



**HAPPY KIDS
FOUNDATION**



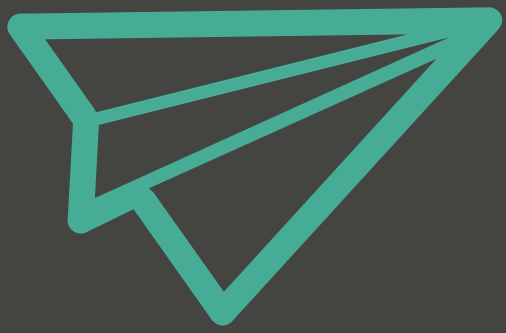
**ANNUAL
REPORT
2020**

OUR MISSION

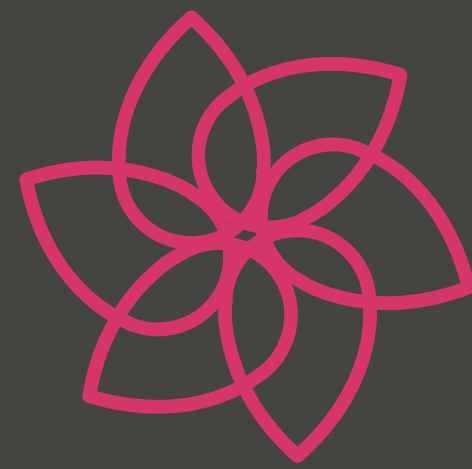
HAPPY KIDS FOUNDATION
UPLIFTS THE LIVES OF AT-
RISK CHILDREN IN GHANA
THROUGH THE POWER OF
LOCALLY LED, LONG-TERM
EDUCATION AND SKILL
BUILDING.

OUR APPROACH

CREATE
OPPORTUNITY



EMPOWER



EDUCATE



IMPACT



LOVE

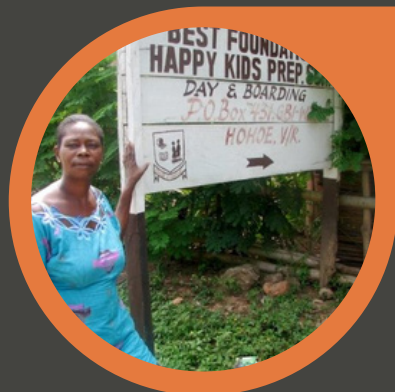


INNOVATE



OUR HISTORY

In **1995**, Happy Kids was founded by Elizabeth Gbone.



By **2013**, infrastructure development was completed for dormitories, classroom, bathrooms & kitchen.



In **2017**, we launched a Secondary Program & Scholarship Fund.



In **2019-2020**, we secured a new boys home & made investments in our nursery infrastructure.



In **2010**, Happy Kids partnership with US team first formed.



In **2014**, we launched the first girls soccer league in Ghana.



In **2019**, Happy Kids Foundation became a 501(c3) organization in the US and the US Board was formalized.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Just like most of you, Happy Kids faced more inflection points in 2020 than ever before. Without your generosity and support, we wouldn't have made it.

In 2020 reflections, I can see the moments that were blurry or chaotic – scary or uncertain – and at the end of every single one of those moments are a few commonalities: Grace, humility, and your generosity.

I'm not sure I could ever express what it was like to watch humanity be tested – the news blasting hateful and hopeless – while we remained filled with hope. You see, what we could see was all of you. To you – our dear friends, donors and advocates, you instilled confidence that the commitment to care, love and support ran deep. Your support was relentless and as a result, we were resilient.

I'd like to take you deeper into the triage moments that Happy Kids faced in 2020. HoHoe is the village Happy Kids calls home – rural, rarely acknowledged by the Ghanaian government for resource allocation, and located in one of the poorest regions of Ghana. As you know, we are locally powered and dedicated to local sustainability – local challenges rippled through the lives of our children, staff and community at large. Our mission in 2020 expanded to meet the times. We not only looked to empower our 200 children and 30 Ghanaian staff, but the community at large, which faced insurmountable turmoil.

For Happy Kids, 2020 brought a 12% inflation rate, a global pandemic with minimal healthcare access and education, an economic devastation, a drought, and a food shortage. The country faced a contentious election, and education stopped entirely in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. Ghana, a country rampant with child labor and enslavement (especially in our region) faced financial hardship, further burdening impoverished children to work in at-risk conditions for family income.

What happened next was remarkable. Everyone stepped up. If not for the trust and collaboration of our US Board, Ghanaian Team, and you, we would not have pulled through. Yet we did more than pull through. We came out anew.

Happy Kids was the only school out of the 70 in our region that paid their teachers during the pandemic. Our teachers made home visits to our Happy Kids – some taking day long treks to reach our children. They delivered education workbooks and spoke with caregivers (many of whom are not educated themselves) to understand the severity of their financial situations, ensure the safety of the children, and assess survival needs.

Our leadership team spearheaded food deliveries – bringing rice, beans and eggs to the most dire households in need of basic nutrition. Digital learning via tablets and distanced tutorial sessions offered at our school sparked a sense of pride and responsibility for Happy Kids to be a place of safety, progress and hope amidst the year's treacherous times. One of our Happy Kids, Benson, even became an entrepreneur out of the times – creating his own disinfectant soap and bottling with recycled goods (with immense success).

