

## Kenya Amboseli student sponsors

Newsletter no. 3, January 2026

Happy New Year to all sponsors!

Your generosity is enabling 12 students from the Amboseli area to continue with their secondary and university education, thereby giving a big helping hand in the development of their community. This is very much appreciated by all members of the Amboseli community, particularly those who are most in need of help.

Kenneth Ole Saei and his wife Loise are good servants of their community and try to select those students who have the most potential and are in greatest need, for whatever reason. The expense of education means that academically-gifted children from relatively poorer families may not achieve their potential and in the case of girls they will be married off and start their own families at a very young age. So, thank you.

-----

Early in the year I got in touch with Drusillas zoo at Alfriston about the sponsorship program. They have a connection with this area of Kenya, started by my late Father, David. As a result, learning about Maasai culture and wildlife by children who visit has been a feature there for several decades. When Dad brought Kenneth to visit the UK in 1995, they went to Drusillas where the photo below was taken. From left to right: Kenneth Ole Saei, Michael Ann (Drusillas owner), Jonathan Lekanayia, David Lovatt-Smith.



In April last year, Drusillas current owners, Cassie and Ollie Smith, set up a group call with staff members, Kenneth and me, following which they decided to join the sponsorship program and are sponsoring a girl in secondary school. They are also donating some money for development purposes to Shades or Amboseli, the Community Benefit Organisation set up by Kenneth. So, thank you to Drusillas. They are also liaising with Kenneth and his daughter Gladys, about their Maasai culture education program. It's good that there is a continuing connection between young people in UK and those in Amboseli.

In March, Loise, Kenneth's wife, and the Mums of the students made traditional adornments for each of the sponsors and other donors and sent them over to UK to say thank you. They were much appreciated. This is me doing the Maasai "ups" dance in mine. Helen managed to hold the camera still for long enough to take the photo.



In October Kenneth organised a big party for the whole community to celebrate his daughter, Gladys' Bachelor of Arts degree in Gender and Development Studies from Egerton University, Nakuru, Kenya. Gladys is only the second woman from their community to get a degree. This is inspiring other girls to aim for a university education. For the celebration, one of Kenneth's cattle was slaughtered and there was traditional Maasai dancing and singing. I can send you the videos if you get in touch but here are three stills.





The seasonal rains in November were disappointing this year and by December another drought situation was developing. There have been some welcome rains however at the end of December. Let's hope these are enough. During drought, Kenneth's people move their cattle into the National Park, where there is permanent water. This means that the herdsmen have to stay away from home, camping out and coping with the danger from wildlife, especially lions. A spear is essential. All of our boy students have been helping to look after their families' livestock in this way during their school holidays this December. Quite a change from studying.

-----

In the school holidays, unfortunately some girls can be vulnerable to the attentions of boys. Kenneth would like to build an activity centre on land that he owns, in which school-age girls can be occupied and supervised during the holidays. I guess it's a kind of refuge. If anyone has any ideas on funding for this, please get in touch.

The secondary school system is changing in Kenya. The old system was for years 9-12. Now it has increased by two years, to years 7-12. The first 3 years are called Junior Secondary and the last 3 Senior Secondary. University entrance is dependent on the exams which cover the last 3 years. Fees

are charged over all 6 years and they vary according to the type and quality of school. The better schools are those in the bigger towns which require, for practical reasons, children from the Amboseli to board, hence the extra expenses on top of the fees. Like last year, Kenneth's estimate for 2026 is 130,000 Ksh (about £780) of fees and expenses per student.

That's about all I can think of. I hope 2026 brings health, happiness, peace and prosperity to all.

Paul Lovatt-Smith, 7 January 2026



Tipape Ole Saie, Kenneth's son. He attends Moi Forces Academy, Nairobi. In 2026 he will be in year 12.



Nandiwua Lekina. She attends Bissel high School, starting year 12 in 2026, and wants to be a nurse.



Sitatian Mantha. She attends Baraka Oontoyie Secondary School in Kajiado. She will start Year 12 in 2026.



Sitayia Jane Samingo. She attends Baraka Ondooyie school in Kajiado and wants to be a doctor. She is starting year 11 in 2026.



Simon Kitipai Oishoki and his father. He attends Makueni Boys High School and wants to be a lecturer. He is starting year 11 in 2026.



David Tuarari Merin. He attends Oloitokitok Boys High School and is starting year 11 in 2026. He wants to be an international doctor.



Valentine Siantei. She attends St Brian School, Kajiado and is starting year 10 in 2026. She wants to be a journalist.



Abraham Ole Saei, Kenneth's eldest son. He attends Kabarak University School of Law and is in the second year of his law degree course. He was awarded a scholarship.



Kasaine Kilelo. He attends Oloitokitok Boys High School and is starting year 11 in 2026. He wants to be a doctor.



Kilakoi Victoria Tumorua with her mother. She attends Olgulului Comprehensive School and is starting year 9 in 2026. She wants to be a doctor.



Naserian Karume. She attends Moi Girls School, Nairobi and is starting year 10 in 2026. She wants to be a lawyer.



Loserian Andrea. He attends Oloitokitok Boys High School, starting year 10 in 2026. He wants to be a lawyer.