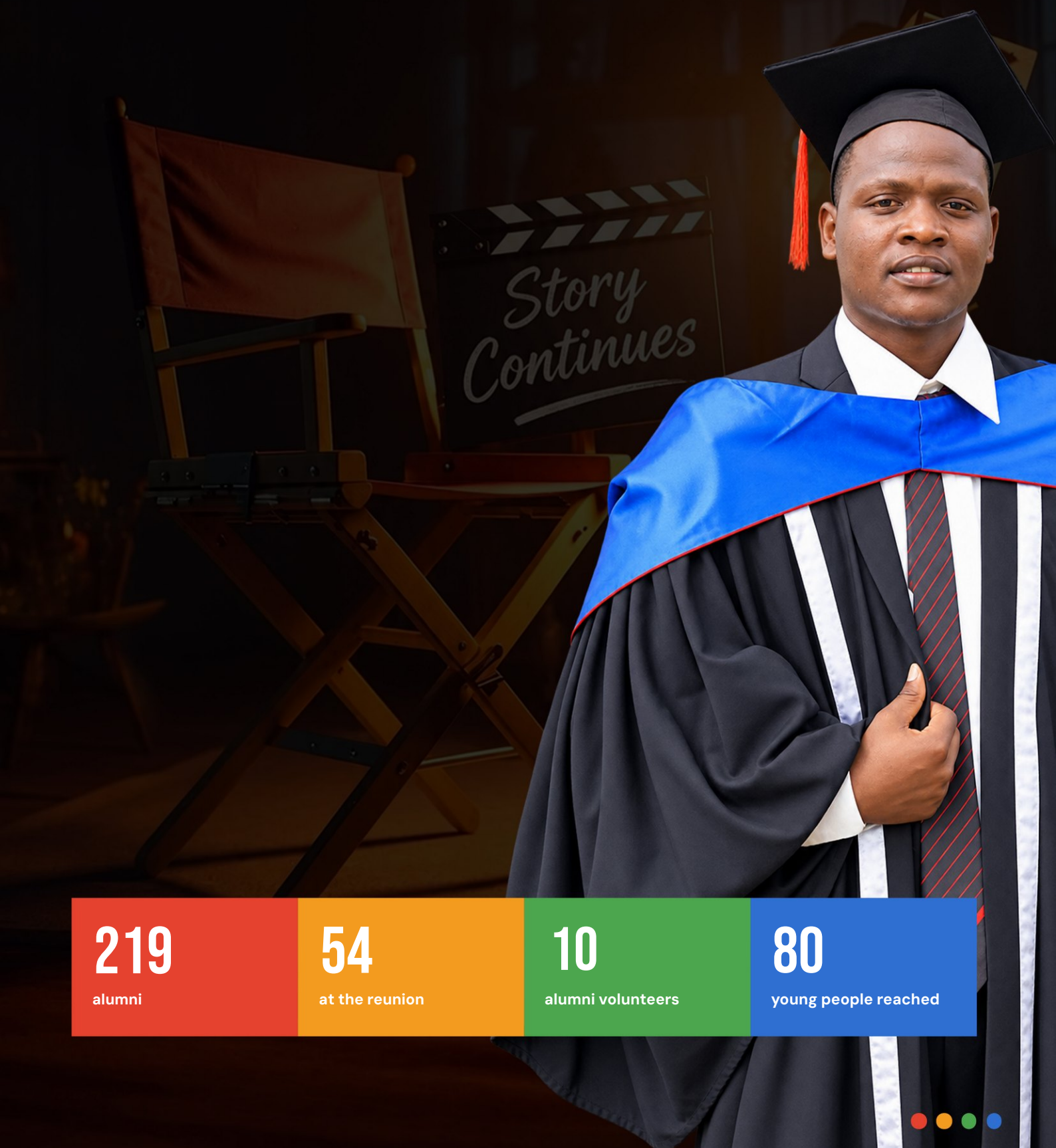
THE HOPE JOURNAL

From being supported to supporting others



219	54	10	80
alumni	at the reunion	alumni volunteers	young people reached

FROM MIRROR OF HOPE

When Support Becomes a Reason to Give Back



A sponsorship may begin with a child, a school place, and a promise of opportunity. Sometimes the impact travels much further, into adulthood, into careers, into friendships, and eventually back into the lives of the young people who come after.

