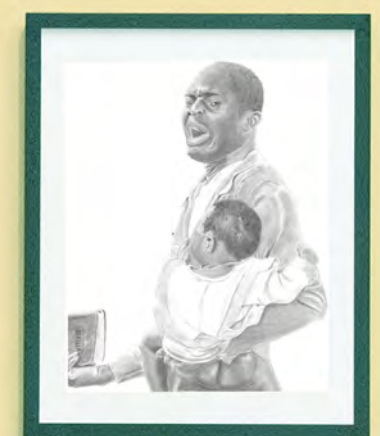
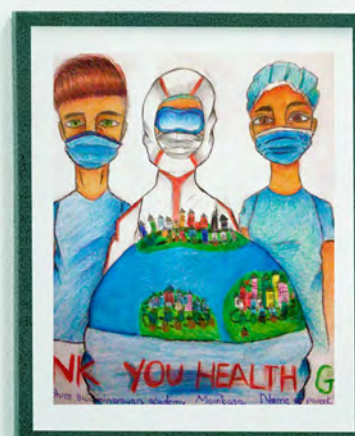
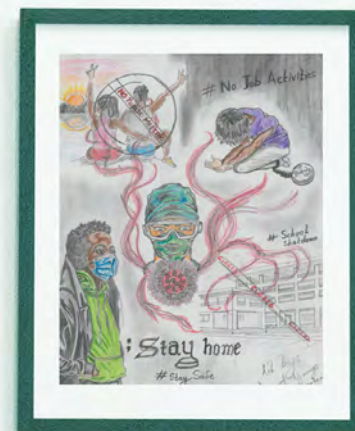


Stuck at Home during Covid-19

This is My Story

Art and Essay Competition



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Printed by Kenya Literature Bureau Nairobi, Kenya.

Publications of the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse are available on the NACADA website (www.nacada.go.ke/publications).

Layout and design: Sylvia Munyeke

ISBN 978-9914-40-209-4



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Foreward

This book is a compilation of winning entries from a two-month media-based advocacy competition conducted by the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) during the first wave of the Corona pandemic.

On March 15 2020, HE the President Uhuru Kenyatta issued a directive after Kenya confirmed the presence of COVID-19 virus in Kenya. Consequently, all educational institutions were compelled to shut down and all learners in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions were sent to their homes curtailing learning in all academic institutions.

As a way of engaging the pupils from lower, upper primary and secondary schools, the competition was structured in two categories - art and essay writing. Titled **Stuck at Home During COVID-19-This is My Story**, the competition received over 1,300 entries. Participants showcased their experiences on alcohol, drug and substance abuse issues using creative expression such as essays, artworks, drawings, paintings, etc.

It is our sincere hope that this collection of artworks and essays will provide insights to parents in Kenya and the world on positive parenting and being responsive to the needs of their children as they grow.



Victor G. Okioma, EBS
Chief Executive Officer
NACADA

Acknowledgement

The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) has published this compilation to provide insights to parents in Kenya and the world on positive parenting and being responsive to the needs of their children as they grow amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

This compilation was a collaborative effort of the Public Education & Advocacy, the Corporate Communications departments of the Authority and respective parents of all participants to the competition under my leadership as the Director Corporate Services.

The NACADA Senior Management and staff provided valuable inputs to the process and I wish to acknowledge the respective teams. Special thanks to parents and teachers who encouraged the participants to take part in the competition; Gabriel Kimotho, Dennis Gitonga and their team from KIKOSI Limited for external communication management during the campaign the judges who tirelessly reviewed the entries and; the NACADA team, Susan Maua for the conceptual framework, Medina Ibrahim for art/design direction and Wendy Gaya for logistical support throughout the campaign.

Finally, I acknowledge the Government of Kenya through The National Treasury and Planning for the financial support towards the project. To all who gave their inputs in one way or another, we say thank you.



