern foundation and empowering girls in Kenya to achieve their dreams.

Students resumed their schooling in the 2022 school year with little disruptions following the Covid19 shutdown of our school last year. After being out for so long students were intent on finishing the school year successfully!

We continued to connect with the girls in Kenya with Commissioned by Christ, a private ngo ministry of the Arlington Diocese in Virginia. A virtual missionary program exchange connected us in early 2022 through Zoom to address the needs and spiritual health of the girls who discussed their daily lives with two Mercy Board Members and several new missionary volunteers. Later in July 2022, another successful missionary team visited Kenya to participate and work on the projects at hand. The connections between us grow stronger as we seek to assist girls in Kenya and the USA to understand the challenges we face everyday and to share experiences and bonds of friendship.

Final efforts this year included finishing the school's administration building, purchasing a new school bus and acquiring additional land for a track and field complex to be built in future. Without all of you and our generous donors who believed in this vision – we would have never come this far. We are poised now to build and sustain the dream of girls' education and excellence for our community now in Kenya.

With my deepest thanks and continued prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Rose Wangui". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Sr.", "Rose", and "Wangui" being capitalized and prominent.

Sr. Rose Wangui, VHM

Founder, Mercy Project and Mercy Center Foundation, USA

MISSION

The Mercy Center Foundation, USA seeks to provide the Lare community in Kenya with international, humanitarian and technical assistance to support access to clean water, a basic health care clinic and a girl's secondary school which assists more than 250 girls to attain a high school education. The work of the Mercy Project also directly impacts the lives of villagers, improving their future opportunities for a better life. In the next school cycle we will include grades 7th and 8th grades to our school in order to adapt to the new Kenyan education system.

The Mother of Mercy Girls School employs fourteen full time teachers, and three security guards, three cooks, a nurse and lab technician for the health clinic, a driver, two farm hands, a secretary and Principal of the School. Sr. Mary Siegie was welcomed at the school this year and will serve as the main point person on the progress and funding to the Mercy Project in Lare, Kenya. The school is working on acquiring modern learning tools, updated study areas and space that will inspire teachers and students to work together cooperatively. In this way, strong bonds of friendship and a culture of serious learning are being forged. These incremental changes gradually impact the culture and spirit of the school in very positive ways. A proud school spirit is growing amongst students and is taking root at our school each year! Alumni are also coming back to show their support!

Summary of Project Activities

The project activities we focused on for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2022 included: completion of the administration building on the main campus, funding a water project that installed new water tanks on campus and establishing new greenhouses for the vegetable farming project. A new biogas project was completed with a grant from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This new project is part of an overall environmental effort and will be a useful source of renewable energy. An exciting pilot STEM Project was also begun last Spring and will continue in 2023 if funds are secured - these programs will continue to assist girls and interest them in modern skills concepts of STEM practicums. We also

continued with virtual and in person missionary trips to Kenya through Commissioned by Christ of the Arlington Diocese of VA. We focused on raising funds for the Acacia Scholarship Fund established to support the girls most in need to attend the Mercy Girls Secondary School.

New Administration Building is Ready for Teachers and Professional Staff

The construction of the new administration building for the Mercy Girls' Secondary School which began in 2020 was completed in summer of 2022 and provides meeting space for the leadership and teaching staff of the school.



Newly completed Administration building in 2022.

In addition, repairs to roofs on the guest house and the teacher housing units on the campus were performed as badly needed upgrades were also completed on the campus.

In partnership with the online teaching company Moonshot Jr., Inc. the school offered students the opportunity to learn not only about technology, but also to learn the skills needed to become an entrepreneur. The program is designed to give students tools and skills to enable them to identify needs in their community, use technology to develop potential solutions, and learn how to bring successful innovations to market. In addition, the STEM project will assist students aspiring to meet the challenges of future college level course requirement programs. The new information technology program was piloted with 20 students. In 2022, the STEM project continued and the pilot aims to be finished in 2023 if funding can be secured for additional training session to the students who expressed greatest interest and commitment. The teachers were impressed by the new enthusiasm this project generated as well as the competence of those training students on line.

It is now important to secure funds for the continuation of the program going forward and to connect with local Kenyan partners if possible to assist in furthering STEM projects.

CBC Leads the Missionary Team to Kenya in July 2022



In July 2022, Commissioned by Christ (CBC), a non-profit Catholic mission organization in the Diocese of Arlington, successfully completed a fourth in-person mission trip to the Mercy Girls' Secondary School in Kenya. One of CBC's first post-pandemic mission trips since 2019, the group of 14 was led by CBC team leaders Tom Edwards and Fatima Godfrey. The chaplain was Fr. Richard Miserendino, St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Springfield, VA, and the team was composed of adults from Virginia and Texas.

The mission team's main objective was to help build out a cement foundation for a new barn for the onsite farming and energy effort. Work entailed many hours of manually transporting large rocks in wheel barrels, breaking them into smaller pieces with sledge hammers, followed by mixing cement into concrete which was then hand-poured onto the foundation of rocks. The team, in conjunction with local contractors, worked diligently to complete the project, but they were also able to enjoy moments of fun along the way. Additional purchases of cows will

further support the biogas project also begun in 2021 as manure waste is recycled and used to source clean energy for the school.



A completed foundation for a new cow barn by the CBC missionary team in July 2022!



The Missionaries were delighted to also have the opportunity to glean cabbage from the school's garden and help prepare it for the girls' dinner.



Simon, the farm manager (center) explains the new projects and greenhouse farming efforts to sustain the school.

The group was impressed by the extensive greenhouse network and were given a thorough tour by the farm manager, through the rows of vegetables and herbs now being grown and harvested to support the school.

During the week, CBC missionaries also assisted with the cultivation of the vegetables in the greenhouses, in addition to hoeing and planting seeds in the outdoor fields.



