

EFAC Sponsor Handbook

Educate, Employ & Elevate



efac



**EDUCATION
FOR ALL CHILDREN**

www.educationforallchildren.org



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Education For All Children



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Welcome to the
EFAC SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Dear Sponsor,

We are very happy to welcome you to Education For All Children!

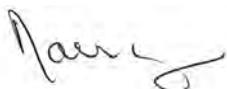
Your commitment to sponsoring an EFAC scholar brings the gift of education to children who otherwise would never have the opportunity to learn beyond 8th grade. EFAC students come from extremely impoverished backgrounds, but they share a thirst for knowledge and the determination to improve their lives and communities. They are enormously grateful for your generosity and support. Thank you.

As a sponsor, you have a unique opportunity to become involved in your student's life through regular correspondence. Each trimester you will receive a letter from your student, along with grades. We hope you will respond with news about your life, along with words of encouragement. A letter from you demonstrates that there is someone in your student's life who cares about their hopes and dreams for the future.

This Sponsor Handbook includes helpful tips for communicating with your student, information about the Kenyan educational system, and FAQs. If you have further questions after reading the handbook, or along the journey of sponsorship, please contact Jo Deupree at deupreejo@aol.com.

Thank you for giving these students an opportunity for a better future. You are changing the world one child at a time.

Sincerely,



Nancy Van Sciver
EFAC Founder



Blair Demers
Executive Director



Jo Deupree, Board Member
Coordinator of Sponsor Communications

EFAC COMMUNITY

EFAC's education-to-employment program for bright, disadvantaged Kenyan youth fosters leadership, economic opportunity and social progress. Our program offers scholarships, skill-building workshops, and intensive mentoring to 350 secondary and post-secondary school students. Our graduates are positioned to be Kenya's future leaders, promoting economic and social progress for their country and for generations to come.



EFAC student Charity, pictured with her father in her village. She is currently studying law at university.

EFAC scholars are boys and girls from extreme poverty.

Our students come from rural villages and urban slums across Kenya. Many have lost a father, a mother, or both. They are determined, resilient students who have scored high enough on the national exams to qualify for a place in high school – boys and girls with an opportunity to move beyond poverty and toward global citizenship.

In Kenya, 60% of children do not attend high school. The government provides free public education only through 8th grade; to attend secondary school, students must come from an affluent family or rely on scholarships. Four years of study at a top-rated Kenyan boarding school means a new beginning and a host of opportunities for EFAC scholars.



EFAC scholars walking to class at Vanessa Grant Girls' School, one of Kenya's top boarding schools.



EFAC founder Nancy VanSciver in Kenya delivering sponsor correspondence to eager EFAC scholars.

Our sponsors provide the funding to educate the EFAC scholars.

Thanks to sponsor support, we are educating students from high school through post-secondary, providing them with annual education-to-employment workshops, and preparing them for successful, productive careers in the 21st century. It is our hope that scholars and their sponsors develop enduring relationships, and that the commitment to education enriches lives on both continents.

ANU (Africa Nazarene University) is our on-the-ground partner in Kenya.

Our Kenya staff, headed by Country Director Mary Kiguru, is based in offices at ANU, a liberal arts university outside Nairobi. The university helped launch EFAC as our initial organizational partner in 2008, and continues to provide a broad range of support for EFAC, such as hosting our three annual student workshops, the *Power of One* fundraising walk, and myriad other activities.



Students ready to learn in a classroom at Starebe Girls' School.

EFAC secondary schools are critical partners in the success of our program.

Partner schools rank in the top 10% of Kenya's secondary schools and provide a rigorous academic and extracurricular experience for our students. We use additional criteria for selecting secondary schools, such as the presence of an experienced Head of School; a willingness to designate a contact teacher as the critical link between scholarship students and EFAC; and the school's record with public university admissions. We currently partner with four girls' and four boys' boarding schools, and occasionally place students at other highly-ranked schools in Kenya if it's determined they are more suitable for a student's needs.



GETTING STARTED

Differences between US and Kenyan cultures and educational systems can sometimes be challenging for new EFAC sponsors. Here are some helpful tips for understanding your student and his/her academic and personal life:

- The vast majority of EFAC students have experienced hunger. Some may have begged on the streets. Their homes are without electricity and running water, and clothing is secondhand. They know loss – very likely a parent – through death or abandonment. Despite this adversity, EFAC students are amazingly resilient and eagerly look to their sponsors for caring, support, empathy and encouragement. You are there just for them - and that is very special!
- Student ages may not correlate to their grade level. While primary school education is technically free in Kenya, families must still pay for essentials. Many EFAC students have missed time in primary school because their families couldn't afford fees for uniforms or books. In families without the ability to pay secondary school fees, some students choose to repeat a year or more of primary school rather than abandon their educations.
- Kenyan schools use British terminology: Form One is the same as freshman year in the US, while Form Four equals senior year.
- All of the schools that EFAC scholars attend are boarding schools, many of them quite a distance from home. Throughout the school year there are several term breaks, and students return to their families.