CPA Patrick Obura

*Director, Corporate Services
NACADA*

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The image features a solid teal background. A white rectangular border is centered on the page. Inside this border is a large, textured orange brushstroke that resembles a hand-painted shape. The text "Art + Winners" is written in white, rounded, handwritten-style font, centered within the orange brushstroke. The word "Art" is on the top line, and "Winners" is on the bottom line. The plus sign between them is a simple horizontal line.

Art + Winners

A large, horizontal, teal-colored brushstroke with visible texture and some yellow highlights, set against a solid yellow background. The brushstroke is framed by a thin white border.

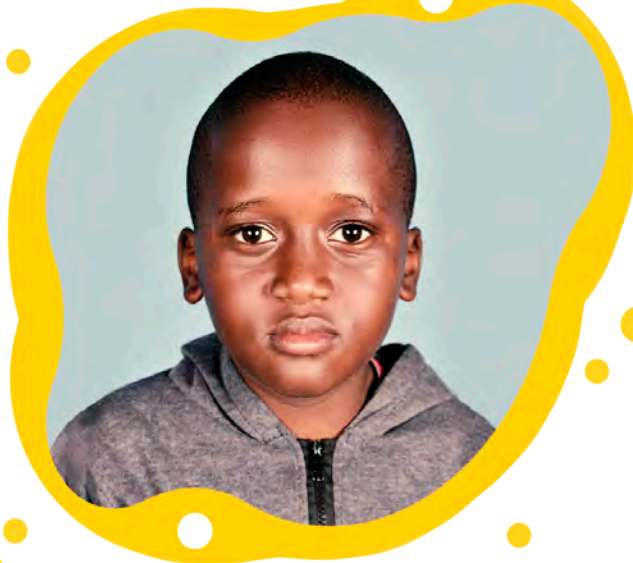
Lower Primary



School: Shree Swaminarayan Academy
Grade: 4

I have worn a padlock with chains tied up to the world to show how most of the parts of the world are under lockdown including myself. The left side which is red and black that represents the dark side of the pandemic for me, but there is also a good side which I have shown in red and yellow as it is bright like the sun.



