

JUNE 2026

From the Heart of Kenya Relief

A LOOK AT THE WORK
HAPPENING IN MAY
ON CAMPUS IN MIGORI



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our Q2 Impact Webinar will be July 16th!

The webinar will feature updates from campus — BHOG, Brase, and KRA — as well as a special talk by KR Board Member Elizabeth Studley on the topic of her PhD which focused on Global Health and the Kenya Relief response to Covid-19!

More info to come!



Note from Melissa Cook, President and CEO

I would like to begin with an urgent request for all of our child sponsors. About one-third of sponsors are still giving through our old system, REACH, and unfortunately, Kenya Relief loses money every month that gifts remain there.

We've emailed, called, and texted to help everyone make the switch, & we need your help to complete this transition so we don't lose critical funding for the children we serve.

Moving your sponsorship to Raiser's Edge takes only a moment online and ensures your support continues exactly as intended.

If you have not yet made the switch, please use the QR Code on the left to give! If you have questions, our U.S.-based Sponsor & Donor Engagement Coordinator, Lauren Eich, is ready to help (contact her at Lauren@KenyaRelief.org). Thank you for your support of these precious children!

I've been on the ground in Kenya for three weeks in May and June, working closely with our team to strengthen partnerships and build staff capacity through leadership development, tactical planning, and logistics preparing for the next wave of mission teams. I'm grateful to have Curtis Coghlan here with me, and he'll continue supporting our work on campus through July 3.

We are also closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak in the DRC. While there are NO cases in Kenya and currently no impact on our operations, we're staying proactive and will be communicating with all incoming teams every Friday so they have the latest information and guidance.

Thank you for your continued support and for the hope you bring to the children and families we serve. Your partnership truly makes a difference.

Asante sana! Thank you very much,

Melissa Cook

SPONSORSHIP SWITCH



[**OR CLICK HERE!**](#)

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BRASE: CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

Sending best wishes to Mr. & Mrs. Enos Odero — our on-campus resident/clinic missionary & surgical First Assist Sonya got married this month! We are so excited for her & Enos, and can't wait for you all to see them when you come visit campus!



CHILDRENS' PROGRAM

Two of our BHOG Boys participated in the Migori sub-county music festival this month!! We are so proud of all of the students that participated, but wanted to share a special celebration for Dickens and Jibri!!



KRA: STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Jacob is a student leader at Kenya Relief Academy with a passion for robotics, science, and innovation. Recently, he helped develop an autonomous watering system and represented KRA at a local science fair. As school captain, Jacob leads by example and dreams of one day becoming a NASA engineer where he can use technology to help others.



THIS MONTH'S COVER STAR

Ramsey Tobias is always on the move, whether he's drawing, playing football, or inventing new games with friends. He loves chicken and mukimo, his favorite color is yellow, and math is one of his favorite subjects in school. He'll be the king of the world someday, if you ask him! Ramsey brings so much energy and creativity to BHOG, we're so happy to know him!

EDUCATION CHANGES EVERYTHING. \$70,000 NEEDED

At Brittney's Home of Grace, we care for 170–180 children and young adults each year. Some live on campus while attending primary school, others are in secondary school or college programs across Kenya.

As the school year continues, several major education-related payments come due this summer. We urgently need to raise \$70,000 to cover costs such as tuition, uniforms, books, meals, counseling, and other support for the children.

Will you help provide life-changing education for the children?

A gift of **\$936** covers a semester of college or university

A gift of **\$585** provides a year of high school education

A gift of **\$390** covers a semester of vocational school

A gift of **\$198** provides school uniforms for 2 children

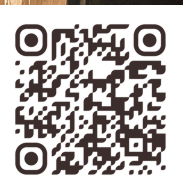


SHEILA, ONE OF OUR BHOG STUDENTS, IS STARTING A PROGRAM STUDYING FOOD & BEVERAGE!



WIDOW'S FUND

This month's small project focus is our Widows' Program, which provides support to vulnerable widows in the Migori community. **We currently have three widows in the program, who for years have received \$50/month of needed household staples and food supplies.** This outreach offers encouragement and connection to women navigating incredibly difficult circumstances. We would love to one day expand this program so that more widows & families can experience the dignity and hope that this support provides! Donations can be made through the QR code on the right, select "Widows Fund" from the drop-down menu.





Ebola Update: June 26, 2026 Update

As the Ebola outbreak in Central and East Africa continues to develop, Kenya Relief remains in active communication with healthcare partners, local leadership, and Kenya's Ministry of Health to monitor the situation closely.

At this time, there are still no reported Ebola cases in Kenya, and no cases connected to Kenya Relief, Brase Clinic, or our Migori campus. Brase Clinic remains open and fully operational as staff continue serving patients and families throughout the community.

