

KEFFA

PROJECT



A Letter From Our Staff

We cannot start discussing this year without first expressing our immense gratitude. Thank you for standing with us, our staff, and the families and kids we work with. You have been a blessing and answer to prayer in a difficult year. Here is a letter from one of our staff members on what you have meant to us:

We cannot thank you enough for your help. Our words are powerless to express how thankful we are. You are nothing less than a blessing from God. Through your actions of giving, you fed many hundreds of people. Those families were discouraged with no hope and no idea where they would get food. Now they are smiling. And a common word they say after receiving food from us is, "God bless you. We don't know what to say but you saved us."

On the side of the staff, we still get salaries and are able to feed our families as well. Those that have been in Rwanda before, those that saw what Kefa is doing, you know how Kefa is a big family. Now the entire family is happy. Those who don't know Kefa, you did this action of giving by faith. I call it an act of faith. I am giving testimony of your faith. We love you and only God knows how we wish and pray for blessing to you and your family and country.



Emile Ngiruwonsanga
Academy Director

WH AT HU RTS ?

**A MEDITATION ON
BEING WITH THOSE
THAT HURT AND WHY
WE DO THIS**

by Brian Beckman

It has been a year unlike any other. It can be so easy in times like these to focus on the heartbreak, the broken plans, and the tragedies. We like so many had big visions for this year. Disruptions in life can make us forget why we do what we do. At our core we did not start Kefa to do big things for the sake of big things.

Nonprofits and ministry begin because something hurts. We feel a lack of peace, a lack of shalom and we strive to see restoration. So, in a year where our programs and work have looked so different, a year where I was unable to travel to Rwanda for the first time in twelve years, let's take a moment to slow down and meditate on why we do this.

The question I get asked most about Kefa is *Why? Why Rwanda? Why did I start the nonprofit? Why this issue?*

Many people have told me that I must have felt a great call to Rwanda. They assert I am so lucky to have found such a calling that many are searching for. And while I do not doubt that many people have great callings within their hearts that lead them exactly to where they are, I must confess I felt no such calling. I did not when I began the nonprofit and I do not now.

So. Why? The Civil Rights leader Ruby Sales, who at the age of 17 marched from Selma to Montgomery, says that we must ask, “Where does it hurt?” She says that if we can answer this question, we can find the heart of what we really want. And in that question, we can find not only what we hate but also what we love. (1)

When one thinks of Rwanda, the first thing that comes to mind is the genocide in 1994. It was a genocide that killed roughly a million people and left so many more homeless, hurt, and lives in shambles. When I first came to Rwanda the wounds were still fresh, many of the kids I initially worked with were genocide survivors. Perhaps it was the brokenness of the genocide that imprinted on my heart and held my soul. But still I think that is only a partial answer. While the wounds of the genocide are still in Rwanda, the kids we work with now were not alive in 1994 and the

need and urgency of our mission has not changed.

I think where it hurts is something more fundamentally human and of God. When I met ‘homeless children,’ I met children. Human beings. Imago Dei. Children formed with passions, talents, and dreams that had been silenced. And it hurt.

They had forgotten how to play, because they never felt safe enough to. And it hurt.

They were beloved by God but felt forgotten. And it hurt.

They were not projects to be saved. Helping them was not an absolution of guilt. And yet they had no home. And it hurt.

So the question became what

From that ‘why’ we launched The Kefa Project. It started with community soccer teams and then a boarding academy and then a women’s co-op and then dance classes and a catchup school program. The how has grown. The why has remained rooted.

When we have gone off course, it is because we have forgotten our why. The why has helped us to weather storms and disappointment.

This brings me back to this year being unlike any other. As I reflect on Kefa, I am not sure that we have ever had a normal year. Some years we felt more in control of outcomes. But every year has been full of surprises. Some good. Some bad. Sometimes kids we had no idea existed

A Different Year The Same Vision

do I love? And I think the answers are rather simple. I love children being able to be children. I love dignity – for children and their families to know they are important and worthy of respect. When we get a child off of the streets, the first thing they ask for is not food, but a shower. We all long to feel dignity. And ultimately, I love people feeling love – that deep kind of love we see in Jesus that called the broken, the hurting, and let them know that they are not alone.

came into our lives in extraordinary ways. Other times people we thought were devoted to the mission left.

The truth is we have never been in control of everything – or much of anything. The one thing we have been able to choose is do we live in love or do we live in fear. Different years look different, but the goal and vision remain the same. We dream of child homelessness ending, for families to be restored, and for them to experience the fullness of God’s love.