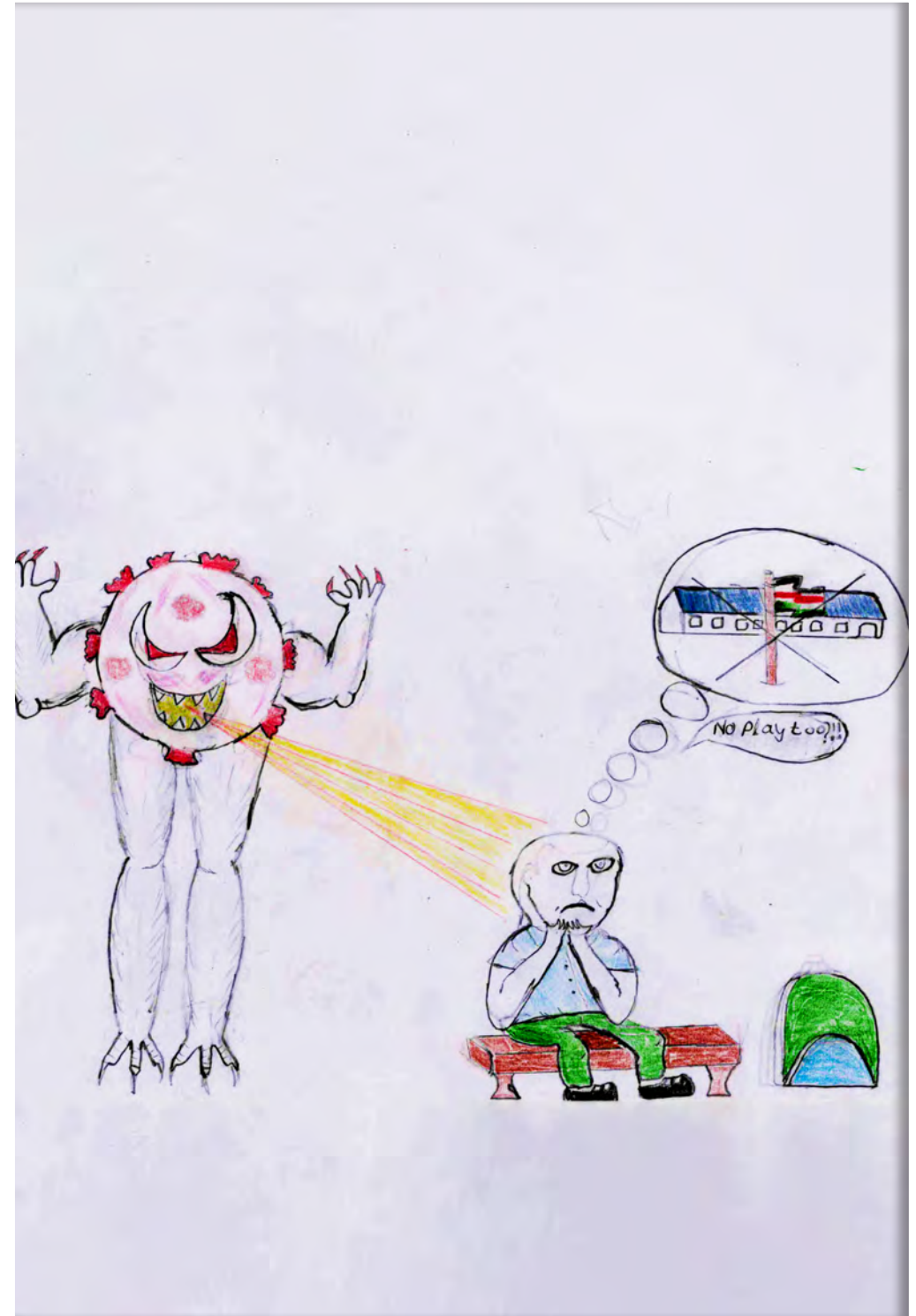


Mark Muvo Nzuve

School: Victory Academy Masii
Grade: 5

Is left-handed. Drawing is his best hobby. He also likes reading storybooks and has read all the Moses Series!

The giant (corona virus) has raised hands with sharp nails ready to attack the innocent child. Its ugliness shows its adverse effects on humans. Rays of fire jet directly from its mouth to the pupil's head. The pupil is sad and desperate. His thoughts reflect on the schools that have closed due to Corona Virus and not being allowed to play with friends.

