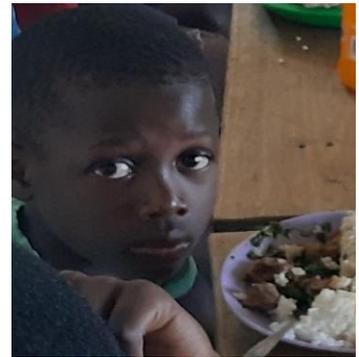


Hello from Kenyan Kids!

Safe Haven Programs Continue

Safe Haven is a program sponsored by the Rusinga Island Children's Fund, and it provides food, medical care, and education for 31 primary school children.

During October – December, most of the children were still at Safe Haven while schools were closed for Covid precautions, except for the few children in 4th and 8th grades who returned to school in October. Volunteer teachers assisted the kids in learning activities at Safe Haven, but there were extraordinary medical challenges in 2020, as described below.



Most Rusinga Island residents are Christian, and Christmas was celebrated with a special meal. Wilson above enjoys a yummy meal with fish and Fanta orange.

Update on Medical Challenges

You will recall from notes below that we were faced in 2020 with our most challenging medical problems so far. The normal bouts with malaria, stomach upsets, and other common local ailments pale in comparison. Only the little girl named Fancy suffers as much pain sometimes with her Sickle Cell Anemia.

Collins (left, below, file photo before accident), who is blind from birth, was hit by a motorcycle in August, knocking out 3 front teeth, among other things. In December he had those teeth replaced, and he is back to his old self. What a bright, lovable child he is, best in his class!

Kevin has apparently had untreated glaucoma for years. He has attended Kibos School for the Visually Challenged for about 5 years, after years of trying to see in the regular classroom. He spent much of 2020 having pain in one eye. After visiting specialist hospitals far from Rusinga Island, with no help and increasingly terrible pain, he had surgery at the Lion's Clinic in Nairobi on October 29. He healed and had rejoined Kibos School for the Visually Challenged. *While writing this, we had a call from the school that Kevin is again in pain with the same eye. We are searching once again for real help for him.*



Happy days in the past for Collins (left) and Kevin. Many more are coming!



Preparing for New School Year

After the 10-month Covid break, the new school year starts in January and there were last minute preparations to get all the children ready for school again with uniforms, shoes, school books and materials. There was also tuition for several children who are away at schools for the hearing and visually challenged and one high school girl, Rose, who assisted our volunteer teachers this year.



Kids receive new shoes and socks for school (left). Above, boys with masks in required school uniforms, measured and made by a seamstress on Rusinga Island.

Our Dream: Further Education for the Kids

At the end of the 8th grade, there is a national exam to determine much of a child's life. Their score determines whether they will be called to join a high school, and what high school(s) may accept them. The brightest child may be called to join a good school, and most of these are boarding schools quite far away. "Boarding" is not as expensive in Kenya. It can mean that food and bed frame are provided, but kids often lose weight and are anxious to get back to Safe Haven for their breaks.

Safe Haven focuses on supporting our primary school children. It is our goal to also support these children when they are ready to go to high school. After this year, we expect that four children may be ready, with five the following year. The cost per child per year could start at approximately \$1,500, but there is a great deal of variation, and a high school on the remote Rusinga Island can be as low as \$130 or \$500 for school fees only.

Thank you for all you do for the children!
Rusinga Island Children's Fund



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