



To create a future for Kenyan Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances by providing quality education and a safe, nurturing, sustainable home environment that is rooted in community and inspired by compassion.



Okoa Toto Family

Front from left: Michael, Jian, Rabecca, Faith, Joy, Mary, Abigael.
Mid from left: Melvin, Gabriel, Wesley, Brightson, Ramsey.
Back row from left – Staff: Erick, Christine, Kevina, Edith, Joshua.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE FIVE YEARS MAKE

Dear Friends,

Later this year, we are excited to celebrate the 5th Anniversary of Okoa Toto! Almost five years ago, on December 7, 2019, we dedicated the home and property which would serve as the main location for our Okoa Toto children's project. Prior to these dates, a gifted group of individuals, including a local Kenyan Advisory Council under the capable leadership of Social Worker Mark Okello, worked hard and long on clarifying the mission and underlying vision that supported it.

We believed then, as we do now, that a loving, nurturing and supportive home environment when coupled with a strong educational foundation, would be the key to some children having the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty they were otherwise destined to inherit. Moreover, it would allow them to make a major difference in their communities as responsible adults going forward. In January 2020, we were excited to welcome 12 children and a staff of five adults to live into the vision which was Okoa Toto.

Fast forward to today, and we are thrilled to report that the Okoa Toto project has far exceeded our hopes, dreams, and expectations. Our children are thriving in the loving and nurturing environment that has been created. They have all continued to thrive in their education at a nearby private school.

Brightson, our oldest scored so well on his national exams that he was selected to attend the prestigious **ST. PETERS BOYS HIGH SCHOOL** in Mumias, Kakamega County. This distinguished school is known for its strong educational foundation and wholistic character development. It was quite an honor to be selected, which was made by the Ministry of Education.

Ramsey and Abigael have transitioned to a new school, the **Lumakanda Junior Secondary School**. And, Ramsey, given his age, was honored to be chosen by his peers as Prefect (the equivalent of student body President).

Back at the home, the children continue to learn good hygiene, cooking (both the Kenyan and non-Kenyan way), computer skills (through the generous donations of four computers), animal care, and important environmental practices. There is also plenty of time to do chores, play games and enjoy life as part of the Okoa Toto family.

YES! Our children are thriving! You can see it in their smiles and in the sparkle in their eyes. You can see it in the academic achievements they are making. You can hear it in Mark Okello's report at our last Board meeting:

The academic transformation of each child is unbelievable.

The way the children are working together is great.

Such well-behaved and healthy children.

A staff that's doing tremendous work.

An Advisory Council that is keeping a watchful eye on things; swinging by often to say hi to the children.

The local government that continues to be pleased with the progress of Okoa Toto project.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and donors. **YOU have made this happen!** Without your faithful and ongoing support, these twelve children and the adults who support them, would embody the narrative of a far different story. Thank you does not seem strong enough to express our gratitude to you, but it is all we have.

We hope you feel the joy that the Okoa Toto project with your support has spread!

Doug Pierce
Co. Founder, 2024 Board President

p.s. It is the rainy season currently in Lumakanda and Mark is thrilled that the water tanks built to capture rain water are working well and supplying the home with a much-needed resource.



Brightson

Ramsey studying with Abigael.

Melvin
collecting
water
from the
well.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Become a monthly supporter (several donors have chosen this option).
- Participate in our 4th Annual Walk, Run, Pedal, Paddle fundraiser June 1-16th.
- Consider becoming an annual donor (if not one already).
- Provide support for special needs: Computers, Printer, Replacement Bedding (after 5 years)
- Become an Okoa Toto Board member (we'd love to add 2-3 more members)



Joy



Faith



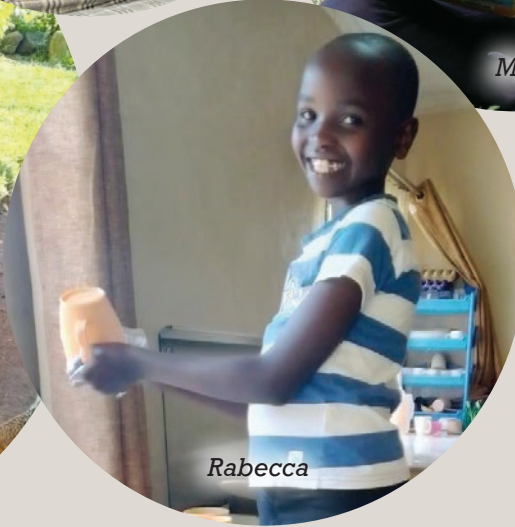
Abigail



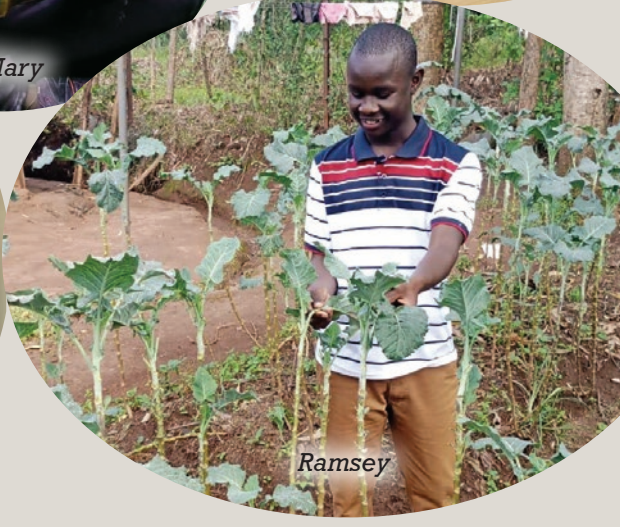
Mary



Brightson



Rabecca



Ramsey



From left to right:
Michael, Gabriel, Jian, Wesley,
Faith, Rabecca



4th Annual WALK, RUN, PEDAL, PADDLE A Fundraiser for Okoa Toto

June 1 to June 16, 2024

Pick a day and join your spouse, family or friends and go for a walk, run, bike or kayak/canoe to help us raise funds for the children of Okoa Toto! (If you're not able to participate, please consider a donation to Okoa Toto for our Okoa Toto summer fundraiser.)

\$25.00 Registration Fee.

To register scan the QR code or for more details visit www.okoatoto.org



OKOA TOTO APPAREL

Would you like an Okoa Toto T-shirt or Polo Shirt? We have received interest to add our logo to apparel items. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Schmitz, Okoa Toto Vice President, at kmitzie@gmail.com



PAINTING PROJECT

The Board has authorized Meshack, the original home builder to return and paint the interior of the home. This is to be done on an "as needed" basis every 3-5 years.