This edition is about that journey.

Since our first cohort completed the programme in 2015, Mirror of Hope's alumni community has grown to 219 young men and women whose education was made possible, in part, through sponsorship and who have gone on to pursue careers and opportunities in medicine, nursing, engineering, economics, accounting, banking, business and beyond.

What connects them now isn't simply where they came from. It is what many have chosen to do with what they received.

This quarter, we bring you inside that return: a reunion at Karura Forest, a holiday programme led in part by the very people who once sat where today's students sit, and the beginning of a more organised alumni community. We also follow the story beyond Kenya, as Mirror of Hope's Australian tour opens new conversations, relationships and possibilities for the work ahead.

Because Mirror of Hope's story does not end at graduation. It continues, carried forward by the people it once carried and by the connections that carry its work further. We're glad to have you along for the journey.

Tommy Nyawir
Founder, Mirror of Hope



FROM PARTICIPANTS TO AMBASSADORS

What Happens When a Sponsorship Ends But Belonging Doesn't?

At Mirror of Hope, sponsorship means more than school fees: a safe boarding environment, food, study time, academic accountability and people invested in each young person's progress.

Many alumni stay connected through check-ins, holiday programmes and volunteering. Some return to mentor students, help with home visits or share their professional skills.

A reunion becomes a turning point

On 15 August 2026, about 54 alumni and 16 staff met at Karura Forest, Nairobi, for team building, a nature walk, singing and time to reconnect. The Board Chair, Brother Tom Kearney, spoke about being a brother's keeper.



The staff noted that the young people seemed more confident, relaxed and more open during the interactions. Mirror of Hope was meeting them again not as children who needed sponsorship, but as adults with their own experiences, skills and responsibilities. The alumni then asked for a clear roadmap to become more involved, and a five-person alumni committee will be the bridge between them and Mirror of Hope. The turning point was not simply that the alumni came back, but that they were beginning to define what coming back could mean.



DENNIS OCHIENG

From beneficiary to organiser

A Software Engineering graduate from JKUAT (2021), Dennis is an IT engineer at a major bank and runs Frenzy Adventures 254, which led the team building at the reunion. He is passionate about helping young people turn their dreams into reality. While still at university, he and fellow alumnus Jacob teamed up to fundraise for the sponsorship project as a way of paying it forward, and today he is at the forefront of keeping the alumni connected.

If it is to be, then it's up to me.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Two Alumni. Two Journeys. One Continuing Story.



VENESSA

Venessa met Mirror of Hope after primary school as a shy, quiet girl who was unsure of herself. Mentorship came first, then sponsorship through high school and university. Somewhere along the way, she began to understand what she could become. Working with children with special needs at a children's home helped her find her calling in special education. This August she returned to mentor students in the holiday programme, among them a student with special needs. She wants young people to see her as proof that their beginning does not have to determine their destination.

It has been a pillar, a source of guidance, and an organisation that believed in my potential.

Venessa



BRIGHTON

Brighton joined Mirror of Hope in 2011 as a shy Grade 3 boy from Kibera, and it soon felt more like family than an organisation. His sponsor, Kelly Stone, a young Australian woman who believed in his potential, supported him through high school, and Steve Brunskill ("Babu") carried that belief forward through university. He calls it "undeserved grace", and grace, he believes, creates responsibility. Today he is an art director and filmmaker, winner of Best Set Designer at the 2024 Filamu Festival, and he teaches art to children through Art Hauz.