Chives being harvested for markets at the Mercy Project's Farming Program.



The students welcomed a new farm truck transport vehicle that will assist the Mercy Project to transport its vegetables and greenhouse products to market. The truck was acquired in 2022 from private donors.



Fr. Richard Miserendino of St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Springfield, VA giving a blessing over the school and the students and the CBC missionaries.

The mission team was thankful for the multiple opportunities throughout the week to spend time with the girls, attend Mass with the school community, including with staff and teachers, and to see the site of the proposed new track and field center. Evenings began with an optional trip to the Marian grotto with the mission team and praying the rosary. It was a beautiful demonstration of shared faith, hope and love. After dinners, the mission team spent time together in reflection and prayer before visiting the girls in the classrooms and on the school grounds. CBC missionaries learned firsthand about the girls' experiences in Kenya and were able to share stories with the girls and have a genuine exchange of experiences about both countries.



Missionaries were delighted to be treated to a cultural heritage fashion event which showcased the diverse and unique Kenyan tribes represented in the student population. The field game day was a fun, loud and a high-energy experience allowing the girls, teachers and missionaries to compete with and against one another. Laughter could be heard from one end of the campus to the other! The day before returning, Fr. Miserendino led the entire school and mission team around the campus for a blessing of all the academic buildings, dormitories, new administration building, cow barn and livestock.

And in an effort to support Pope Francis' call for us to Care for Our Common Home, each CBC missionary challenged themselves to use a refillable water bottle or a singular plastic water bottle all week, and to return all used plastics to the U.S. for recycling. In addition Kenya's moves to recycle and ban plastic bags, etc. was

respected by the group which renewed discussions at the campus on climate change and the importance of supporting all green programs. The result was only a half-filled bag of plastic waste which was delivered to the Fairfax County Recycling Center upon CBC's return. CBC is looking forward to returning in July 2023.



Michelle Haworth, Executive Director of the CBC participated in the mission to Kenya also and is pictured finishing the recycling effort from Kenya in the USA upon her return.

Half Marathons Continued to Support Girls Education in 2021-2022



The races bring together runners from many diverse communities in the USA to help support girls' education. The half marathons are run every year in Spring and Fall at Fletcher's Cove along the beautiful C&O Canal in Washington, D.C. Runners received great finisher medals and awards from Down Dog Yoga, Barrel Oak Winery. Balducci's and Saxby's Coffee sponsors donated all the light fare for the race. The fall Georgetown Half Marathon did go virtual yet we were able to support Kenya with a 10k donation despite the Covid19 pandemic's restrictions.



Sr. Rose and student volunteers at the Towpath Half Marathon in Spring 2022.

Additionally, race sponsors include Georgetown Running Company, AMNION, Soft Edge, Saxby's, the Bricklayers International Union, ULLICO, Barrel Oak Winery. These races have become a well known success in the Washington, D.C. area. So many look forward to competing each year and we now host hundreds of runners from the broader United States and all of those interested in the cause of supporting girls' education in rural Kenya. All net proceeds support girls' education and targeted programs for healthy lifestyles and living.

ACACIA Girls' Scholarship Fund Established for the Mercy Girls Secondary School



The Mercy Board of Directors raised funds to help support the girls scholarship fund in Kenya. The Acacia tree, known for its strength and endurance through treacherous, heavy storms and devastating droughts was chosen to symbolize the strength that girls demonstrate when they aim to succeed and chart their own path in life. Named after this famous national tree, the Acacia Girls' Scholarship Fund will help to assist girls most in need and qualified to attend the Mercy Girls Secondary School. Each year, depending on donations to the fund, we will seek to assist the Mercy Girls by providing a certain number of scholarships each year.

Funds raised in 2021 and 2022 will help to support more than 60 scholarships which assist girls to finish Secondary School and go on to college or other job training skills programs to support success following completion of high school.



Students observe and assist as the new school bus for the Mercy School is blessed.

Funds obtained from a private benefactor helped to purchase a new school bus for the Mercy School. The bus is badly needed to transport students to and from school and helps to assist the school now to arrange field trips.



Mercy Girls express joy and smiles in their new school bus!

Financial Report

The Mercy Center Foundation, USA undergoes financial reviews or audits and continues to be an organization in good standing. The Board meets regularly to address the ongoing issues and projects as well as fundraising plans of the Foundation.

Our financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2022 can be found on our website under the donate button.

The Mercy Center Foundation, USA supports a fully transparent and accountable approach towards financing of the Mercy Project. We do this by encouraging volunteerism and partnerships with other like-minded companies, organizations and private foundation donors and friends of Sr. Rose.

Looking Ahead to 2022-2023

The Mercy Center Foundation, USA seeks to advance the school's plan to become self-sustainable over the long term, by providing continued support for micro-enterprise programs focused on income generating agribusiness farming and skills training.

The Board plans to continue to support a scholarship fund going forward after the school facilities are completed. We seek to help develop programs that will support the school's move toward financial independence and strengthen their ability to support their own administrative budget and school programs.

A very special thanks to the Georgetown Visitation community for its special help with this project including all of the Sisters of the Visitation, the students and parent volunteers.

Keep standing up for girls in Kenya and sharing this project with your friends, family and colleagues! We thank you all!

Mercy Center Foundation, USA

Brian J. Doherty, President

Nick Guglielmo, Finance Officer

Tony DeCarlo, Communications

Tom Edwards, Member at Large

Julie Waddell, Legal Counsel

Adrianne V. Doherty, Special Projects

Please visit us at www.mercyproject.org

The Mercy Center Foundation, USA, 1500 35th Street, Washington, DC 20007

We are a 501c3 organization and all donations are tax exempt. Tax id: 54-2124269