



# BEACON OF HOPE APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER



*Empower. Transform*



## **BEACON ACADEMY ON THE MAP FOR STELLAR PERFORMANCE DESPITE COVID-19.**

Of the 1,179,192 million pupils who sat for the national exams last month, 8,091 scored above 400, a drop from 9,673 in 2019. This was expected as COVID-19 had ravaged the education system in the country throwing teachers and pupils into a state of uncertainty with respect to when normalcy will resume.

“When the Covid-19 pandemic befell the country in March 2020, the future of our 15 million basic education learners seemed thrown deep into turmoil,” Education Cabinet Secretary George Magoha stated as he released the national examination results.

The top Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) candidate scored 433 marks, seven points below 2019’s record of 440 marks. In just its second year in into its KCPE examinations, Beacon Academy has performed exceptionally well with its first candidate Abigail Wanjiru scoring 404 out of a possible 500 points as compared to 2019’s top candidate Victoria Wanja’s 374 points.

Despite the learning difficulties encountered by pupils in a COVID-19 pandemic period, Beacon Academy has gone up to position 20 from last year’s position 49 in Kajiado County with a mean score of 340 points.

A sense of euphoria rent the air at Beacon of Hope and its environs on the examination release day. The Beacon Academy school bus full of jeering teachers, pupils and staff made its way to Magadi road amid celebration from residents who waved in excitement once they saw the results pasted on the bus.

“We have done very well and I am very proud of all the pupils who sat for the exams. Their collective efforts have gotten us where we wanted to be and we cannot wait to show the entire world even better results next year”, remarked Teacher Wilson, the headteacher at Beacon Academy.

Top student Abigail Wanjiru couldn’t hold back tears of joy as everyone now knew her name.

“Trust in God. He is able”, she remarked amid bouts of laughter.

The Beacon of Hope (BOH) Academy has indeed lived up to its name in 2021 as an institution of excellence that offers specialized education for the holistic development of children from Pre-School to Primary School.

# **BEACON ACADEMY THANKSGIVING -PHOTO GALLERY**



**Founder and Executive Director of BOH, Jane Wathome appreciates Beacon Academy Class 8 pupils for their exemplary performance**



**Beacon of Hope Board Trustee Mr. Ken Wathome gives an analysis of the K.C.P.E results**



**Beacon Academy parent Patrick Gakungi offers advice to the outgoing pupils**



**Beacon Academy top pupil Abigail Wanjiku receives a gift from Mr and Mrs Wathome**



**Beacon Academy most improved pupil Elijah Makini receives a gift from Mr and Mrs Wathome**



**Beacon Academy Headteacher Wilson Kimathi receives a gift from Mr and Mrs Wathome**



**Beacon Academy pupils enjoy their thanksgiving lunch**



**Beacon Academy teachers and outgoing class 8 pupils cut a cake in celebration of their exemplary performance**

# WHAT HOPE DID FOR ME



It all started when Grace Gakungi joined Beacon Technical Training Institute in 2008 to study Fashion Design. After the course, she began working at the Beacon Crafts & Gift Centre and would tag along her youngest daughter Abigail or 'Kadogo' as she was fondly referred to, to play with other women's children as their practiced hands made beautiful shawls, carpets, and attire.

Soon, it was time for Abigail to start school and her husband Patrick Gakungi had already made up his mind on enrolling her at Beacon of Hope Academy because of the values it upholds.

Beacon of Hope Academy is one of the institutions at Beacon of Hope - a Christian organization located in Ongata Rongai that adheres to the following core values expressed as The Beacon Way:

- We are led by our faith in Jesus Christ
- We are committed
- We do it very well
- We do it for good

"It was the word hope that did it for me. Being a born-again Christian I was drawn to Beacon Academy and I was certain that there's no way my daughter would fail in such an institution", Patrick reminisces.

Hope is one of the three theological virtues of the Christian religion, alongside faith and love. "Hope" in the Holy Bible means "a strong and confident expectation" of future reward (Titus 1:2).

In modern terms, hope is akin to trust and a confident expectation". Paul the Apostle argued that hope was a source of salvation for Christians: "For in hope we have been saved...if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it" (Romans 8:25).

Throughout her education at Beacon Academy, Abigail received both parental and institutional discipline ensuring that she maintained her good grades. Her parents were part of the Positive Parenting Program offered at Beacon of Hope.

The program is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children and teenagers. It aims to prevent problems in the family, school and community before they arise and to create family environments that encourage children to realize their potential.

“I used to always tell her to at least add 5 marks and step up one position with every performance she brought home”, Patrick added.

Abigail scored 404 marks out of a possible 500 in this year’s K.C.P.E examinations and hopes to join Alliance Girls or Kenya High School in Nairobi. Her dream is to become a lecturer of Mathematics and languages.