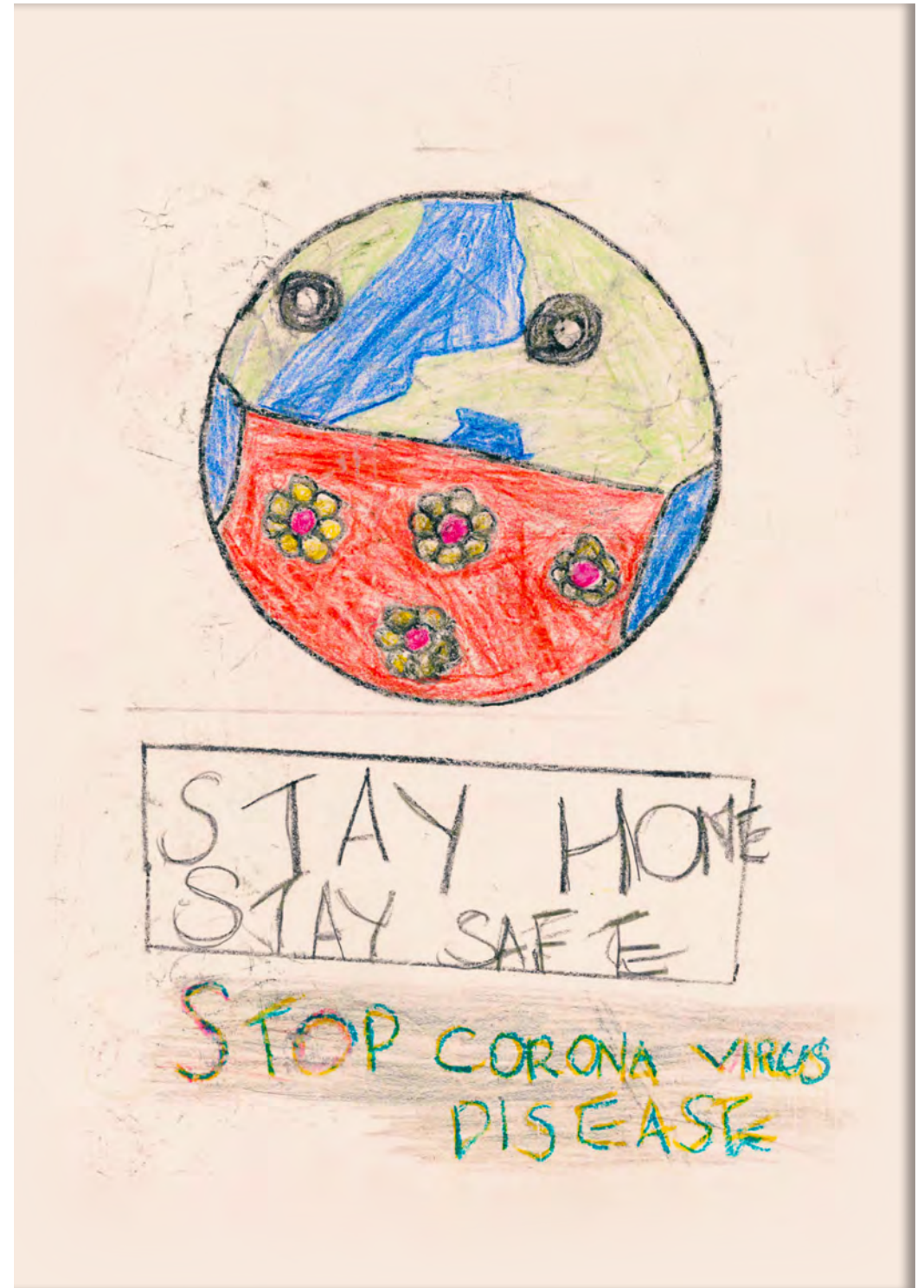











Malaika Wambui

School: Tassia Catholic Primary
Grade: 3

Likes cooking, taking care of her pets- 3 cats and 3 dogs. She also enjoys singing with her brother and knitting with her grandmother. When she grows up, she wants to be a chef.



	Geoffrey Michael Ng'ang'a Kiboi	School: Good Shepherd Academy, Nyeri Grade: 4
	Afieno Maina	School: Crawford International School Grade: 5
	Agnes Njoki	School: Muhito Primary Grade: 4
	Jason Ndefo	School: Josnah Primary Grade: 3

	Ruby Mkara	School: Damacrest, Thogoto Grade: 3
	Jeremy Manoa	School: Damacrest, Thogoto Grade: 4
	Dulcie Jullie	School: Donholm Catholic Primary Grade: 4

