

## Letter from Jitegemee *by Michael Kimeu*

Over the past year, the staff and children at Jitegemee have faced many challenges emanating from difficult economic times. In 2009, Kenya experienced one of the worst droughts in our history, which killed animals and crops across the country and created widespread hunger. Today, thankfully, rain has returned and our economy has begun to recover. But the price of food and basic goods has remained too high for many poor families. Many children dropped from school due to lack of food and money for small expenses, such as after-school tuition payments. But thanks to the friends and supporters of Jitegemee, we managed to walk the year without registering any school drop outs.

Our work with street children is driven at all times by understanding that each child is an individual with a unique set of experience, aspirations, needs and challenges. We conduct comprehensive surveys in schools that our children attend to assess their academic progress. We also ensure that we conduct personal evaluations of all Jitegemee-sponsored school children, especially during the three month-long school holidays that they spend at our center. This assists us make the right decision on how to support the kids. Talking with their teachers and classmates helps Jitegemee staff understand our children's challenges even better. Each one of

us does his part and considers that the welfare of these children is our own responsibility.



This year, we held a graduation ceremony for 54 vocational students (21 girls and 33 boys) who have made the transition from the streets to the workplace. "I don't know where I would be now if it were not for the Jitegemee program," said Lucy Kavunga, who is now a qualified tailor and dressmaker. "It is amazing that I play a very great role in supporting my family with food and school support for my siblings." "Before I joined Jitegemee I would not express myself, I was untrustworthy and did not care what happened," said Stephen Mwanza, who has been trained in motor vehicle wiring. "My mentor has a lot of trust in me. I am the person keeping records for this business and I do help him manage his work. He says he has a lot of faith in me and the customers give him similar

information. Thank you Jitegemee supporters for helping me become who I am."

Many of the vocational graduates have been employed by the mentors who taught them their trade. Others have opted to start their own small businesses. Street children are robbed of their dignity through communities' ignorance and fear; but Jitegemee has come out strongly to empower them and reaffirm their potential. Contrary to when the children were in the streets, now the majority of community members want to be associated with Jitegemee graduates. Street children need support to succeed in life.

Our secondary school program has not lagged behind. Currently, Jitegemee supports 13 scholars in prestigious secondary schools. This year, Nzioka Paul, who just began his first year at Kitondo Secondary School, has so far scored an A in all subjects, including science and mathematics. Sophie Mutuku, an orphan who began her first year at Misyani Girls High School, posted a B in almost all subjects.

Jitegemee is also pleased to report outstanding success in college. One recent graduate, Mwendu Musyoka, is already employed in early education, while another, Musa Tom, is working as a trained electrician.

We attribute much of this success to our  
*(Continued on page 2)*

### 2010 Events

**August 25, 2010**  
**It's A Date**  
Washington, DC

**October 2010**  
**Meet & Greet**  
Boston, MA

For more information, please visit  
[www.jitegemee.org](http://www.jitegemee.org)

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“attachment” program, where secondary school students spend school breaks working in an office or an institution as an unpaid intern. This program has built up the career ambitions of our students. After spending time working at a state-run wire news service, Jitegemee scholar Muli Kieti will be joining Kenya School of Mass Communication. Another recent second-



*Vocational Training*

ary school graduate, Mbithe Mutinda also intends to pursue a Diploma in Journalism, while Lilian Syokau will be joining the Kenya Medical Training College for a Diploma in Nursing.

Through experiences like these, Jitegemee’s children are developing personal esteem and are fulfilling their responsibilities for supporting other children. This year, we invited our secondary school kids to orient the younger Class 8 candidates on what happens in secondary school. Secondary school graduates also gave a talk about their life experiences after school to all Jitegemee scholars, demonstrating how former street children have developed aspiration and ambition for the future in addition to a sense of commitment to others.