(1) (<https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt/>)

The Why

We asked our staff in Rwanda why they work with children who are homeless. Here is what they told us:



Richard Rwamahungu
Technical Director

I work with children to prevent them from becoming homeless to keep them safe. We walk alongside them. We mentor them. We want to show them what our experiences were like. You know, we could have been in similar circumstances as them. We had dysfunctional families. We've dealt with domestic violence. And so we share those experiences with them and their families so they know they are not alone.



Grace Nyinawumuntu
Office Manager

Kids that are homeless are so vulnerable and they are at a high risk to not survive. When people see them on the streets, they have different opinions of them. I really do care (about these kids) now because I know different causes and don't judge them anymore. They steal things because they have no choice at their age, but they are not thieves at all. If they are not treated well in society, who else will do it?



Emile Ngiruwonsanga
Academy Director

Personally, I work with kids who are homeless because I see them as victims of many things: Family abuse, lack of education, and other abuses. To me they are the most vulnerable in the community, but when they grow up they can change that channel so that the next generation does not face the same challenges. It is my passion. It is my calling.



Akili Rachid
Coach

I work with kids who are homeless because I used to be on the streets. I know how bad it is. God helped me get off the streets when I was in a bad condition and was unhappy and unsafe. I chose to work with kids who are homeless to teach them and to bring them off the streets and to show them how bad it is on the streets by sharing my testimony and the words of God.

How We Resp

Our main programs had to stop due to the pandemic.
Read about what our staff did that made a difference.
We believe this year will have a positive impact on our community.

Rapid Response

When the pandemic started, our staff worked to implement all government regulations in under 24 hours. They contacted the more than 550 kids and families on our teams with instructions on how to stay safe. The staff immediately began an analysis of every family's unique situation to determine who would be hit the hardest by the economic slowdown from the pandemic.



Assessment

Food Disbursement

From their analysis, our staff determined the families who absolutely could not get food. Food uncertainty is common for most families and so we categorized families by health risk and got food out accordingly. In total we were able to distribute more than **56,000 meals** to families on our teams.



Emergency Need

Medical Care

In addition, our staff worked to ensure that members of our teams could get lifesaving medical care. This included two athletes who needed long-term hospital care and another athlete who needed an emergency surgery. Our staff also made sure that families had access to soap and other hygienic necessities.



Emergency Need

When we were at a feeding crisis, Eric he coaches who less and their



Reveals

(AKA We are so grateful)

ond To Crisis

o the pandemic, but our work did not.
kept countless kids off the streets.
impact on families in Kefa for years to come.



met Eric, he
program for
During the
provided
to athletes that
were home-
families.

Growth/Prevention



Family Reconciliation

Once the initial lockdown was lifted our sports programs remained paused. Our staff began (safely) visiting many families in our programs to check in with how they were doing. They provided conflict resolution for family issues and helped families get out of situations where severe abuse was occurring.

Growth/Prevention



Devotions

Our staff spent time sharing devotions with the families and praying together with the families. They talked through struggles that the kids on our teams were facing and ways to find solutions. These visits kept kids engaged and prevented many of them from going onto the streets.

Growth/Prevention



Education

Our staff encouraged kids to stay engaged in their studies both by reviewing notes and by listening to the school being done over radio. They taught kids exercises that they could do at home to stay in shape. These times built upon our relationships with our athletes as a reminder that we are in this together and will come out stronger at the end.

Our Heart

ul for our amazing staff)



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The Opportunity

This has been a hard year for everyone. We know the pain of lost opportunities, brokenness, and tragedies. We strongly believe that we cannot do life or make an impact alone. In the next 100 days, we, as an organization, will pray for every single person receiving this magazine by name. We do not know everyone's story, but if you would like to have specific things prayed for, please email me at brian.beckman@kefaproject.org.

We ask that you would pray for us, our staff, and the families that we work with as well.

It has been a hard year for vulnerable families in Rwanda because of the economic slowdown from the pandemic.

There is a growing number of children who are dropping out of school and living on the streets.

Our work is needed now more than ever.

The government has noticed our success in preventing child homelessness so much so that local government officials are asking us to intervene in a new area, Gasogi, that has seen a spike in child homelessness. Our staff has already put on socially distanced trainings in this area as we work with the community to reconcile children back into their families.

We believe this is only the beginning as we impact more and more areas battling child homelessness. **God is growing our impact.**

This is a big opportunity to stop child homelessness, but we need your partnership to empower as many kids and families as possible to leave homelessness. If you are able, would you join us to expand our impact to meet the growing need? Here is how:



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Give Towards Our Goals:

\$100,000
in 100 days

Our goal is to expand our ability to meet the growing need to prevent child homelessness and to reconcile children back into their families. We are coming together to raise \$100,000 by March 12th.