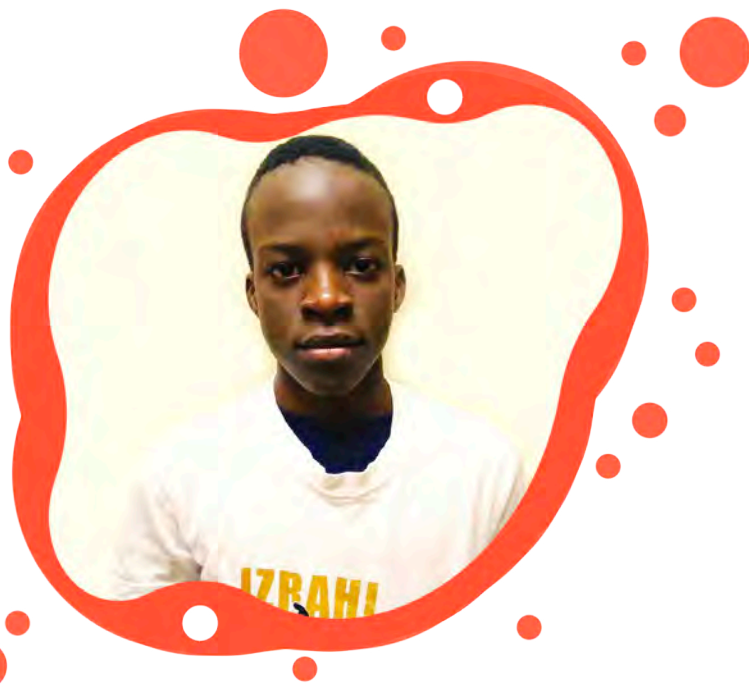


Upper
Primary



School: Mary Immaculate Primary
Grade: 8

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Izrahi Du'jade owuor

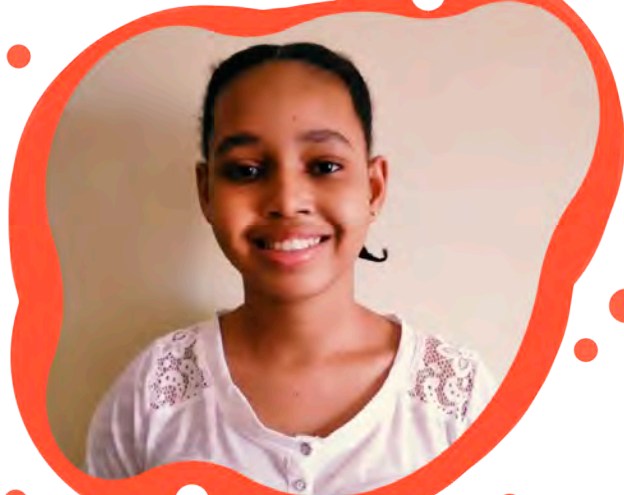
School: Harvard School, Dagoretti

Grade: 7

Hobbies include drawing, writing stories and playing football. He also enjoys drawing comics. He would like to be a structural engineer or a mechanical engineer.

Covid-19 came from a far off land represented by the mountains. As it chases me out of the playing field where I enjoyed free interaction with my friends, school and church, I run desperate for help. I am confused as its speed is real fast! Its spikes are threatening my life. I can't just imagine looking back! I quickly think about going to hospital. Unfortunately there is neither a cure nor a vaccine. The only corner I can successfully take to escape is to keep social distance, sanitize frequently and wear my mask in public places.