2021 is a year of ambition and commitment for us. Among many efforts ahead, we're working to uproot main causes of severe poverty in our region: Accessibility and accountability in academics, and family planning. You'll be a part of our journey and we cannot wait to share our stories with you as we embark on new paths paved by the pressures of 2020. Your humility, grace and generosity is a part of our fuel, and we love you for it. As we say in Ghana, Akpe Ka Ka Ka.

With Love,
Cassie Rosengren
VP, US Board of Directors



OUR REACH

200

STUDENTS
EDUCATED

23

FULL TIME
TEACHERS

7

STUDENTS IN
SECONDARY

200+

MEALS
PROVIDED
DAILY

90%

FUNDS RAISED GO DIRECTLY
TO OUR KIDS & STAFF

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

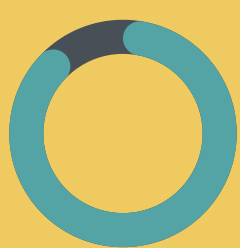
We are committed to maximize the impact of every donation - so your dollar goes further to affect local change.

Our mission is to push every available dollar to the local needs. We are proud to report that of every \$10 donated, \$9 goes to Ghana. The \$1 is used to pay: bank charges, dues and subscriptions for accounting software and the like; plus legal and professional fees plus hard costs of fundraising. Accordingly, our Board is fully voluntary and they pay for their own travel and the related costs associated with trips to Ghana as well as the majority of expenses for fundraising activities.

Fundraising: Given that we serve vulnerable children in a very poor region of Ghana, there are few organic funds raised and operations are near fully dependent on funds raised internationally, predominately the U.S. Despite the pandemic, and it's whiplash effect on non-profit donations worldwide, fundraising in 2020 equaled \$101k, or 90% of the prior year's level.

Unfortunately, our monthly donations dropped by almost half, to 18% of total funds raised, compared with 30% of funds coming from monthly donations in 2019. Fortunately, this gap was covered by a single large donation from a very generous and kind advocate. This does pose a greater risk for managing our ongoing expenses, as it increases dependency on large and infrequent donations. A core part of our efforts in 2021 and beyond will be to expand the scope of donations. We also will be focusing more on securing grants as a funding source.

Capital Position*: Due primarily to the large donation mentioned above, we are fortunate to start 2021 with a strong balance sheet, with \$64k in cash and no liabilities. Accordingly, we have a solid runway of cash to start the year while we rebuild our donation base post Covid-19. It is our ultimate goal that the operation is supported by an endowment that ensures longevity and local control. This topic will grow in importance after we succeed in expanding monthly donations.



\$9 / \$10

Every donation has an impact. For every \$10 you donate to Happy Kids, \$9 goes directly to Ghana.



18%

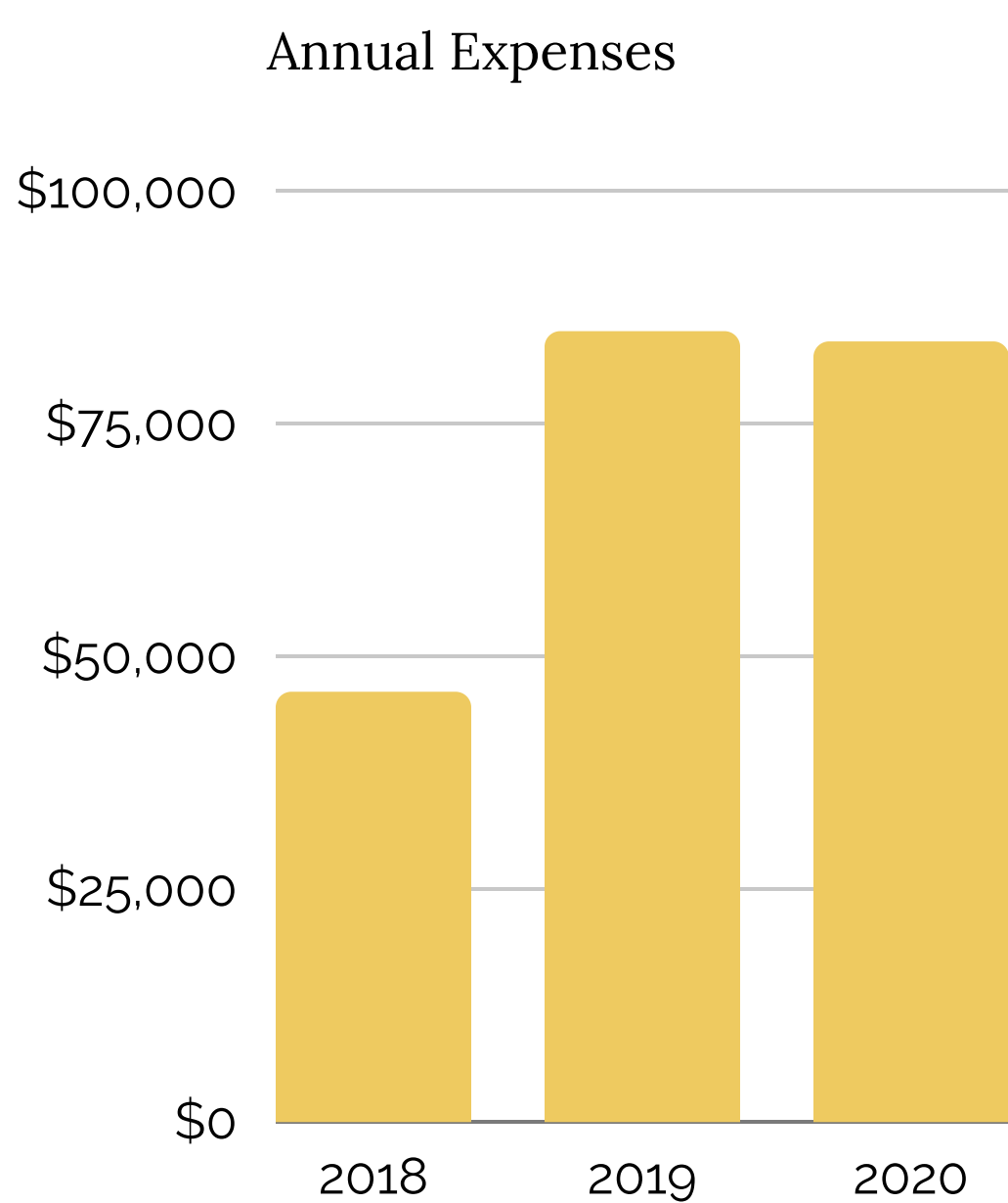
Recurring donations are critical to our ability to provide essential care. With the pandemic, our monthly recurring donations dropped to 18% from 30% of total funds raised.