In 2010, Jitegemee is working hard to realize our goal of building a new educational center with offices, class-

rooms, a library and a computer lab on an acre of land that we purchased last year. Although we have faced some unexpected hurdles along the way, we know that we shall realize our goal. We sincerely appreciate your donations which have made all this possible. Together, we will continue to make a difference in these children’s lives. **d**



*2009 Annual Field Trip*

## Building for the future by Charles Wambua Kieti

I will first begin by introducing myself. I am a student who just graduated from Jomo Kenyatta University with a Diploma in information technology, sponsored by Jitegemee. I have been a child in Jitegemee from 1996. I hope to continue my education if that chance opens up for me.

It was during our school vacation, in August 2009, when the Director informed me about some visitors who were to come that year. The visitors were none other than architects Mark Palmer and Raya Newman, board member Shu Kahn, her daughter Jenya, and husband Kevin, and teacher Emily Gasoi. These guys were led by dear Madam Farah. Their idea was to share with us about how to come up with a design for the new Jitegemee school.

A planning committee was formed composed of parents, staff and students. We met early in the morning to travel to Nairobi University School of Design where we met with professor Musau Kimeu. We saw different buildings with different designs, though they appeared to be very expensive. Pro-

fessor Kimeu led through our discussion in coming with an affordable plan to our new school. It took us not less than two hours! Every point discussed was put down in paper for future reference.



*Charles Kieti (seated) learning about computers.*

Then we went to Catholic University where we saw a rainwater catchments system and very huge concrete tanks, so big that they could hold large amounts of water that could be used if a drought occurs. Both parents and stu-

dents came up with such an idea so that Jitegemee can have such tanks—but these tanks seemed too expensive.

Then we were able to visit a solar panel shop. It was not encouraging because the solar panels were not very affordable. The day was coming to an end and everyone was tired. But the next day, we still had one more place to visit: The Limuru School.

It took us one hour to our destination. When we arrived, everyone was pleased because it looked affordable. We saw their program was just like Jitegemee. This was the kind of school we had been looking for. It had a nice and spacious library where kids could learn without interference, good classrooms, and plastic water tanks to collect rain. It gave us hope that we can have a school just like that.

It was an amazing and very important journey that was taking Jitegemee another step after many years.

**B**ravo, Jitegemee sponsors! **d**

# Q&A with Mark Palmer Architecture for Humanity DC

**Q: What is Architecture for Humanity?**

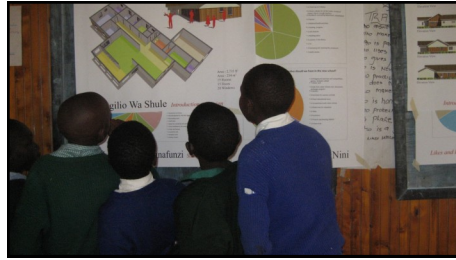
**A:** Architecture for Humanity is an organization that provides design services to people and groups that might not typically have access to architects, engineers, or designers. There are local Architecture for Humanity chapters all over the world.

**Q: What kind of projects have you worked on with Architecture for Humanity?**

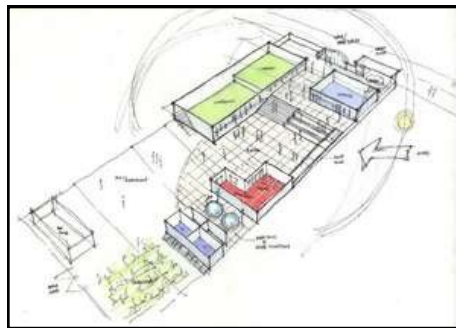
**A:** I've been fortunate enough to work on some small projects locally here in Washington, DC and also around the world. Several years ago, I travelled to Nigeria and helped to design a primary school there. The last project I worked on was a Children's Center in India. We designed a campus with dormitories for sixty boys, a community center, a kitchen and dining building, offices, a small market-place and a cricket field.