Sharique osman


School: Shree Swaminarayan
Academy, Mombasa




Grade: 6

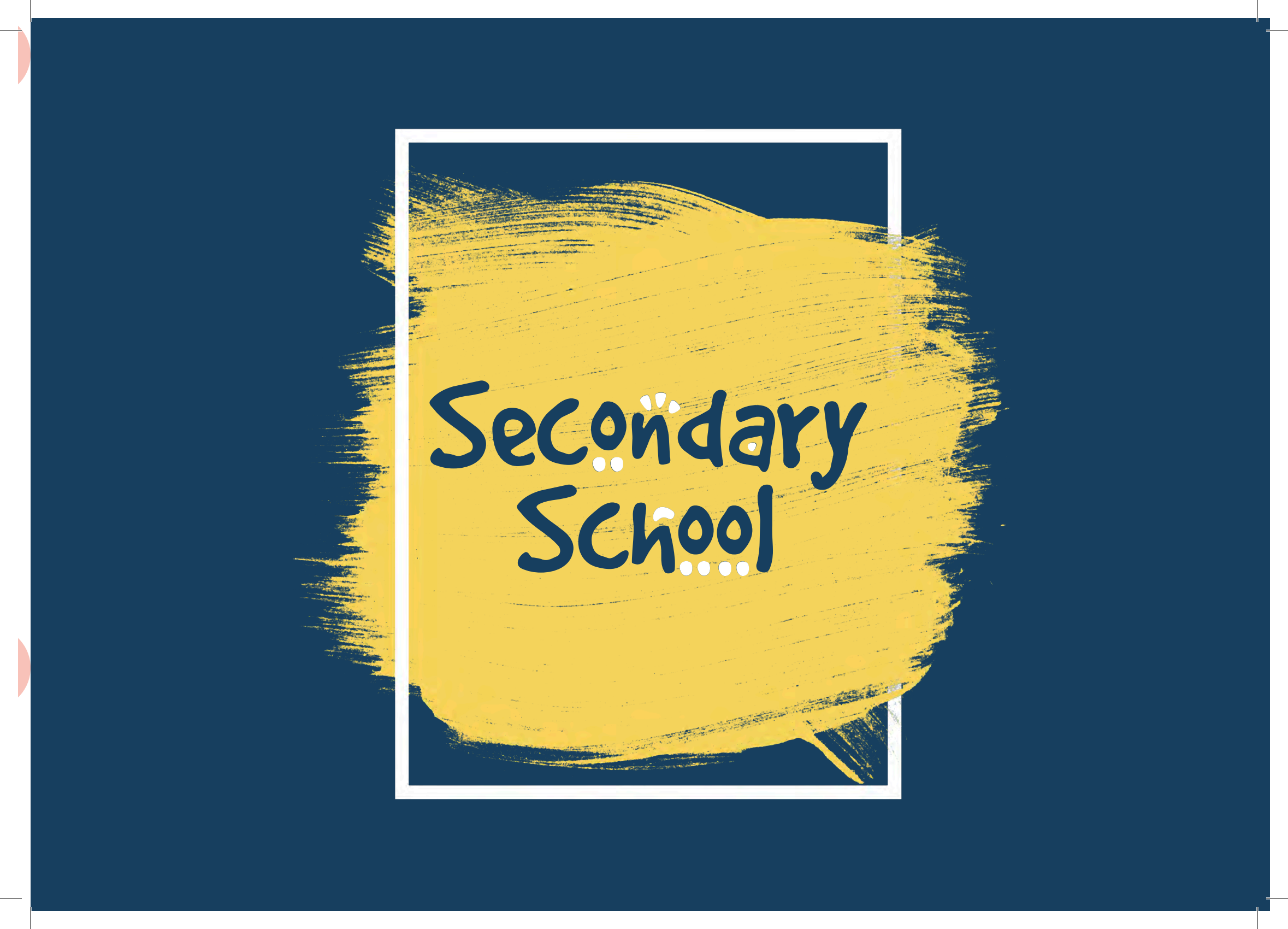
Hobbies are singing, drawing, digital painting and animation. She also likes to travel, cook, play basketball and badminton and learn foreign languages.

My drawing is a dedication to the healthcare workers for their hardwork and sacrifice in taking care of the sick. They work round the clock. The globe covered with a mask means everyone should wear a mask to protect themselves.