100%

Our Board in the United States volunteer their time so we can maximize impact locally.

Expenditures*: Expenses for 2020 were relatively similar to the prior year as represented in the chart below, due largely to our commitment to our staff during the pandemic. Specifically, the Ghana government shut down our operations (except for our boarding homes for students) for most of the year, yet we continued to pay our staff.



Financial Controls: We have evolved from teaching under a tree to a formal school, nursery and boarding houses. To match our operational evolution, our financial controls improved dramatically in 2020. The key challenges remain a wider spectrum of managers having access to funds and the cash-based economy. To improve control and accountability we implemented new processes with our accounting software and sourced local accountancy support. This has enabled our team to more efficiently manage budgets while also significantly enhancing financial controls.

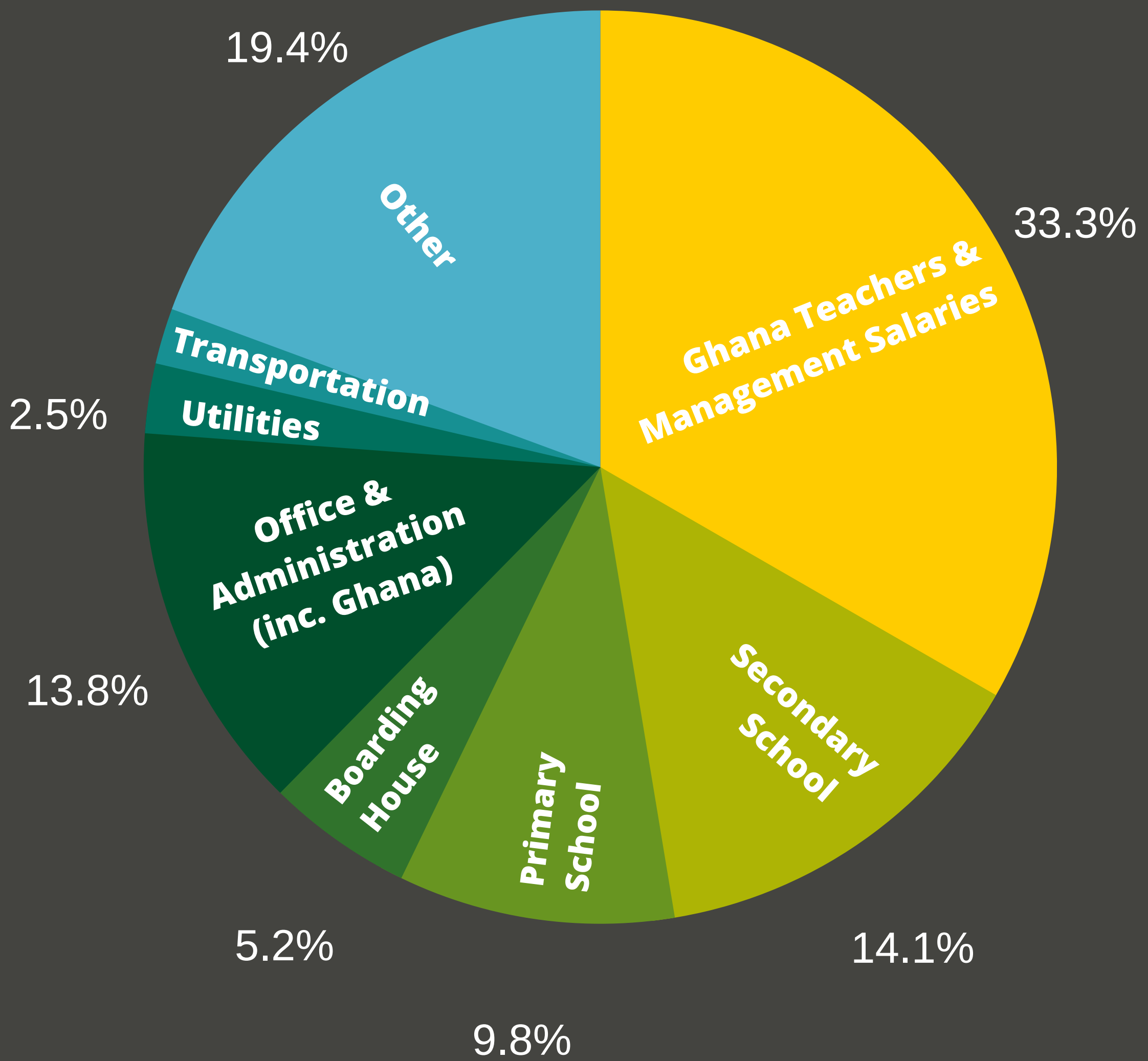
While we have had a few challenges in implementing, these changes represent a substantial boost in our controls and provide greater visibility than previously possible.