50

New or Increased Monthly Donors

We know not everyone can make a one-time large donation. But we hope that everyone can give something - whether one-time or monthly. To fully meet this goal we are asking that you consider becoming a monthly donor or increasing monthly donorship for the next year.

Together we can impact an entire generation.

You Can Make a Donation in one of three ways:



Text 'Kefa' to (503) 217-6983



Go to www.kefaproject.org/donate



Mail the card in this magazine with check to
8311 Brier Creek Pkwy Ste 105-206,
Raleigh, NC 27617



CELEBRATING



STRONG



WOMEN

In a year where we cannot have visitors to Rwanda, we wanted you to meet some amazing people who make Rwanda so special.

Let's go on a journey together. We love our programs that empower women and we are so glad to have you join us. First meet Angelina who visited our women's programs last summer and shares about the experience. Then join us as we travel to Ruyenzi. Smell the burning embers of charcoal lightly hanging in the air and hear the giggles of her nearby children, as co-op member Sifa shares her story. Finally, travel up the windy mountain road to Jabana, a cloud of red dust forms behind our car, as we meet three incredibly talented girls from our community team Together FC, who after struggling to afford school, got full scholarships to a boarding school based on their soccer ability.



Angelina Darrisaw
Visiting Rwanda

Last summer I went to Kigali, Rwanda. While I was there I was able to connect with Brian Beckman and learn all about the Kefa Project. When I learned about the mission of Kefa: Taking faith, taking sports, and building leadership skills all to improve communities to reconcile families and to empower families to care for each other, it was just too amazing to miss out.

My day (with Kefa) began with connecting with mothers of students. I was able to see firsthand the process of how they make the baskets that they sell to support themselves. They showed me their craft with such pride. In the spirit of empowerment and in strength, we decided to have a conversation about what makes us strong, what makes us remarkable and what makes us amazing and unique as women. I heard some of the most devastating traumas of my life... some things I will never repeat out loud. The women encouraged each other, they let each other know they were strong, and they celebrated each other. And when we were done, one woman said we cannot close out this experience without celebrating the Rwanda way. And she got up and she put her baby on her back and she began to sing and dance.

After that experience my day was far from done, I went out to a rural Rwandan community and I was able to engage in soccer games with some of the girls that are part of Kefa. That experience was so much fun. I was able to see the leadership. How women - young women at early ages as students - were finding their voices. There were some girls who had shoes who lent their shoes to other girls when they were not on the field. And I was just amazed by the values that were being installed in these young girls.



Sifa

Co-Op Member



Together FC
Kefa Girls Team

No one is greater than anyone else. That is God's law to love your neighbor as you love yourself, to put yourself in the place of the other person and have compassion for them because we are all created in the same image.

In the past, I was really discouraged. I was living a hated life. No one could have compassion towards me. My family was really, really poor. So I decided to get married because I was thinking maybe it could get me out of poverty. After we were married and had 4 children together, my husband left me.

Thank God who gave Kefa the heart of humanity to love people. What Kefa did for me is they provided a trainer for me who told me how to make baskets. Now I can make bags myself. Through those bags, I can sell them and provide small needs in the family. The parents of these kids we haven't had the chance to go to school, but now through their moms, they are going to school.

My children are escaping the situations that I had to face. But because it is through me as a mother, it goes straight to kids and the kids will benefit from this. It is so important to work with mothers. It's so important that mothers can change their own life through Kefa.

What I hope my children remember about me is that they recognize the sacrifices I made. That I took care of them. I became their father and mother. That I had the idea to take them to school even if I didn't have the means. That I prayed to God and God strengthened me to take care of them. Even if it means I only get one book or one pen. I did it over and over again. They will remember that our mom did all these things so that we could be in a good condition.

I never had a chance to have parents. Coach Pascal has been like a father to me. Sometimes when I started, I got discouraged. I would come home from playing and my (extended) family was always upset with me for playing football. I was about to quit. What made me resilient and strong was my teammates and coaches who always encouraged me and sometimes they talked to my parents so I got strength. I got support from my family after I got a scholarship to school for soccer. In 2019, I finished secondary school. During the week, I have a job that I do at the statistics institution. When my siblings consider me as a role model for them, I am very happy and I feel very proud. I am a superstar.

-Ariette

I love football. I feel it is in my blood. From home to the training field it takes me 2 hours and then 2 hours coming back. In Rwanda many people think that girls can't play football. They think that girls cannot perform like boys. From Senior 4 to Senior 6, I received a scholarship for football. I graduated high school this year. If I had an opportunity to stand in front of Rwandan girls, I would tell them how important it is to play sports because you relax and you make friends.

