



Self-help group started in Kenya

A sponsored aging member in Timau, Kenya, Joseph Ruuri Ikiugu had an idea: form a self-help group. He and a friend gathered others like themselves and formed the Timau Walemavu Self-Help Group early this year.

“Walemavu” means “disabled” in Swahili.

A severe case of rheumatism in the 1970s left Joseph without the use of his legs. All of the group’s 16 members are disabled. Some are amputees. One is blind. Half of the members are sponsored or have children who are sponsored.

CFCA seeks to form a worldwide community of compassion through personal outreach. The Walemavu Self-Help Group exemplifies this concept.

“A community of compassion is a small, caring community of fellow sponsored members and their families, and local CFCA staff,” said Paul Pearce, CFCA director of international programs. “In that small, caring community, each member brings their ideas about local issues and problems.



CFCA/Timau project

Chairman Joshua Muriithi leads a meeting of the Walemavu Self-Help Group in Timau, Kenya. “Walemavu” means “disabled” in Swahili. All of the group’s members have some type of disability.

It’s a forum to talk about local solutions.”

That is the purpose of the Walemavu Self-Help Group. At the group’s weekly Tuesday meetings, members each contribute 100 Kenya shillings into a kitty. Half of the kitty is saved in the bank and the rest is given to one member in a merry-go-round system. The recipient for the week is required to use the money in his or her ventures.

The group has saved \$125. They have bought a group phone and hope to purchase a small piece of land on which they can build some simple houses. Rental income from the houses could provide the group with a better

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ASK SPONSOR SERVICES

Editor’s Note: Ask Sponsor Services addresses a question frequently asked by our sponsors.



Q. I have not received a letter from my friend in a long time. Is something wrong?

A. Please keep in mind that CFCA requires sponsored members to write two letters every year to their sponsors, one in the spring and fall, and a Christmas greeting. Some sponsored members are able to write more often.

When your sponsored friend writes a letter, the subproject serving your friend must deliver it to the project office, which may be far away. The project translates the letter, which also takes time, especially during a busy holiday season. The project then sends the letter to Kansas City in a batch with other letters. The letter is logged and mailed to you. This whole process can take weeks, sometimes months.

Letter writing is an important part of the sponsorship relationship because it is a way for sponsors to get to know their sponsored friends and to share their lives. It also helps children practice their writing skills and teaches them to be responsible.

CFCA appreciates the interest sponsors show in nurturing relationships with their sponsored friends through correspondence. CFCA is always working to improve the quality of letters from sponsored friends and the time it takes for them to arrive.



CFCA staff members and sponsored friends wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of hope and peace. Please keep sponsored friends and their families in your prayers.

MEMBERS DISCOVER THEY ACHIEVE MORE AS A GROUP

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standard of living for their families.

“The group is in its tender stage so collectively they have not yet achieved much,” said Stephen Odupoi, a CFCA scholar working at the Timau project office. “But as for individuals, each has made an achievement with the merry-go-round money they received. Joseph already bought three chickens and intends to double that.”

Members are discovering that they can achieve more as a group than they could as individuals.

Stephen Mwangi, one of the members and a farmer, uses his merry-go-round money to buy fertilizer and chickens.

“I saw that I could not make it on my own,” he said. “When two or more work together, they can accomplish more.”



CFCA/Timau project

Joseph Rurri helped to found the Walemavu Self-Help Group. Read more about Joseph's entrepreneurial spirit at www.cfcausa.org.

Small groups in Philippines empower sponsored members

In communities where CFCA is present, the sponsorship program provides members with a common bond. They can gather and make decisions that affect their families and communities.

At the Antipolo project in the Philippines, small groups of neighboring CFCA families help define and monitor the delivery of sponsorship benefits.

The groups, called “kapitbahayan” (“neighborhood” in the Tagalog language), consist of 10-15 members.

Each kapitbahayan has a leader and each member is responsible for monitoring different aspects of the program, such as education, health care, nutrition and letter-writing. The kapitbahayans meet once a week.

“Transparency and timeliness of the delivery of benefits to sponsored members generate happiness, good thinking, enthusiasm, cooperation and gratitude,” said Malou Navio, Antipolo project coordinator.

“Working with the kapitbahayans is like a feast. We reap multiple

achievements.”

Small, caring communities such as the kapitbahayan don't appear overnight. CFCA's Antipolo project has been present in the community for about 20 years. When CFCA enters a community, it must first address basic needs.

“You can't talk to a mother about community if she doesn't know what she's going to feed her children in the morning,” said CFCA President Bob Hentzen.

Once basic needs are met, sponsored members are in a position to reach beyond their immediate sphere of existence to others.

“I see communities of compassion as people passing on to others what they receive themselves, like the ripple effect when a stone hits water,” said Sister Joanne Gangloff, project coordinator for Timau, Kenya. “I think people can't reach out to others if they've never been reached out to.”

Encouraging and nurturing the formation of small, caring groups of sponsored members at the local level supports CFCA's goal of building a community of compassion and service worldwide.

Visit www.cfcausa.org to read more about a kapitbahayan leader and how she helps fellow members.



CFCA/Antipolo project

Small community groups, known as “kapitbahayans,” meet weekly in the homes of members in Antipolo, Philippines, to discuss aspects of the sponsorship program.