“I am very happy about my performance. I give all glory and honor to God for helping me, because if it weren’t for Him, I couldn’t do it”, she gleefully quipped.

# BTTI ADAPTS TO THE CHANGING TIMES USING VIRTUAL LEARNING



Kenya is on a sure path to digital transformation. In 2017, the third medium-term plan for Kenya Vision 2030 regarded Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a fast-growing industry.

During the 2019 Transform Africa Summit, President Uhuru Kenyatta released the Digital Economy Blueprint and hailed ICT as a pillar in the realization of Vision 2030.

In recent times, online education, work and e-commerce have revolutionized the way people were used to living and grown to an extent of mitigating the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While countries have different infection rates, worldwide there are currently more than 1.2 billion learners in 186 countries affected by school closures due to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected education, prompting training providers to search for rapid and feasible solutions to deliver learning content.

Beacon Technical Training Institute (BTTI) has not been left behind.

BTTI is equipped with a robust Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure that is fully and effectively utilized by students, faculty, and staff.

This establishment is in alignment with the current Beacon of Hope (BOH) strategic plan which emphasizes the need to expand, maintain and optimize use of physical facilities and technology to enable BTTI to increase visibility and enhance quality of its services. E-Learning at BTTI has the following objectives:

- 1.To widen access to BTTI's academic programs.
- 2.To create innovative and flexible course materials and contemporary delivery methods using technology

3. To collaborate with other experts locally and globally to offer innovative courses that are market-driven.

Alphonse Okiya, a trainer at BTTI asserts that online classes have revolutionized learning as his students can log in and actively attend the lecture from anywhere.

“Apart from a few technical hitches that we experienced when we began, we have now streamlined the sessions and learning is taking place smoothly”, he quips.

Students at BTTI had to quickly adapt to the new methodology of learning which was made easier by the fact that compulsory ICT courses are included in all the programs in order to enrich student profile and increase their overall competitiveness.

Although majority of the students initially thought that it would be difficult to navigate their studies from home, they have learnt to embrace the new system because of the convenience it brings.

“I couldn’t imagine that a gadget I only used to use for chatting with my friends would one day become a platform for learning that I cannot do without”, asserts Elisha Mwenda, an Electrical Engineering student at BTTI.

Some research shows that on average, students retain 25-60% more material when learning online compared to only 8-10% in a classroom. This is mostly due to the students being able to learn faster online; e-learning requires 40-60% less time to learn than in a traditional classroom setting because students can learn at their own pace, going back and re-reading, skipping, or accelerating through concepts as they choose.

Samwel Masika, the Principal at BTTI considers online learning an alternate form of learning for the future as far as technical education is concerned.

“BTTI is now ready to teach students beyond our borders . This is the future we have embraced and are committed to scaling”, he concludes.

# GIFT OF A FOOD BASKET



In the age of COVID-19, families around the world are experiencing hunger on a massive scale as they have been unable to work and get access to food. Eleven-year-old Samuel is one of the beneficiaries of food basket support from Beacon of Hope and lives in Kawangware with his parents and two siblings. He is a special needs child who suffers from cerebral palsy and is a pupil at Kilimani Primary School in the special unit.

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. CP is the most common motor disability in childhood. Cerebral means having to do with the brain. Palsy means weakness or problems with using the muscles.

Samuel's mother has spent the years since his birth navigating the challenges of raising a son with special needs while trying to earn a living. Currently she is jobless and spends all her time at home taking care of Samuel who relies on her for constant care and support.

"During school holidays it's down to me. I can't ask a friend to help out because his needs are just too complex and anyone looking after him needs to have quite a lot of training. More so, it comes at an exorbitant cost which I cannot afford", she sadly notes.

Luckily Samuel's father is a doting and present father but the money he makes from his casual work is not enough to pay bills and put a meal on the table for the family every day.

"I want to say a huge thank you to Beacon of Hope who have been consistent in helping us with food basket and medical care, I do not know who else would help us carry such a burden", he remarks.





# PRAY WITH US

- Thank God for the exemplary performance by Beacon Academy's class 8 in the National Examinations. Thank God for answering the prayers of so many people including; parents, partners, teachers, pupils, and friends of Beacon of Hope.
- Pray that God will bless them henceforth and grant them the Secondary Schools of their choice.
- Pray for Beacon Academy's new Class 8's (2021); that God will guide them and give them exemplary performance.
- Thank God that we have been able to turn the COVID-19 pandemic learning challenge into an opportunity as we recently kicked off virtual classes at BTTI; this has presented a new opportunity for us to offer blended training ( Physical and Virtual ) allowing us to scale our impact. Thank God for the zeal and commitment we have observed with our teachers during this period.



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