- Angelique

I play football because I love it and my mom and dad they do support it. My team has been like a family. When I have a problem, I can share it with them. When I am sick, they come and visit me. Football helped me get a scholarship so that I could continue school. My team taught me how to pray to God and love each other. To live in peace with each other. To be mature when there are hardships. If I have a daughter, when she is young, I will train her so that she will grow up with football skills.

- Arianna

Enrolled in Secondary School

23.2%

of eligible girls are enrolled in secondary school in Rwanda

(Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2018)

High School Diploma

5.8%

of women over 25 have a high school diploma in Rwanda.

(World Bank, 2018)

Reinvestment

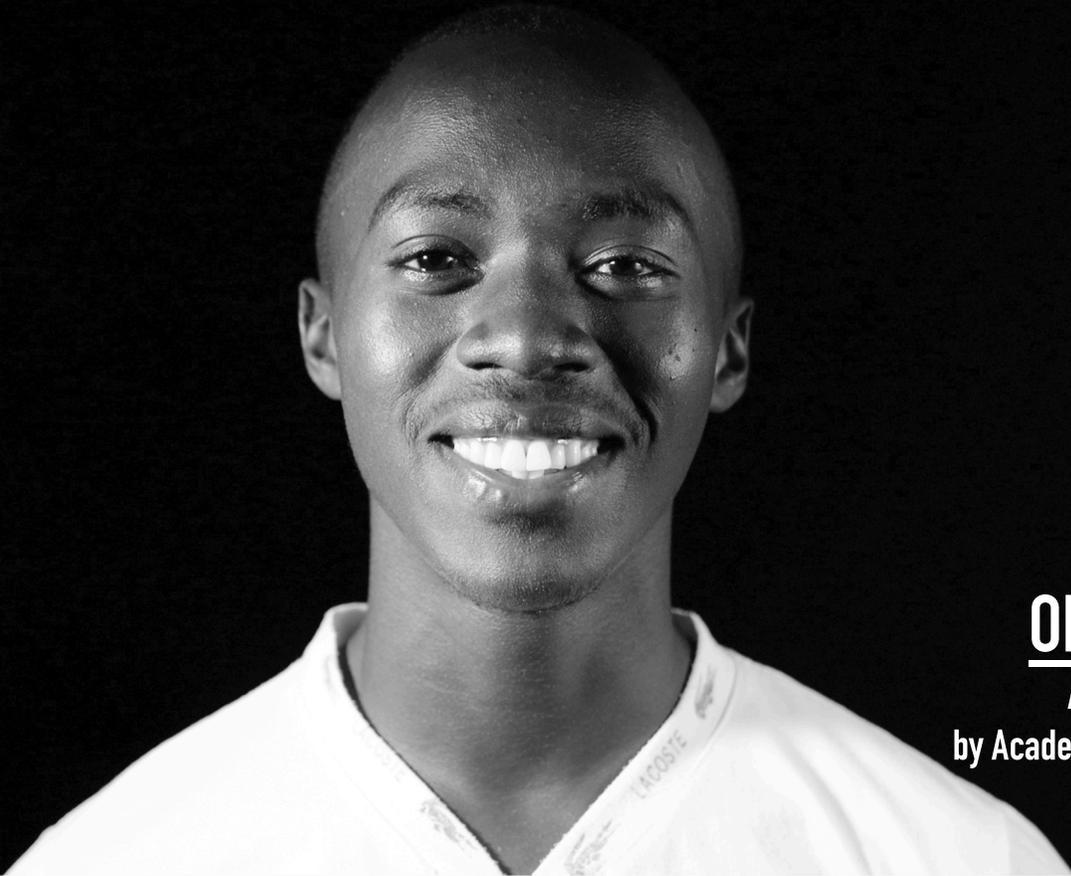
90%

Women reinvest 90% of income earned into their families

(Girl Effect, 2009)

A Lasting Impact

To end child homelessness it is paramount that we pour into mothers and female education. Empowering women in our co-op allows mothers to get off of the streets. Our programs break negative trends in communities and allow girls to finish school.



Oh Kefa
A Poem
by Academy Athlete Nana

Oh Kefa
My Kefa
Your Kefa
I will always say your goodness
Everyone is happy
Your children we are safe

Oh what a wonderful day

In the last ten years
Nothing was able to separate us from you
We are still together
With love
Reconciliation
Collaboration
And commitment
Dwelling in us forever
Because we are all built on the rock

Oh what a wonderful day

Co-operative of our parents is growing up
Community Service is growing up
Oh Kefa
You deserve a big hand clap.

