



STILL STANDING WITH STUDENTS

A Letter From The Lahash Board Of Directors

I want to share a huge thank you from my heart for your involvement in the work of Lahash this past year. Your prayers and gifts have been absolutely invaluable in the lives of the kids we serve. You've helped bring hope and revitalization to communities across East Africa. I would love for each of you to be able to visit the region and sit and hear these incredible stories.

Ten years ago my husband Clark and I lived in Uganda for a year. We sat and heard many stories. We became dear friends with our ministry partners and with dozens of the Lahash kids in the region. It was great to see that the kids in primary and secondary school received education and care – but I was also struck by a sobering realization. These orphaned kids had no family and no land. They had no concrete hope or prospects for life after secondary school. In response, Clark and I helped create the Lahash Stand With Students (SWS) program where the kids could be mentored and disciplined by local

Christians and then receive a scholarship for higher education and additional training. We started out by assisting a couple of South Sudanese students.

Ten years later the program is flourishing! There are now over 30 kids in SWS. In January I was able to travel to Kenya for a retreat with 17 of the young men and women in our Higher Ed program. It was so incredible spending time with these kids. They were all so tall! I was reunited with some of the ones I knew, but I also saw a lot of new faces and it was special to see how the vision had spread across East Africa. I loved seeing how these once shy and awkward kids had blossomed into confident young adults. One kid named Morris was just a teen when we met him ten years ago. At our retreat he was leading prayer and worship sessions! He has become a wonderfully mature young man.

Your faithful participation is expanding the vision Clark and I had ten years ago. I encourage you to visit! Keep



giving financially. And most importantly, please continue praying for the kids and in particular for the local leaders – that God gives them strength, resources, and discernment as they invest in these promising young people. What you've helped accomplish through your support of Lahash is life-changing for these kids and their communities. Thank you for your role in each of these precious lives!



Cathy Blakeman

Cathy is a former staff member at Lahash and currently helps guide the ministry through her presence on the Lahash Board.



Leaders from each of our partner ministries joined Lahash staff members and their families for training, discipleship, and fellowship in Moshi, Tanzania.

SEEING GROWTH FACE TO FACE

The 2022 East Africa Conference brought Lahash staff and ministry partners back together after far too long apart. Being able to see the changes in the lives of children we serve truly put the JOY into this joyful reunion!

The first of many highlights that marked the 2022 conference in Tanzania was the simple joy of seeing each other. We had not gathered our staff from the US with East Africa staff and ministry partners since 2018, and it was wonderful to reunite. During the conference we were also able to visit with children in the Lahash Sponsorship Program who are served by our local partners at Peacemakers for Albinism & Community. We arrived to discover that the kids had been preparing for weeks in anticipation of this day. They were eager to meet their many visitors and share time with us, treating us like the guests of honor at their joyful party. In their excitement, they had prepared many more performances than the allotted time could hold. They presented a full program of singing, dancing, drumming, sharing a story from the Bible along with a short skit, and even some acrobatic tricks!

Sister Martha Mganga has albinism herself, and founded this ministry to care for others with the same genetic condition. Together with staff member Mariam Munga, they receive children from a heartbreaking variety of traumatic circumstances. There has been significant progress in recent years, but albinism

is still highly stigmatized in Tanzania. People with albinism are pushed to the outer margins of society so that others don't have to see or touch them. They are abused, mocked, and abandoned. Children with albinism develop severe health problems when their skin, lips, and eyes are not cared for properly, so by the time they find Sister Martha and Mariam's open arms, they are in major physical and emotional distress.

"When we started to find them, they had really big trauma in their heart because of different abuse and stigmatization," Sister Martha explains. "So what we started is really to encourage them. To heal their inner wounds. And also take them back to the Word of God about love and forgiveness – that yes, God loves *you*."

Because of the unique forms of harm children with albinism are exposed to, the holistic care model is key to helping them thrive. They need patient, loving attention to their emotional needs over time. Educational care requires building relationships with schools and teachers that can fully commit to facilitating the children's learning with larger print, magnifying glasses, and seats right up close to the blackboard so they can see. Nutritional



support is one aspect of their physical care, and they also need close monitoring of skin and mouth lesions, specialized medical treatments, and the frequent distribution of sunscreen, sunhats, and clothes that protect their skin.

Spiritual care for these kids means reinforcing the truth of God's great love for them over and over, continually counteracting the harmful messages they have received. Sister Martha saw a great transformation happen when the Lahash Bible Fund was able to provide each child with their own Bible to hold:

For these children to share even a Bible between two of them – they can't. Our vision as people with albinism is low vision. Legally we are in the group of blind people. So it was a very very great surprise for them when everyone can hold her or his own Bible! Now they are finding their own memory verses, they don't even wait to be taught. Sometimes they call friends, "Come! It is written here! God loves us and he sent his only begotten Son!" They say, "It is for us! So God loves me!" So I really thank God for that gift of Bibles for the children.