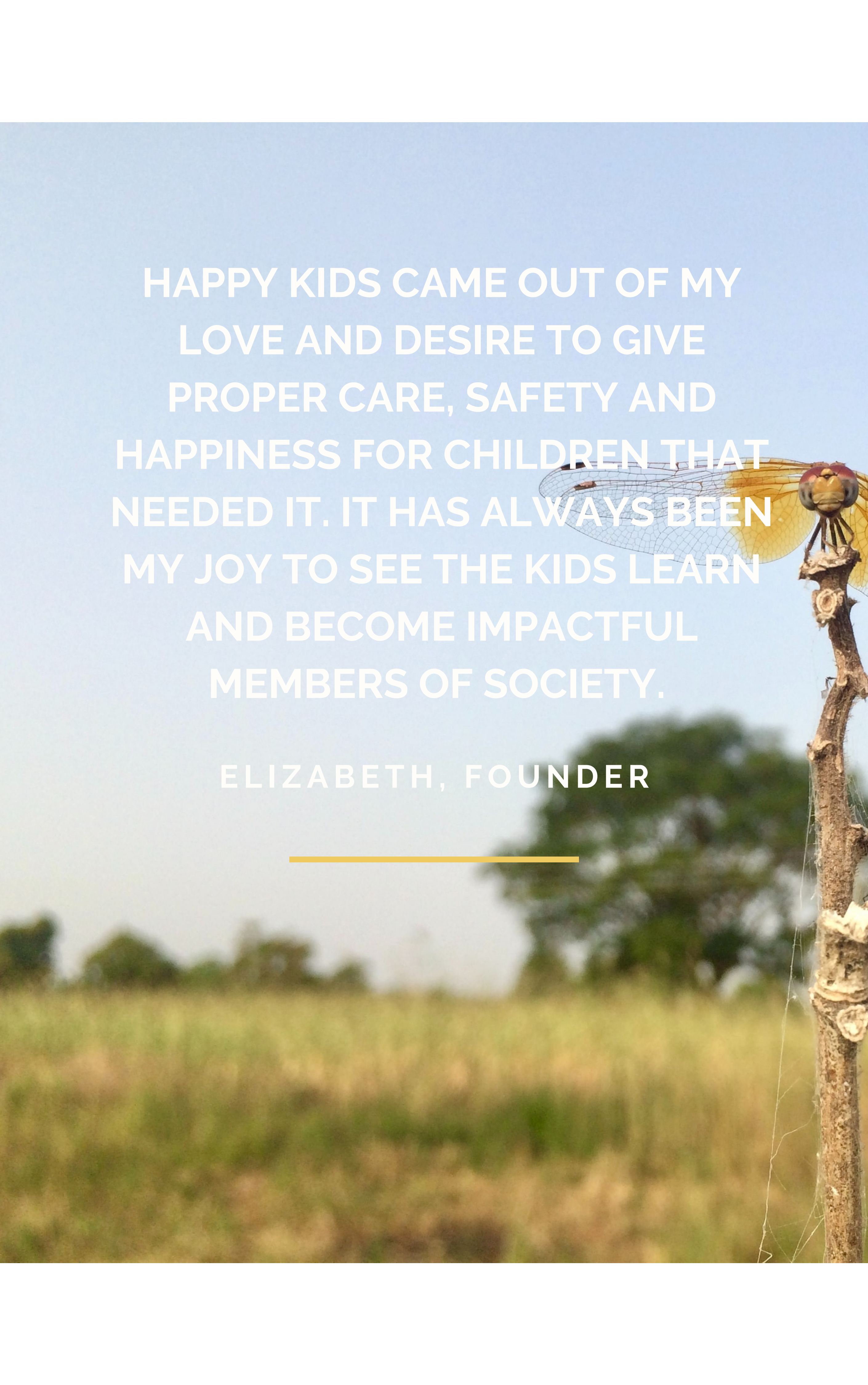
**Note: To aid in transparency, capital balances and expenses represent combined U.S. and Ghana accounts (U.S. and Ghana operations are separate legal entities). For official reporting purposes in the U.S., only US inflows/outflows are reported.*



PROGRAM FUNDING

2020



A dragonfly with a reddish-brown head and yellowish wings is perched on a vertical tree branch on the right side of the image. The background consists of a clear blue sky and a blurred green field. The text is overlaid on the left and center of the image.

HAPPY KIDS CAME OUT OF MY
LOVE AND DESIRE TO GIVE
PROPER CARE, SAFETY AND
HAPPINESS FOR CHILDREN THAT
NEEDED IT. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN
MY JOY TO SEE THE KIDS LEARN
AND BECOME IMPACTFUL
MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

ELIZABETH, FOUNDER

EDUCATION OVERVIEW

This past year was the year that all plans came to a halt. We learned, adapted and at times struggled. Still, we kept the children and community we serve above all else.

