

Advent greetings!

Many of you have heard about our Kenya Scholarship program at Oswego Pres. Since starting in 2013, we have helped sponsor 160+ students in high school of which 100+ have graduated (with almost 0 dropouts) and 70+ have continued on to college.

I would like to see us grow our presbytery-level program, the **Imenti Scholarship Fund**, to an even higher level. Samuel and Joseph have assured us there are many bright students, girls as well as boys, many of whom are orphans or of single-parent homes, across the 3 Imenti presbyteries who desperately need our support. And having a child graduate high school or college can often make the difference in pulling a family out of poverty.

The success of our program at Oswego is tied to our decision to push the scholarship gifting as an **Advent alternative gifting** program. We even did this in place of the 'Christmas Joy' special offering for several years although we are now asking members to support both. We've found that many people are delighted to give a scholarship in honor of Uncle Bob in lieu of buying him another 'white elephant'.

Please see a pamphlet that you can edit to highlight your church's program. Also attached is a printable gift card for 2-sided printing. Having a bunch printed, cut and folded and then spread at a high-traffic area in your church is a good reminder of the program to go along with your in-service announcements and printed or emailed pamphlet. Your accumulated collections can be later sent by a check to Blackhawk with a note that it is for the Imenti Scholarship Fund.

If you want, you can orient your church's program to have donations made directly to Blackhawk by check or online, using the Blackhawk website's "Donate" button, with an 'Imenti Scholarship' designation. This will be simpler, but you will not be able to report back the total donations to your congregation.

When Kathy and I visited our partners (Kithino Parish) in 2017 and then again in 2020, we were overwhelmed with the expressions of appreciations, especially from sponsored students and parents. Rev. Patrick said one of the biggest financial stresses for many low-income families, every school term, is how to procure enough cash to cover extra fees and clothing to keep their child in school. These scholarships are making a huge difference in these student's lives, and their families' lives, and even in their communities. We heard several students say their goal is to come back and be able serve their community.

I believe providing funds to our Kenyan partners for these scholarships is one our most impactful 'give a gift, change a life' missions projects.

Let me know if I can help in any way.

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