2022 was a significant year of growth for Lahash, and the best way to see that is by looking in the faces of these kids. It was pure joy to observe the light in their eyes, the health of their skin, the confidence in their voices, the strength in their bodies, the sincerity in their prayers, the joy in their dancing, and the love of God that is so evident in the way they treat one another and the way they move through the world. "It is a long journey, but we see the success," Sister Martha shares. "From the beginning to where we are now, it's a big difference. So nowadays, they have the courage even to mix with other non-albinos for different activities like celebrations. Ah! They are



going very majestically, marching! So we see that emotionally they are really improving."

Working alongside local ministry partners, Lahash is helping to advance the vital work of bringing vulnerable children out of the shadows so they can grow, thrive, and *be seen* as they experience God's love. Thank you for partnering with us through donations large and small. Together we are giving kids the hope of learning in a classroom, the joy of reading the Word of God on their own, and the confidence to "march majestically" into all that life holds, knowing that they belong to a beautiful global family that sees and loves them from the other side of the world.

FIND MORE STORIES ONLINE AT LAHASH.ORG/BLOG

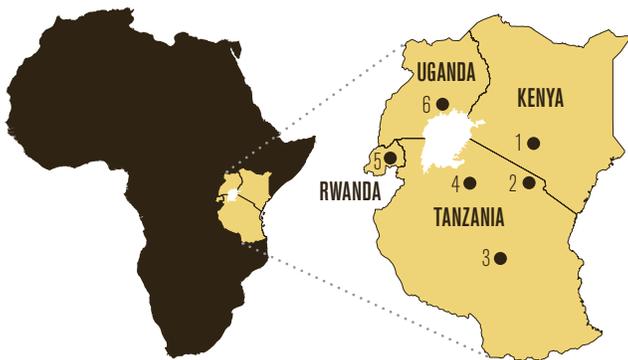
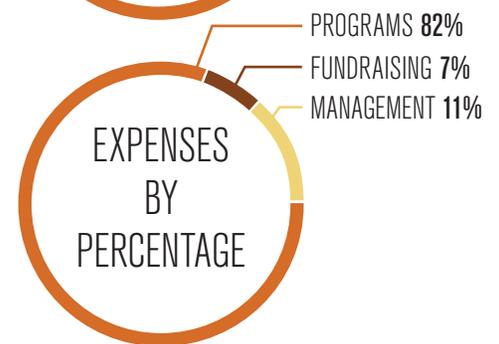
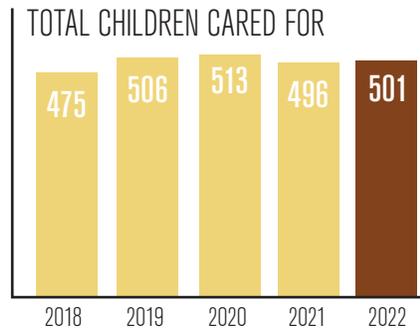
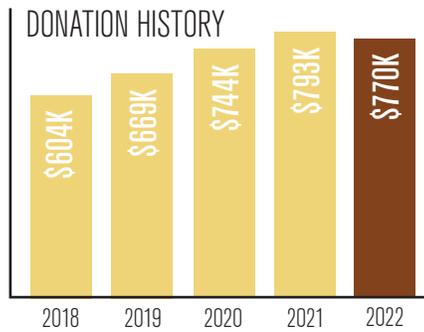
HOLISTIC CARE THROUGH CHILD SPONSORSHIP

The Lahash Sponsorship Program remains our central focus, providing consistent, loving, holistic care for vulnerable kids. **Spiritual care** includes discipleship in the ways of Jesus through worship, prayer, and Bible teaching. **Educational care** means working to educate each child to their highest ability. **Physical care** supports their nutrition, health, medical, and practical needs. **Emotional care** is about surrounding them with support and reaching out to them on home visits to offer counsel and encouragement. We are thankful for the deep commitment of our ministry partners to this work, and for the perseverance shown by every child. We are excited for a new year of ministry and growth and all that God holds in store!



In 2022, Lahash provided holistic care for over **500 vulnerable children** in **4 East African countries** by partnering with local ministries at **10 unique sites**.

2022 FINANCIALS



WHERE WE WORK

1. MAI MAHIU, KENYA
2. ARUSHA, TANZANIA
3. DODOMA, TANZANIA
4. SHINYANGA, TANZANIA
5. KIGALI, RWANDA
6. KAMPALA, UGANDA

Morris, mentioned in Cathy's letter on the front, celebrates receiving his diploma from Uganda Christian University



Thank You for Changing Lives!

This QR code will take you to a video that lets you hear directly from our ministry partners as they share what it looks like when a child is **Wholly Loved**. They are empowered in this vital work by the tangible gifts of grace shared by donors like you. Partnering across cultures and continents, we are impacting precious lives with God's love! *Thank you!*



WATCH THE NEW VIDEO AT
LAHASH.ORG/WHOLLYLOVED

To support the ongoing work of Lahash, donate online at lahash.org/give



Lahash is committed to financial integrity, transparency, and careful stewardship of every donation. In recognition of our financial accountability efforts, Lahash has received the Gold rating from the non-profit listing service GuideStar. Visit lahash.org/financials or contact us for more details.

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