In a "normal year" Happy Kids Schools educate approximately 200 vulnerable children from the Volta region in Ghana and employ a staff of 30. Children are taught from nursery age, lower primary, upper primary to junior high levels. In February of 2020, things were looking good – the Ghana Education System had just rolled out a new curriculum plan for the entire country and we were on our way to training our teaching staff in accordance to the new guidelines, ordering new textbooks for our student body and implementing important educational supports such as an after school reading club, revamping our ICT lab and planning out a prosperous academic year.

Then, Covid hit. In March of 2020, all plans came to a halt. It ignited fear, spiraled uncertainty and opened a pandora's box of questions on how we educate children living in rural villages, some very far away, without the support of a structured school day. No one had masks, no one was equipped with a reliable internet for distance learning, everyone was in a state of bewilderment. It was a scary time for adults and even scarier for children who simply didn't understand why their school suddenly closed down.

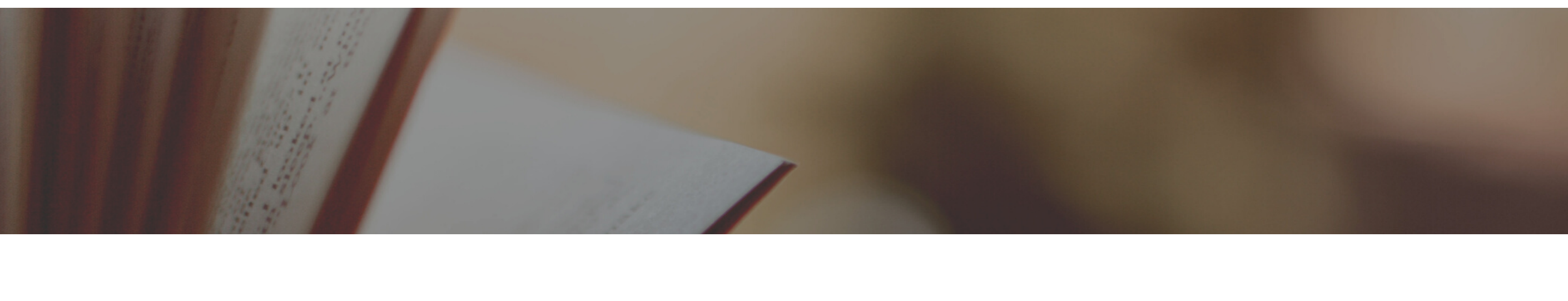
Happy Kids had to pivot quickly, like all other schools, and come up with a plan to continue educating our students in the midst of uncertainty. Without understanding how long this would remain, we developed a plan of action. Our local management team, in partnership with our entire teaching staff, moved swiftly to create and implement a workbook program. Workbooks were developed for each grade level, and were distributed personally by the teachers to each of their students. This process of developing a single workbook took many days, required creativity and resourcefulness. Over the course of the year, our staff created 3 sets of workbooks.

While noble in effort, this program suffered many setbacks. Coordinating dispersed and often unknown addresses for students proved challenging for dropping off and picking up workbooks, as did addressing the individual comprehension levels and families ability to provide support. While we are proud of our team's efforts, we were disappointed that we were not able to produce the results we had hoped for. Ultimately, our students' education suffered greatly and resulted in a significant gap in learning for 2020.