GETTING STARTED

The Kenyan Secondary School Calendar

**Understanding the Kenyan school calendar
is important for the timing
of student/sponsor correspondence.**

January to April: Term One

January	New school year begins
January - March	Term 1 classes
April	One month break

May to August: Term Two

May - July	Term 2 classes
August	One month break
Late August	Annual <i>Bridge to Success</i> workshop* (<i>Power of One</i> fundraising walk)

September to December: Term Three

September - November	Term 3 classes
Mid-October to November	Form 4 students KCSE exams Forms 1-3 continue classes
End of November	Students leave for 6-week break

* **The Bridge to Success Workshop** is a four-day workshop for all EFAC secondary school students. The focus is on fostering character, vision and social responsibility. It embraces a wide-ranging agenda that includes social and emotional mentoring, life skills training, a reproductive health curriculum, and motivating presentations by local business and NGO leaders, educators, and school counselors. The workshop concludes with the Power of One fundraising walk, which raises money to support several EFAC secondary school scholarships. EFAC relies on this workshop, together with those for our post-secondary scholars, to foster a sense of solidarity and pride among our students, knowing that they are sharing their educational journeys with other talented young people from similar backgrounds.

GUIDE TO STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Common Questions

When will I hear from my student?

EFAC students are asked to write to their sponsors three times a year (once each term). Sponsors will receive the letters, along with term grade reports, via email. We'll also include a deadline for sending a return letter to your student(s).

Most students handwrite their letters, and these are scanned and emailed to sponsors. *We do not read the letters*, so if you sense a problem, please bring it to our attention.

How and when do I write to my student?

We encourage sponsors to respond to the letters they receive during the school year. Sponsor letters are sent electronically to Kenya in February, June and October. A simple one-page letter is ideal; suggestions for what to write about can be found in the next section. Email your letter to info@educationforallchildren.org. *Please include your student's full name and school.*

We will send a reminder to all sponsors that letters are being collected, and give you a deadline for submission. Some sponsors write each term, while others do so less often. It's up to you how often you would like to correspond with your student.

You are welcome to include a photo or two in your letters, but please keep in mind that letters are printed in black and white at the schools in Kenya and resources are limited. Once a year, an EFAC representative will travel to Kenya to visit the schools, and we are able to hand-carry cards and photos at that time.

How should group sponsors communicate?

Group sponsors have the choice to write letters together or individually. However, we do tell students who are sponsored by a group to write only one letter in response, since we don't want them to feel they must write several letters each term.

Can I email my sponsored student directly?

EFAC secondary students cannot correspond via email. Please email your letters to info@educationforallchildren.org, and we will make sure your student receives them.

May I share my personal contact information?

Please do not include your personal address, phone number(s), or email(s) in your letters. All communication with your student should flow through EFAC.



What if my student asks for money?

Students are instructed not to ask their sponsors for money or gifts. Please let us know if you receive such a request, and we will follow up with our Kenyan staff to determine if the student is experiencing any problems.

We have a separate *Student Expense Fund* for the personal needs of students, such as healthcare, travel expenses to and from school, toiletries, etc. There is a process in place for such needs, and all EFAC scholars are told how to request funds. If you wish to contribute to this account, please contact Katie Donnelly, Director of Development, at kdonnelly@educationforallchildren.org for more information.

Can I send a small gift to my student?

This is our most frequently asked question. We ask sponsors **not to send gifts or money to students**. There are several strong reasons for this:

- Schools work hard to make sure that anything that is gifted can be shared by everyone. Most students have few possessions, so when one student receives a special gift from their sponsor, other students become jealous and it creates tension in the dorm.
- From a logistical standpoint, packages sent to Kenya often do not arrive; if they do, the school must pay customs fees that neither the student nor school can afford.

Once a year, an EFAC representative will travel to Kenya to attend the workshops, and may be able to hand-carry small items (cards, letters, photos, small photo albums) from sponsors to students. Please let us know if this is something you would like to do.

Whom do I contact if I have any questions?

Please send an e-mail to info@educationforallchildren.org or call 603-436-3826. For questions about student grades and letters, please contact Jo Deupree directly at deupreejo@aol.com.

GUIDE TO STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Writing To Your Student

What should I write about?