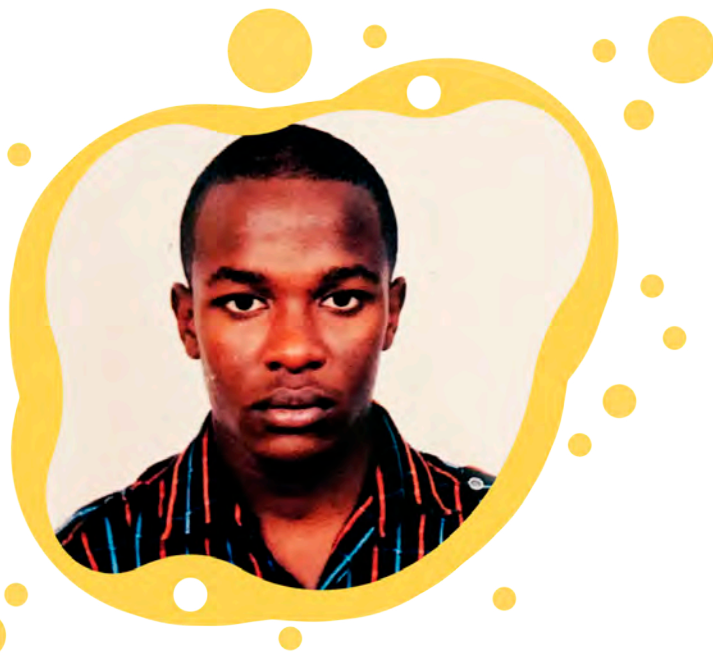


	Lakhsimran Kaur Sagoo	School: Shree Swaminarayan Academy Grade: 8
	Dorotic Mbisilia	School: Hekima Primary, Kitale Grade: 7
	Nancy Ndingi Mwoya	School: Emmanuel Christian School Grade: 8
	Muborack Davlatshoeva	School: Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa Grade: 8

	Manal G. Ahmed	School: Shree Swaminarayan Academy Grade: 8
	Bhakti Patel	School: Premier Academy School Grade: 8
	Isabel Chanya Malasi	School: Citam Schools Buruburu Grade: 7



Secondary School



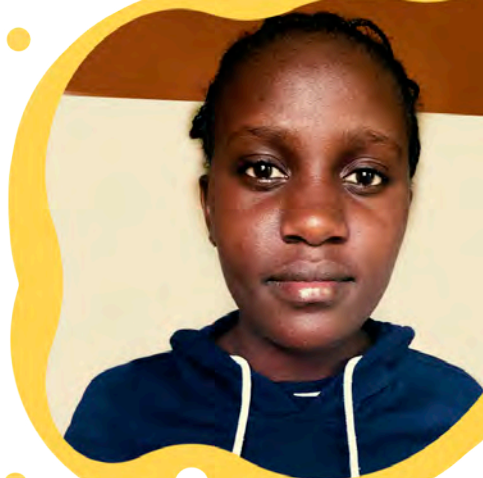
David Njoroge

School: Pioneer School, Murang'a
Form: 4

Uses art to express his emotions, thoughts and real life situations. He is an ardent athlete in swimming, netball and karate. He would like to turn art from a hobby to a career.

This piece summarizes the impact of COVID-19 from my view. Restriction of movement leading to loss of jobs resulting in despair, social distancing leading to closure of schools, recreational facilities and other social places. Children are spending more time at home leading to anxiety. Scientists continue to search for how to control and eliminate virus.