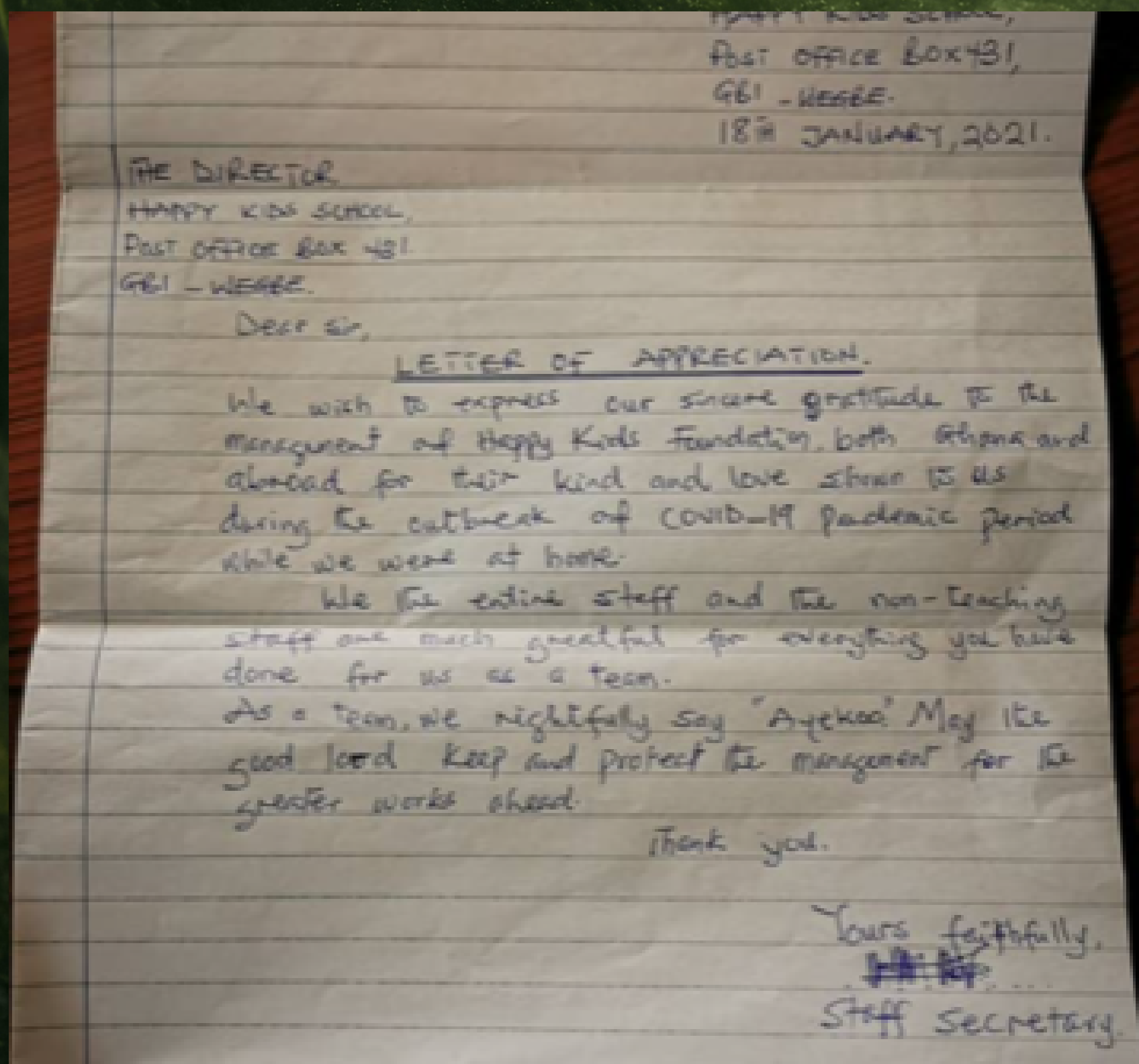
Despite the significant setbacks that we faced, it was also important we continued to support our teachers and community during this time by continuing to pay staff throughout 2020 and provide professional development training. We believe this was the right thing to do and were only able to do some because of continued donor support. We later learned we were the only school in our region to do so and are proud we were able to support our staff.

This past year showed us we are strong amidst adversity and fully dedicated to support the 200 children we service. We learned a lot, while sticking together, and we are now focused on the year ahead. Our priority is to assess individual gaps and "catching up" our students on all that they missed during the pandemic. We look forward to brighter days and have a new sense of appreciation for the importance and formality of a normal school day.

Christine Joseph
Director of Education



A MESSAGE FROM OUR TEACHERS



Letter of Appreciation

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the management of Happy Kids Foundation, both Ghana and abroad for their kindness and love shown to us during the outbreak of COVID-10 pandemic period while we were at home. We the entire staff and the non-teaching staff are grateful for everything you have done for us as a team. As a team, we rightfully say "Ayekoa". May the good lord keep and protect the management team for the greater work ahead. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
Staff Secretary

THE CHALLENGES CHILDREN FACE

Children in the Volta Region in Ghana face unique risks for exploitation and abuse - making our role in supporting their safety and education at Happy Kids even more critical.

LOCAL CONTEXT: VOLTA REGION



- The Volta Region is 1 of 16 regions in Ghana, located to west of Republic of Togo and to the east of Lake Volta.
- This region experiences some of the highest unemployment in all of Ghana.
- Services (*trade*), Industry (*construction*) and Agriculture (*crop & fisheries*) are the predominant sectors for employment in this region.
- Nearly 40% of the population is 0-14 years old.

Widespread Child Labor

- The average age a child begin work here is **9 years old**.
- **1 out of 5** children are engaged in child labor.
- Trafficking for child labour occurs mainly in connection with children working in the fishing industry.

Combating Violence & Sexual Abuse

- Children in this region experience some of the highest levels of physical abuse at home in Ghana, with **70%** of adults stating they physically punish children.
- **33%** of children report being beaten by a teacher/head in the past month.
- **Trokosi** is practiced in this region, a tradition involving the ritual servitude and enslavement of girls who are brought to atone for the sins of a family member.

Seperation from Parents

- The Volta Region has the lowest proportion of children living with both parents: **45%**.
- Poverty is the most often cited reason for fostering children out of the home, with parents not being able to afford to take care of their child.

HAPPY KIDS HIGHLIGHTS



HAPPY KIDS HIGHLIGHT: SUCESS STORIES

Our kids overcome adversity every single day. Here are just a few of their success stories in our Continued Education Program.



David is a young man who grew up in our care and attended Happy Kids. His access to Secondary School, made possible by the Continued Education Scholarship he received via a Happy Kids donor, opened up opportunities that would have otherwise, been impossible. David made history as the first Happy Kid to be admitted into University! The local Ghanaian team jumped through academic hoops to find affordable University options - it took a team to get him here, but most of all - it took David's commitment. David had every imaginable hurdle in his way and with persistence, the help of his educators, and Happy Kids family, he's made Happy Kids history. David set the example - and as children watch him evolve, they too know what's possible for them.



Johannes has spent most of his childhood at Happy Kids, relocating from a nearby fishing village with his sister after their parents were no longer able to care for them. For the past ten years at Happy Kids, he has grown from a sweet and shy boy to an incredibly bright and thoughtful young man with drive and purpose. He has always thrived academically at Happy Kids, reading books beyond his years. We are so proud that his dedication to school earned him enrollment as a Visual Arts student of Bishop Herman College. Like David, this opportunity was made possible through the Continued Education Scholarship Fund that provided the support and resources for Johannes to thrive and continue learning.



