

The Rotary Foundation at Work

Project HOPE – Eric’s Story

Eric Otieno is a young man who lives at Agape Children’s Ministry in Kisumu, Kenya. For many years, he has been struggling with an infected leg from a bad burn. He has had several surgeries, but recently the foot had developed a bad ulcer. While visiting Kisumu with the Project Hope team, Dr. Joe Serra examined Eric and told him that he would need to have his leg amputated just above the knee to save his life. Eric accepted this diagnosis readily and knows that now he has a chance for a normal life with an artificial leg.



Dr. Joe had traveled to Nairobi before joining the rest of the group in Kisumu. While visiting friends and colleagues there, he was put in touch with an orthopedic surgeon at Kenyatta Hospital. He shared Eric’s story (even before he had met Eric) with this doctor who encouraged Dr. Joe to send Eric to Nairobi for any surgery that might be necessary. When Dr. Joe shared this news with Dan and Patty Schmelzer at Agape, they were thrilled. Soon after the Project Hope team left for home, Eric was taken to Nairobi for the surgery. After several “red tape” delays and after he received several pints of blood, they were told that the surgery would be performed January 21st. Eric was also taken to the Jaipur Foot Project, which is funded by Nairobi South Rotary club. Eric would be able to receive his artificial limb free of charge after healing from the surgery. They told him that he could even play football if he wanted! We are awaiting news of the surgery at this time.

A few years ago this boy was sitting on a pile of trash in a back alley of Kisumu, his life wasting away. Now, thanks to Agape Children’s Ministry, Project Hope, The Rotary Foundation, Dr. Joe and his colleagues in Nairobi, and Rotarians and Rotary Clubs from both the United States and Kenya, Eric now has a wonderful new life ahead of him. He has a second chance to make a life and a future for himself.

Rotary – A Daughters Perspective – by Erin Gallagher

I am sure that as Rotarians you have heard the phrase “Thank You” many times. You have probably heard it in different languages, from many different places and for many different reasons. But I want to say this phrase to you from a different perspective – as a child of a Rotarian. The things you all do – the money that you raise, the trips that you take and the time that you give – have helped more than just the people that you were working to help. My life is a perfect example



of this indirect influence. My father has been a Rotarian for many years and truly lives by Rotary’s motto “Service Above Self”. He has demonstrated this to my sisters and me through his many trips and countless hours spent to help people that do not have the resources that we do. Because of his example, along with my mother’s example, we learned the very important qualities of kindness, sympathy, generosity and compassion. I am sure many of you did not have the intentions of influencing your children through your membership in Rotary and active participation in Rotary’s projects. But from my own experience now as a teacher I have learned something important about kids: they watch and learn. I am sure your children have watched and learned from your example of

“Service Above Self” just as my sisters and I have, and have wanted to continue living by that motto in their own lives. So, although your children may not have told you this before, I would like to say, on behalf of all of the sons and daughters of Rotarians, “Thank You” for teaching us the meaning of serving others.