We are grateful for this continued stability, and we continue to monitor events faced by our neighbors in the Democratic Republic of Congo & Uganda. We ask you to continue praying for the patients, families, healthcare workers, and communities directly affected by the outbreak.

There is currently no impact on Kenya Relief operations, however we will be providing regular updates to all incoming teams each Friday so they have the latest information, guidance, and travel recommendations as the situation evolves.

We celebrate recent news that the American physician who contracted Ebola while serving patients in DRC has now recovered and been discharged from treatment. His family, who were quarantined for several weeks, have also been released and thankfully did not contract the virus. Stories like this remind us both of the risks healthcare workers willingly carry and of the importance of strong medical response systems and coordinated global care. This week, we are also praying for the French humanitarian doctor who recently tested positive for Ebola after serving patients in the DRC. In a statement from the French health ministry, he is in stable condition has been admitted to a specialized care facility.

Thank you for continuing to pray for our staff, our patients, and our neighboring communities during this time!! Your support helps ensure that Brase Clinic can continue providing steady, compassionate care no matter what challenges arise.

REKINDLING HOPE: JOYCE'S STORY



In 2013, a little girl joined the Brittney's Home of Grace program after the loss of her father. Growing up in a family of ten children in the Kuria community, life was filled with uncertainty, though her mother worked hard to provide for the family.

For Joyce, BHOG became a turning point.

Through the support of staff, social workers, missionaries, and sponsors who walked alongside her over the years, Joyce was able to continue her education and begin building a different future for herself. After completing primary school, she transitioned into vocational training at Maranatha College, where she spent three years studying tailoring and dressmaking.



Today, Joyce is a proud graduate and trained tailor with a business of her own near her home community.

Just one year after completing her program, she is already earning an income that helps support both herself and her daughter! During a recent visit with our social department, Joyce reflected on how much the BHOG program shaped her life during some of its most difficult seasons. She shared that the support she received gave her hope when the future **once felt uncertain**.



Joyce hopes to continue expanding her business, building a stable future for her family, and use her story to encourage others in her community. Her journey reflects the long-term impact that is possible when children are surrounded by consistent care, opportunity, & people who believe in them.

MORE THAN MEDICINE

DR. GILCHRIST & MRS.
KATINA JACKSON
REFLECT ON
GLOBAL MEDICINE,
THE CHILDREN AT
BHOG,
& KENYA RELIEF



For more than 50 years, Dr. Gil Jackson has practiced surgery, building a respected career in Houston. Wife Katina Jackson is the Senior Associate Athletics Director for the University of Houston. Together they have raised four children. Yet even during the busiest years of their careers, a desire quietly remained in their hearts: to serve through global medical missions.

“While working at St. Luke’s, our surgical practice was incredibly busy,” Dr. Jackson shared. “There simply wasn’t space at that time to engage in mission work, even though the desire was always there.”

That changed in 2017.

After transitioning to a new practice at Houston Methodist Hospital, Dr. Jackson attended the M3 Conference, where he encountered organizations serving around the world through surgery and medical missions.

“That was where I first learned about Kenya Relief and began to understand how global surgery could realistically fit into my life and calling.”

In 2018, Dr. Jackson joined his first medical mission team at Kenya Relief as part of a team of surgical specialists from across the United States, focusing on general surgery as well as head and neck procedures.

“We worked long days—often from 6:30 in the morning until 8:30 at night—but the work was deeply meaningful. I will never forget it,” Dr. Jackson said.

He recalled operating on a woman who had lived for years with a massive tumor on her face, roughly the size of a grapefruit. Because of shame and embarrassment, she had spent years covering her face in public. During surgery, Dr. Jackson carefully removed the tumor while preserving the facial nerve so she would retain the ability to smile afterward.

“The surgery was complex,” he recalled. “We spent a long time preserving her facial nerves, but we were able to remove the tumor completely.”

Dr. Jackson continued, “When I saw her post-op, she smiled at me. She didn’t say much,” he remembered, “but her expression said everything.”

The surgical teams also treated many patients with severe thyroid disease and large goiters, conditions that had often gone untreated or had been unsuccessfully managed through traditional methods. **Many patients traveled extraordinary distances seeking care, some by motor bike (three passengers at a time) for days or traveling by train from coastal regions near Mombasa. Others came from neighboring countries, including Uganda and Tanzania, hoping for an opportunity to be seen by the medical team.**



But it was the next year that the experience became even more meaningful for their family.

“A team leader called Gil to come again the next year,” Katina remembered, “and that’s when he said he would only come if I could come.”

Katina wasn’t sure exactly what her role would be, but she came prepared to love the children. Before the trip, she gathered athletic gear, basketball jerseys, shoes, sweatbands—and 30 soccer balls.

