

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Dala Development Christmas Letter

Dear Friends,

What a year it's been! Though we may not be able to celebrate as we have in the past, it's still so nice to end the year with Christmas, a time of hope, love, and coming redemption. Merry Christmas!

### **Health News: Christmas Cheer, Screenings, and Graduation!**

The photo below is of Elizabeth, full of gratitude, standing next to her care package, behind that mask is a big smile. This Christmas about 20 cancer patients in our program will receive the same. In May, after Covid-19 hit, we started providing care packages filled with staples such as flour, rice, beans, cooking oil, sugar, soap, and more, to help needy cancer patients. Your support is bringing Christmas cheer and good tidings, thank you!



Recently, when lockdown restrictions here were lifted, we held an educational and screening session to women vendors in the open-air market -- using a new and different approach of going to **where they are** as opposed to gathering people together for large clinic events in the pre-COVID19 era. We set up event tents for patient privacy and, with the help of an enthusiastic male vendor with a megaphone, distributed over 200 brochures and recruited over 100 women for breast and cervical cancer screenings. Of those 100 women, about ten were treated for non-cancerous, but still serious, women's health issues.

Two weeks later we screened over 80 women attending Mother Child Health Clinic at a local hospital. We used the same approach of **meeting people where they are** and intend to use it going forward until COVID is managed.

## Graduation time!

On Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> we graduated (with honors!) from America Cancer Society's SOURCE Program (Strengthening Organizations for a United Response to the Cancer Epidemic). After three years and over 450 hours of travelling, training, and technical assistance, our staff are better equipped to run the operations, manage human, material and financial resources, and offer services in a professional and caring way. We thank God for the opportunity to participate in the program and that we have now completed it!



## Exciting news from Soi School!

School is back in session! We re-opened the school after meeting public health measures--masking, spaced seating, hand washing centers, and a temperature-testing unit. In October the Government ordered 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades only to resume classes to lessen the number of children in attendance for COVID. The books we told you about in the last update have also been loaned to students with great success. Although commonplace in the US, such a lending library is almost non-existent in rural Kenya.

On January 4<sup>th</sup> all grade levels will return to school if health measures can be met. For Soi School, this means purchasing around 20 more bench-desks to maintain social distancing—now only two, not three or four children will be allowed to share one desk. January will be a very interesting month, as many of the private schools could not afford to remain in operation. **It is such a blessing that we have external funding and that our teachers and students have not and will not suffer from 7-9 months of school being closed. Words cannot express how thankful they are and we are for you and everyone who has invested in the future of these wonderful children!**



We, the Okalls, are very thankful to God for all the things, big and small, we normally take for granted. This difficult year we are especially thankful for life, good health, and for family and friends like you. One of our favorite storybooks reminds us that “a lot depends on a helping hand from a few good friends.” You, our friends and family, have made all that we have been able to do this difficult year possible. We thank God for you and appreciate your continued support for this important work.



We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

With Sincere Gratitude,

Dan and Emily Okall plus the Dala Development Team

**If you are interested in helping us buy more desks (\$10 each) or Care packages for cancer patients (\$35 each), please note it with your donation. Thank you!**