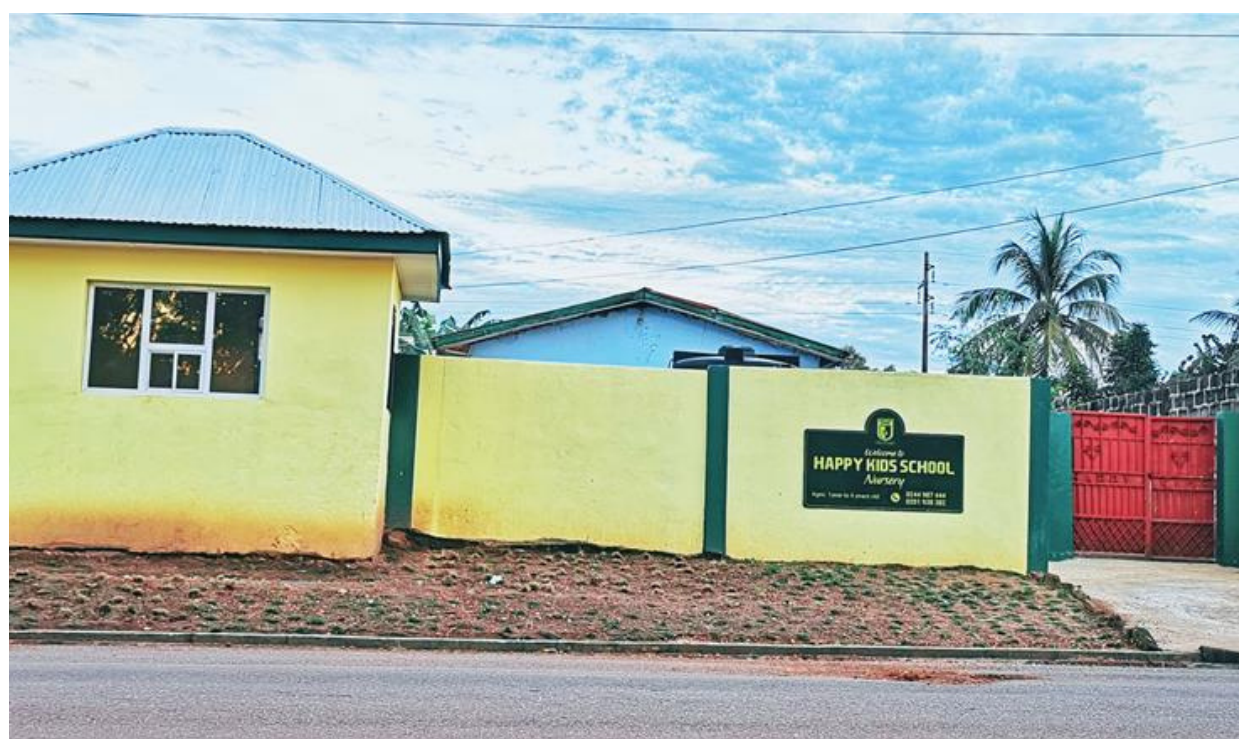
Moda has grown up at Happy Kids alongside her brother, Etonam. She excelled in her studies at Happy Kids and grew her creative mind. Even as a young girl, Moda wanted to become a seamstress and would practice stitching buttons when we first launched our sewing program. With our Continued Education Scholarship Fund Moda is now in her third and final year at Imperial Arts College studying design and fashion. Pairing her skills and passion, Moda has been busy at school learning and crafting unique pieces.

HAPPY KIDS HIGHLIGHT: INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Sustaining an effective and safe learning environment requires continued investment in our infrastructure - the foundations for healthy learning.

