

If you would like to appear here contact the editor on juniorspot@ke.nationmedia.com

main feature

"I am happy because the water is now inside our home compound. I am doing well in school and I no longer get late for classes"

BY SARAH OOKO

sarah_ooko@wvi.org

In 2016, a friendship sparked between Maureen Jepkorir and Addyson Moffitt. Both girls were 10 years old at the time of their meeting. Maurine comes from a village called Chesem in Baringo County. Three years ago, the village suffered from severe lack of clean drinking water.

Harsh weather conditions caused the natural water sources such as seasonal rivers and springs to dry up. As a result, the villagers were forced to walk for over two kilometres to make a round trip to the nearest spring that still had some water. The water was unclean and not fit for consumption, but it was all they had.

Every day, Maurine would wake up at the crack of dawn to go and fetch water. On her way uphill, she would pass by deep gullies which looked like huge holes on the ground that threatened to 'swallow' her if she dared miss a step.

"I used to wake up at 5am each morning to make trips to the spring before preparing to go to school. I would arrive in school as late as 11am, tired to the bone. I missed most of the morning lessons because they began at 8am," Maurine narrates.

In 2016, an organisation called World Vision Kenya visited Maurine's village. The organisation focuses on improving the lives of vulnerable children all around the world. After interacting with the villagers, the team selected Maurine to be part of a team that was to attend an event hosted by World Vision USA.

On arrival, Maurine was given an opportunity to share the story of her village and the problems they faced due to water scarcity.

Her story touched many people in the audience including a young girl called Addyson Moffitt. She was 10 years old at the time, just like Maurine. After the session, Addyson went to talk to Maurine so as to interact with her some more.

"I felt sad. Maurine was just about my age yet she was facing many challenges, walking for long distances to go and fetch unclean water that can make children sick," she said.

Addyson's parents are volunteers at World Vision and often participate in charity marathons to raise funds and support the charity work done by the

You are not too young to make a difference



Maurine shows Addyson the place where she would fetch water from everyday. Today, she no longer has to make these trips because they now have running water in their home. PHOTO | CORRESPONDENT

Maurine and Addyson hold hands as they follow a path that leads to one of the water springs in Chesem village.

PHOTO | CORRESPONDENT



organisation.

After meeting Maurine, Addyson was inspired to follow in her parents' footsteps. Her goal was to run and raise enough money to help Maurine and other children get access to clean water.

First, she had to prepare for the marathons. She adopted a strict training programme that included waking up early for a morning run before going to school as well as training during weekends and holidays.

In 2017, Addyson ran the first half-marathon to raise money for her cause. Today, she has participated in numerous marathons and with the support of family, friends and other well-wishers, she has raised over Sh7 million.

Part of this money was used by World Vision Kenya to bring clean piped water into Maurine's homestead.

Maurine no longer has to make tire-some journeys to the water spring.

"I am happy because the water is now inside our home compound. I am doing well in school and I never get late for classes," says Maurine.

The rest of money was used to create a water distribution system that pumps water from the springs and boreholes to communities and schools in Bartabwa and Barwessa wards in Baringo County.

The two girls have become best of friends and rarely leave each other's company whenever they meet.

In March this year, Addyson together with her family got an opportunity to visit Maurine's home in Baringo County. This was their first trip to Africa which made it very exciting.

Addyson speaks fondly of her friend Maurine.

"I love Maurine's sense of humour. She is very funny and such a joy to be around. When we're together, we usually spend time laughing and playing. She's a hard worker and doesn't take anything for granted. It is very inspiring."

Equally, Maurine values the special bond she shares with Addyson.

"Addyson has a big heart and is willing to help all children, not just her friends."

During a recent visit to Kenya, Addyson got a chance to interact with pupils from various schools in Nairobi. She shared with them the story of her charity marathons that aim at helping children access clean water. She also encouraged the pupils to help those in need and support initiatives that make a difference in people's lives.

"If I can do it, you can do it too," she said.

The writer is a communication specialists at World Vision Kenya.