

Be the change.... you want to see in the world.

Kawempe Home Care has been very fortunate to have welcomed many volunteers over the years. The volunteers bring their expertise and skills to the organisation and for the volunteer it can be a life changing experience.

Often we are busy focussing on managing the day to day services we provide our clients and it sometimes takes someone from 'outside' who sees what we do that reminds us the difference our staff and supporters make to our clients lives and the important work we do.

We recently were pleased to welcome 3 volunteers from Germany: Josy, Marie Sophie and Lora who spent two weeks with us helping in the New Hope Children's hostel. We asked Josy if she could share her experience as a volunteer.

"It is hard to describe such an indescribable time.



My name is Josy and I am a 20 year old student from Germany. I always wanted to volunteer in Africa because I was fascinated by the continent and the people.

When my friend Marie Sophie called me and told me about KHC, I decided to grasp this opportunity. My decision to volunteer at Kawempe Home Care was very spontaneous and the morning I arrived at Kawempe, Mary, the administration manager had just found out that I would be visiting. Nevertheless, I was welcomed warmly and with open arms, which immediately made the atmosphere of familiarity at Kawempe Home Care. Mary invested a lot of time in ensuring that we were aware of the inner workings of every department. I originally wanted to volunteer in the Medical Support program but when I visited the New Hope Children's Hostel, I decided to stay there as I just felt that this was the area I could achieve

my best performance in. Claire, the Hostel Operations Manager, also welcomed me and my friend with open arms.

The children were very shy at first, but from the second day when they had become used to our presence, the mood became more engaging. It quickly became noticeable how difficult it was to engage with the children without real books or games.





Instead my friend Marie and I took up the challenge and came up with many different activities, which went down very well with the children. Among other things, we bought a soccer ball and had a tournament, made paper airplanes, painted a lot, played games, made bracelets, painted balloons. The favourite activity of the children was catching soap bubbles, much to everyone's amusement. My two favorite activities though, were dancing with the kids and face painting. Often we would just play some music and dance along to it with the kids. We also introduced morning yoga sessions to the children giving them the opportunity to move without overstraining themselves physically given the condition they were in.

Another very important activity we came up with were the English lessons. Thanks to one of the mothers there, who was a teacher, these turned out to be a major success. I noticed that many of the children did not go to school, so we wanted to give them the chance to learn something new.

Before my stay I was worried about the language barrier, because many of the children spoke Luganda, but this fear disappeared immediately when I entered the hostel for the first time. I quickly realized that in many cases, spoken communication was not necessary as laughter and body language quickly allowed for the children and I to connect and understand what we wanted from one another.

So, I almost always knew what the children liked and if they had fun. Nevertheless, I continued to speak English in the hope that I could teach the children some basics during my time there.



L-R Josy Jones, Lora Licata and Marie Sophie Baier with the children at the hostel.

What struck me the most was how enthusiastic the children were about such simple things. For example, the paper airplanes we made, kept the children busy for a whole morning and they never stopped laughing. The same was true for the soccer tournament or our dance games. Only then did I realise how much influence we actually had on the mood of the children with our ideas, which meant a lot to me personally. Furthermore, I realised how important the work of volunteering can be. Because of our ideas, the children were

distracted from their pain and fears and had the opportunity to simply enjoy being children. Not only did I enjoy working with the children, but I also enjoyed working with Claire as together we worked on improving KHC's social media presence and digital accessibility.



I also had the chance to accompany the medical support team on their weekly visits to patients. This made me realise how important the work of the KHC team is and how much these people actually do for the community. On another day I had the opportunity to accompany the children to the hospital for an event. The poor condition of the children's ward in the local hospital made me realise how we must do more to ensure that medical facilities in poverty stricken areas of the world can at least provide the minimum facilities required to an acceptable standard.

Through the volunteer program at KHC, I got to grow as a person as well. I found that creativity can help turn an endearing situation into one filled with children's laughter and happiness when one comes up with good ideas and approaches. Saddened by the experiences faced by many of the children at KHC I nonetheless did my best to ensure that even during my short time there their happiness was the top priority. Laughter indeed is often the best medicine.

My time at KHC, even if it was short, gave me the opportunity to open up emotionally, to get to know new sides of myself, to strengthen my self-confidence and thus to broaden my horizons. I can only recommend for anyone to sign up to the volunteer program at Kawempe Home Care.

I learned so much in these two weeks, met so many great people and am grateful for every day I spent there. I am so grateful for this experience and will definitely come back."

Josephine Jones.

Thank you Josy and we would love to have you back again.

If you are a person that enjoys new adventures, cultures and would like to give something back we have just the place for you to visit. Go to [Volunteer – Kawempe Home Care](#)