If someone believed in me when I was a young boy from Kibera, then I want to be that person who helps another young person believe in themselves.

Brighton





KEN ODHIAMBO
The person behind the pathway

As Sponsorship Officer, Ken follows each student's progress and works with sponsors, schools and families. Often he is the one trying to understand what lies beneath a child's performance, the part of the work most people never see.

A sponsorship round can attract around 200 applications for about 30 places. Deciding who receives a place, and knowing what it means for those who don't, is in his words the hardest part of the job. The best part is graduation day: children who arrived having lost hope, pushing through year after year until they graduate. "I feel proud," he says.

> **Mirror of Hope is a family, and once you are here you remain part of us.**
> Ken Odhiambo



AUGUST HOLIDAY PROGRAMME
When the Alumni Come Back

From 10 to 14 August, 80 young people took part in five days of sessions on peer pressure, academic performance, sexual and reproductive health and giving back, with Zumba, music and games.

Ten alumni volunteered during the programme. Students opened up to them in ways the staff had not seen before, and asked for more alumni next time. Mirror of Hope wants to continue this.



THE STORY TRAVELS

From Kenya to Australia and Back Again

Tommy's Australian tour, "Seeds of Change, Empowering Possibilities", introduced Mirror of Hope to new audiences in Queensland and Victoria, from Rotary clubs and schools to the Edmund Rice Foundation.

It brought a pledge of laptops from St. Bernard's College, ongoing fundraising from St. Patrick's Ballarat, new sponsors, and a pledge from Steve Brunskill to match donations up to AU$10,000.

> **Mirror of Hope is about possibility, not pity.**
> Tommy Nyawir



FROM CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY RESOURCE

A New Chapter for Learning in Kibera

For nearly two decades the Kibera Community Library has welcomed 10,000 to 12,000 users a year. Funds from the tour secured its future, and Mirror of Hope will now keep it open for the community, thanks to Peter O'Beirne, the Rotary Club of Paddington, Help Club UK and Steve Brunskill ("Babu").





THE LIBRARY TODAY

2,000	7	50	3
books	laptops	study spaces	staff

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MIRROR OF HOPE

The News Desk

10 new sponsors
secured for Grade 10 students. Recruitment continues.

Health check-up
On 28 August the community was offered health screening, HIV testing, counselling and GP consultations.

A stronger team
Staff trained in public speaking, complaints handling and safeguarding.

Six years of SILC Amani
SILC (Savings and Internal Lending Communities) is delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program. The Amani group celebrated six years together.



A LIFE REMEMBERED

Remembering Merciline Akinyi



Merciline Akinyi

Merciline was shy, jovial and warm, with a strong interest in mental health. She was studying counselling psychology and would have been the first in her family to graduate this year. She is remembered for her humility, her faith and her love for her sister. Her sponsors, who walked beside her throughout her journey, sent their heartfelt condolences to her family.

LOOKING AHEAD

From Education to Employment

The five-person alumni committee will be the bridge for mentorship, holiday programme design, recruitment and fundraising, and the November Alumni Gala will bring everyone together again.

HOPE CRAFT STUDIOS

Our next step is helping young women move from education into meaningful work through tailoring and garment production.

More on Hope Craft Studios in a future edition.



CALL TO ACTION

The story continues because people choose to take part in it. Whatever you can give, there is a place for you in the next chapter.

Donors	Volunteers	Partners	Alumni
Help another young person reach their next chapter.	Share your time, skills or experience.	Create pathways from education to opportunity.	Come back, connect, mentor and build.

Every story in this journal began with someone who chose to give.

Website	mirrorofhopecbo.org
Facebook	facebook.com/mirrorofhopecbo
Instagram	@mirrorofhopecbo
YouTube	@mirrorofhopeCBO

SCAN TO DONATE

DONATE ONLINE

Australian Aid

Edmund Rice FOUNDATION
Liberating Lives Through Education

MIRROR OF HOPE CBO