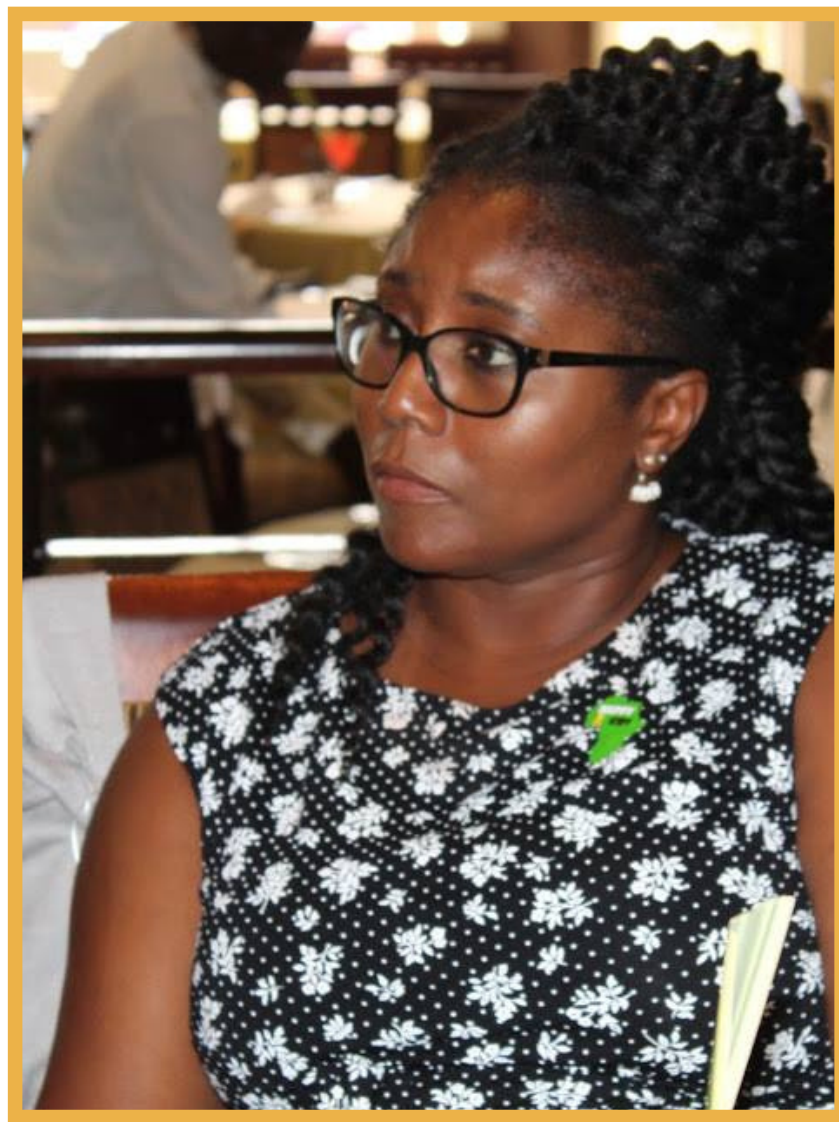
While most of our students were home due to COVID restrictions, we made a number of upgrades throughout Happy Kids to better the environment for our students and teachers. We renovated the entrance walls to Happy Kids, built a new storeroom for nursery supplies and made several enhancements to our school classrooms. These updates, which included window and electric repairs, along with fresh paint, are important improvements to continue to provide an effective and safe learning environment for our kids.

Providing a dedicated, protected space for our teachers has also been a priority for us. After a temporary structure was damaged in a storm, our teachers had no dedicated space to grade papers, collaborate with other teachers or simply eat lunch privately. As an investment in our teachers, we also built a new teachers lounge. This lounge is now a permanent structure that has been added to our school, providing teachers with a secure space to research, plan curriculum and connect with other staff.

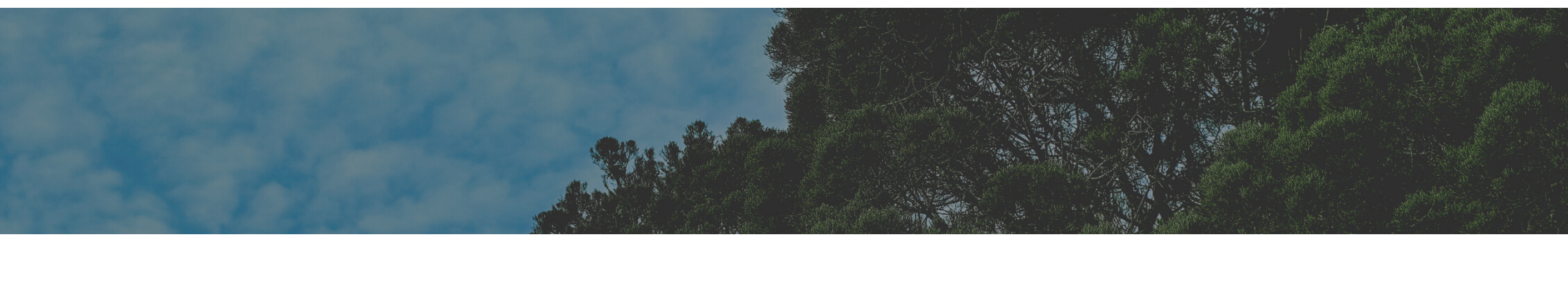


HAPPY KIDS HIGHLIGHT: LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Leveraging local leaders in education like Madame Evelyn helps us bridge gaps in our programming and ultimately deliver against our mission.



In 2018, we began working with Madame Evelyn. She is a School Improvement Partner and has over 24 years of experience in teaching and management in the UK. Our partnership with Evelyn has grown over the years, working closely with our team to enhance the structure and processes within our school. Evelyn has been a valuable extension to our team, helping ensure that our students are thriving and have a curriculum that meets their educational needs. She has also worked on supplemental training for our teachers so they can provide the best education possible to our kids. As we continue to improve our school, we are grateful to have local partnerships and passionate leaders like Madame Evelyn.



GHANA MANAGEMENT TEAM

ELIZABETH
GBONE,
FOUNDER



GODSWAY AGYABO,
PROGRAM
DIRECTOR



STEPHANY
ABRA BOATEN,
DIRECTOR CONTINUED
EDUCATION



EMMANUEL
GBONE, SPECIAL
PROJECTS MANAGER



KNOX
ODUMAH,
DIRECTOR



US BOARD

CASSIE
ROSENGREN,
PRESIDENT



PAUL NEEDELS,
FINANCE
DIRECTOR



CHRISTINE
JOSEPH. EDUCATION
DIRECTOR



CHRISTY MAHAR,
FUND DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR



KELSEY
FINNEGEN,
ADVISOR





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EMPOWER.
MAKE CHANGE.**

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www.happykidsfund.org