**Q: How is the Jitegemee building project different?**

**A:** The Jitegemee project is really different than any other project I've worked on because we've been able to work very closely with the actual school members - students, teachers, and parents - to design it. I think if you really want a project to be successful, you have to really get involved with the users and make them a part of the decision making process. We, as architects, know how to design, but the students, teachers, and parents, know Jitegemee. So, to really take advantage of this, we hosted a school design workshop with the school to start the design process off. We put together a "planning committee" together made up of about 9 students, 4 teachers, and 8 parents and had a four day long workshop with them to explain just what goes into designing a school, have discussions on what they liked and disliked, and what their short and long-term goals for the school were. We even travelled to other examples of new schools so they could get a feel for design and construction projects. It also allowed them to see concepts and solutions they might not have been familiar with in the first place. In the end, we felt



*Jitegemee scholars and parents during the design workshop*



*Preliminary Site Plan*

with a very good idea of the school, its members, and its goals. We all left not only as informed participants, but also as friends. It wasn't your typical architect-client relationship. Although we were still the architect and they were still the client, we were making decisions together on an equal footing. It really became a learning experience for everyone and helped to spread ownership of the project.

**Q: What is the building project status?**

**A:** We had a great start with the design workshop. From there we have been working through detailed design of the new school campus. When we left the workshop, we had a really good idea of what everyone wanted and why they wanted it. Presently we are taking all of that information and working on the details. Exactly how big are the classrooms?

How will the school be sustainable and use less energy and collect rainwater? Where is the best place for windows so there is enough natural light in the building without a lot of heat gain and glare? All of those kinds of details need to be figured out while still maintaining good communication with the planning committee in Machakos. As we make design-oriented decisions, we need them to respond and let us know if it will work for them programmatically. It's a process that takes longer than traditional design, but I think that in the end, the new Jitegemee campus will be specifically tailored to the organization's needs and wants and will be a very intimate solution to the school's experience.

**Q: What are the important next steps?**

**A:** I think the most important thing is to keep up the involvement and awareness of the project. This is actually a very unique endeavor and the more people that are involved and aware, the more successful it will be. For instance, I was recently invited to speak at a conference on Green Buildings in Africa in Nairobi, Kenya by the United Nations Human Settlement Division (UN-Habitat) where I gave a presentation on responsible design education, and community involvement. I was able to present the Jitegemee building project as a case study to the delegation and it was very well received. Many of the attendees were very interested in how they could learn more, if they could contribute, and how they might participate in projects like this in the future. It really proved that the way we are going about this building project is not only unique, but that the potential to build something really special at many different levels is very possible.

*Mark Palmer, LEED AP, is a member of the Washington, DC chapter of Architecture for Humanity and is the lead designer on the Jitegemee building project.*

*For more information or to contribute to the building fund, please visit [www.jitegemee.org](http://www.jitegemee.org).*



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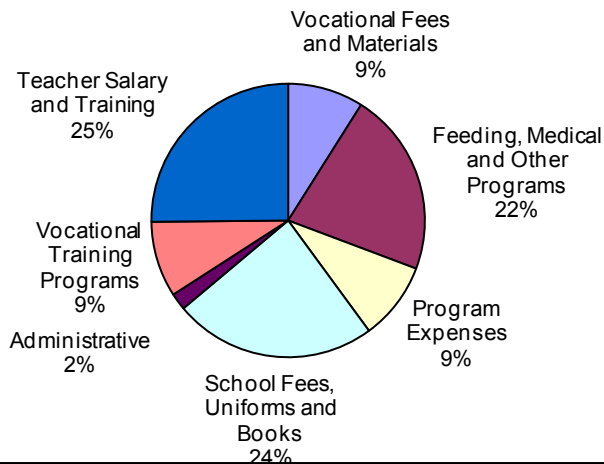
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### Jitegemee Program Expenses 2009



**Total 2009 Expenses: \$55,084**  
**Total 2010 Budget: \$69,479**

#### 2009 in Numbers:

**Total Number of Children Served: 163**

Number of children sponsored to elementary schools: 48  
Number of youth sponsored to high school and college: 17  
Number of youth sponsored to vocational training: 98

### Jitegemee Building Project

Jitegemee has a chance to win **\$12,000** for the building project.  
To help us, please give by **July 31** through:  
[www.globalgiving.org/leaderboards/green-open-challenge](http://www.globalgiving.org/leaderboards/green-open-challenge)