A great first letter might describe how excited you are to be their EFAC sponsor, that you are looking forward to learning about their life, and encouraging them as they tackle the demands of secondary school. Invite your student to write back and tell you about their hopes and dreams. Some other letter ideas include:

- Describe your family (where you live, interests, activities, pets, etc.).
- Explain special holiday and family customs.
- Talk about important events, such as weddings, graduations, new jobs, etc.
- Let them know you are thinking about them and wishing them success.
- Talk about your profession or education as they love learning about careers.
- Feel free to ask questions about their lives.

Things to keep in mind when writing:

- Students love to hear about you and your family, but please remember that these children come from very poor areas, so showing them a picture of a big house or a fabulous trip may be hard for them to grasp. Be sensitive to their backgrounds, but certainly tell them about your life.
- Sponsors are an important factor in the success of each student. Your letters of encouragement mean so much to them! Writing regularly, expressing interest in their life, sharing your interests and family, and cheering them on throughout high school will help them see their true potential.
- Share your classroom stories and let your student know that their concerns are universal. Urge them to put in extra time in science and math, as these competencies are critical for future job opportunities. There is a large demand for accountants, computer scientists, and other skilled jobs in developing countries. Science is an important subject and a large part of Kenya's national exam.
- Our students need and respond to positive reinforcement. **Please read carefully the information about the Kenyan grading system (page 11).** Students report that having someone who believes in them is a big incentive to work hard and do well in school.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



How are EFAC scholars chosen?

Education is essential to escaping poverty, and is highly prized in Kenya. After 8th grade, schooling is no longer free and is out of reach for most youth. During the last year of primary school, all students take a national exam, the Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). To receive an EFAC scholarship, students must complete an application and are selected based on rank in class, recommendations, and their KCPE score. Some of our partner schools have their own rigorous application process, and EFAC chooses from their accepted students list.

What is the KCSE? My student writes about it a lot!

While in secondary school, all students are focused on preparing for the KCSE (Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education), the national secondary school exit exam given to all Form 4 students. The score students receive determines whether a student will attend a university degree program (4 years) or a college diploma program (2-3 years).

Form 4 students begin taking the KCSEs in October of their last term. Testing takes over a month to complete, and the rigorous exams include mathematics, English, Swahili, chemistry, and four electives. The overall score is calculated based on the compulsory tests, with results announced in March of the following year. You will learn more about this process from us as your student progresses through secondary school.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my student very religious?

The letters you receive from your student may include religious references. 80% of Kenyans are Christian, and approximately 10% are Muslim. Kenyans are very spiritual, but they do not push their faith. Your student is likely to send you blessings when they write; these are a courtesy. If you are uncomfortable with their blessings, please find a way to express warmth and caring that communicates that you consider their well-being very important. Some examples:

“Sending you love”

“With warmth and affection”

“I think about you often”

“You are in my thoughts/prayers”

Why do young girls have short hair, while older girls have long hair?

Hair is a big deal in Kenya. Secondary schools seek equality among students. They wear uniforms, and short hair is required. Once they move on to university, most young women get elaborate braids, weaves, or straighten their hair.

What should I do if I think my student may be at risk or if something is wrong?

Please let EFAC know if you have concerns by calling or e-mailing us right away. We will assess the situation and determine whether intervention is required.

Will I be able to visit my student?

EFAC has organized several trips to Kenya, and it can be a wonderful, life-changing visit. Participants are able to meet their students, visit some of our partner schools, attend one of the workshops, and go on safari. Sponsors will be notified of upcoming trips in emails and in our newsletter. Please let us know if you are interested in joining us.

How can I become more involved?

- *Do you have a story about your EFAC experience to share?* We are always interested in hearing from sponsors about their experiences, whether it's something you've heard from your student or the impact your student has had on your family. These are stories we can share on social media, in our newsletter, or on our website.
- Encourage others to support EFAC! Share your experience with friends, relatives and business associates. As a growing non-profit organization, we rely on donations from individuals, companies and foundations. Please contact Katie Donnelly, Director of Development, if you are willing to host a house party or help with one of our events.

IMPORTANT NOTES ON GRADES

Secondary School Grading System

When looking at your student's report card, his/her rank in class and the general trend of grades are the strongest indicators of performance. It's important for US sponsors to understand that grades are viewed as a motivational tool in Kenyan culture; there is a belief that mediocre grades will spur students to work even harder to excel.

Kenyan students commonly receive much lower grades than their peers in the US. Many schools even have a policy of not giving A's to first and second year students. Chances are that your EFAC student will receive B's, C's and D's, and even an occasional E. Students with C's (and even some D's) often score extremely well on the KCSE.

Please share with us any concerns that you may have when you receive your student's grade reports. We have a staff in Kenya and a contact teacher at each school who can follow-up.





*Thank you for your generous support of
Education for All Children*



Follow us on social media:



Please visit our website to directly access the links.



One hundred percent of your scholarship contributions directly benefit your EFAC scholar.

Education For All Children

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