“One thing I’ll never forget is the complete chaos when we blew up 30 soccer balls,” she laughed. “It was pandemonium, just a free-for-all! Soccer balls were flying everywhere. It was so much fun.”

For both Gil and Katina, one of the most meaningful aspects of each trip is the time they spend with the children. “It doesn’t take long to connect with them, and those moments are incredibly impactful,” says Katina.

During visits to the villages where many children once lived, Dr. Jackson saw firsthand the poverty and hardship so many face. Seeing those living conditions gave him a much deeper understanding of the work Kenya Relief is doing across the community.

He spoke about how dramatically children’s lives begin to change once they enter the program. The Jacksons, and many members from visiting medical teams, sponsor children through the children’s program Brittney’s Home of Grace, which allows Kenya Relief to provide: consistent meals, safe housing, healthcare, mosquito prevention, HIV treatment when needed, and access to education create opportunities many of the children would not otherwise have.



“The children truly blossom,” he said. “Their confidence grows, their curiosity expands, and their future changes.”

“These are environments marked by extreme poverty, subsistence farming, and very limited access to healthcare or education,” he explained. “When you see where these children come from, you truly understand the magnitude of what Kenya Relief is doing.”

Just as meaningful to him has been watching the caregivers and staff who dedicate their lives to supporting the children every day. “They don’t simply supervise,” he said. “They nurture, guide, and love these kids as family.”

Now, after seven trips to Kenya, the Jacksons are deeply committed to the mission.

Dr. Jackson’s advice: “If someone was considering supporting Kenya Relief, I would tell them this: Kenya Relief transforms entire ecosystems. Patients receive life-changing medical care. Orphans receive safety, education, nutrition, and love. Communities are strengthened through schools and healthcare. Volunteers don’t just give—they are changed.”

Katina agrees wholeheartedly. “It’s just a very, very special place.”

“It’s funny because you go on a mission to serve, but you get so much more out of it than you give. You just feel so blessed to have had that experience.”

Stories of Impact: Patient Story

In August 2025, Vincent Clintone was asleep in bed under a mosquito net while his mother was outside washing dishes and preparing supper. Because the family lives in a small single-room home, the charcoal stove had been placed near the bed. Tragically, the mosquito net caught fire, and Vincent sustained extensive burns to his back, head, and face.

His father heard screams coming from the house and was able to extinguish the fire, and quickly took Vincent to Migori County Referral Hospital. Due to the severity of his burns, he needed skin grafting, a service that was not available at the hospital at that time. Plans were being made to transfer him to Nairobi for further care, but by God's grace, local doctor Dr. Kibira had just completed a plastic surgery residency & saw Vincent during ward rounds. Dr. Kibira performed the first phase of grafting, and Vincent was discharged home in January 2026.

Because Brase Clinic is closer to the family's home, Vincent was referred here for regular wound dressings. During one of his dressing visits at Brase Clinic, Vincent was seen by Michael Hunt's team and other mission members. Moved by the extent of his injuries, they fundraised as a team for his continued treatment and surgeries. Through their support, Kenya Relief and Dr. Kibira were able to connect with a neurosurgeon in Kisii, who performed a decortication of Vincent's scalp. Since then, grafting of the scalp has been completed, and Vincent continues to receive dressing changes under the guidance of Dr. Kibira.

Because Vincent also sustained injuries to his eyelids, the plan is for him to be seen by an oculoplastic surgeon at Lions Eye Hospital in Nairobi once Dr. Kibira gives clearance!

Recently, Kenya Relief's CEO, Melissa, had the opportunity to check in on Vincent during a visit to the clinic. She shared that he is recovering well after surgery and is now only a few dressing changes away from being ready for what is believed to be the next step in his care: a corneal transplant. Melissa was able to encourage Vincent and remind him how loved he is, and how many people are continuing to pray for his healing. She also spent time speaking with his parents and encouraging them in the incredible care they have given their son throughout this difficult journey.



Photos From May





More Ways to Get Involved!

CRNAs Needed in October!

We are in need of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) to join a surgical team traveling to campus **October 14 - October 25th!**

If you or someone you know may be interested or able to serve alongside our Kenyan healthcare partners at Brase Clinic, please let us know!!

Any help recruiting would be so appreciated!!

Email us at
Missions@KenyaRelief.org
to learn more!

Help Bring Teams to Kenya!

Every mission team begins with someone willing to lead. Team Leaders play a vital role in helping volunteers prepare well, serve confidently, and use their skills to serve while they're in Migori!

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Team Leader, we'd love to tell you what the role looks like and help walk you through our training process.

Email us at
KenyaRelief@KenyaRelief.org to
learn more!