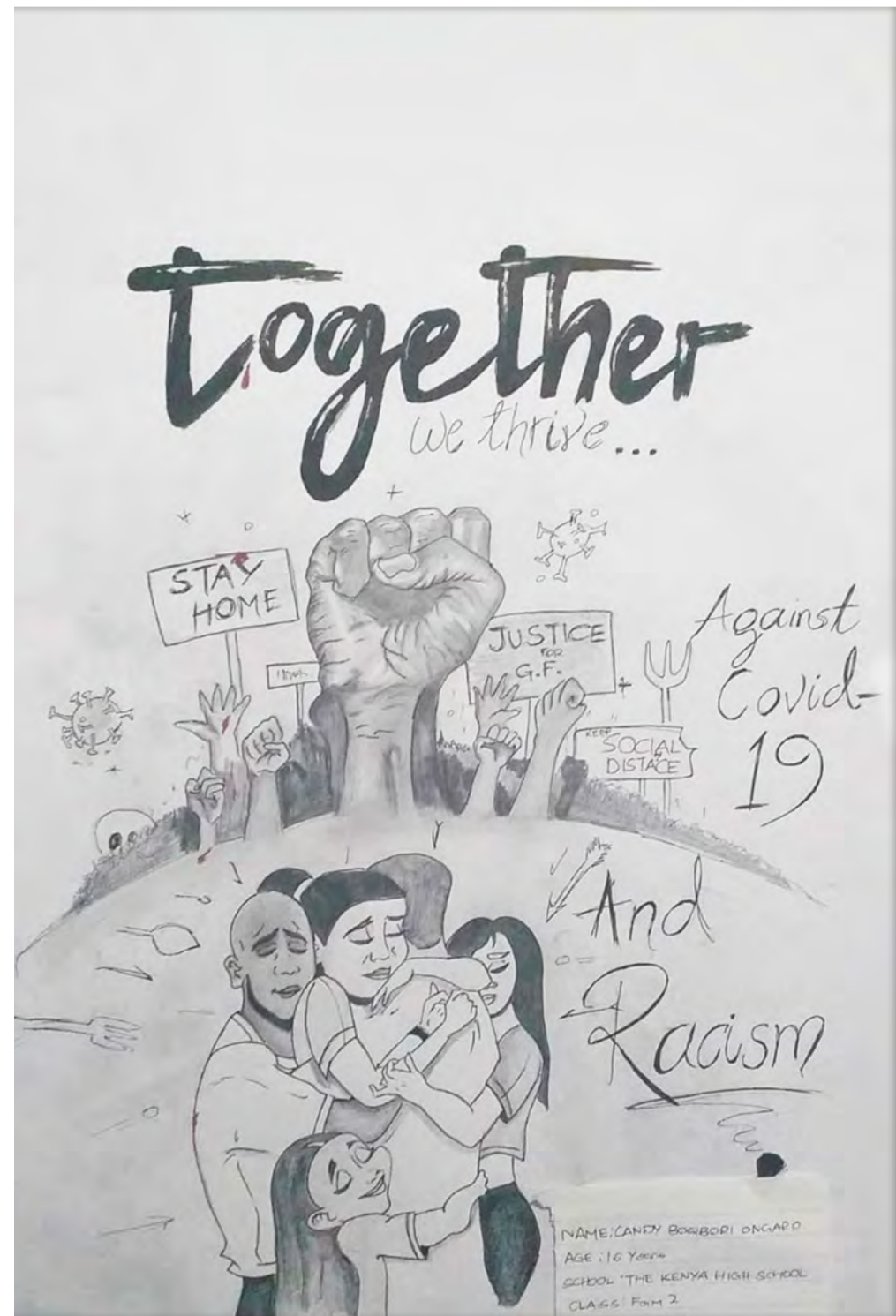


Candy Bosibori

School: Kenya High School
Form: 2

Loves drawing and playing football. She would like to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study architecture.

The drawing seeks to communicate that in the face of adversity "together we win; divided we fall". The death of George Floyd and the protests witnessed in the US and beyond as well as COVID-19 have taught the world the importance of cooperation in fighting a common enemy - Racism and Corona Virus respectively





Jedidiah Jasper Kidai




School: St. Augustine, Mlolongo
Form: 3

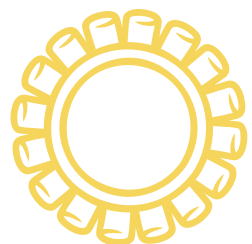
Hobbies are dancing, listening to music and reading storybooks. Drawing is his favorite hobby and he teaches himself through YouTube tutorials.

COVID-19 had brought major changes on how we live and relate to each other. Social distancing, putting on face masks and using sanitizer before boarding matatus. I agree when our President said "EVEN SCIENCE NEEDS GOD".



	Caleb Kipchumba Jerome	School: Turbo School, Eldoret Form: 4
	David Jackson	School: Nairobi School Form: 1
	Rajisa Yimam	School: St. Austin's Academy Form: 2
	Clinfon osebe	School: Nairobi School Form: 3

	Mark oliver Masai	School: St. Peter's Mumias Form: 2
	Maryann Akofh	School: Asumbi Girls High School Form: 2
	Robert okello	School: St. Austin's Academy



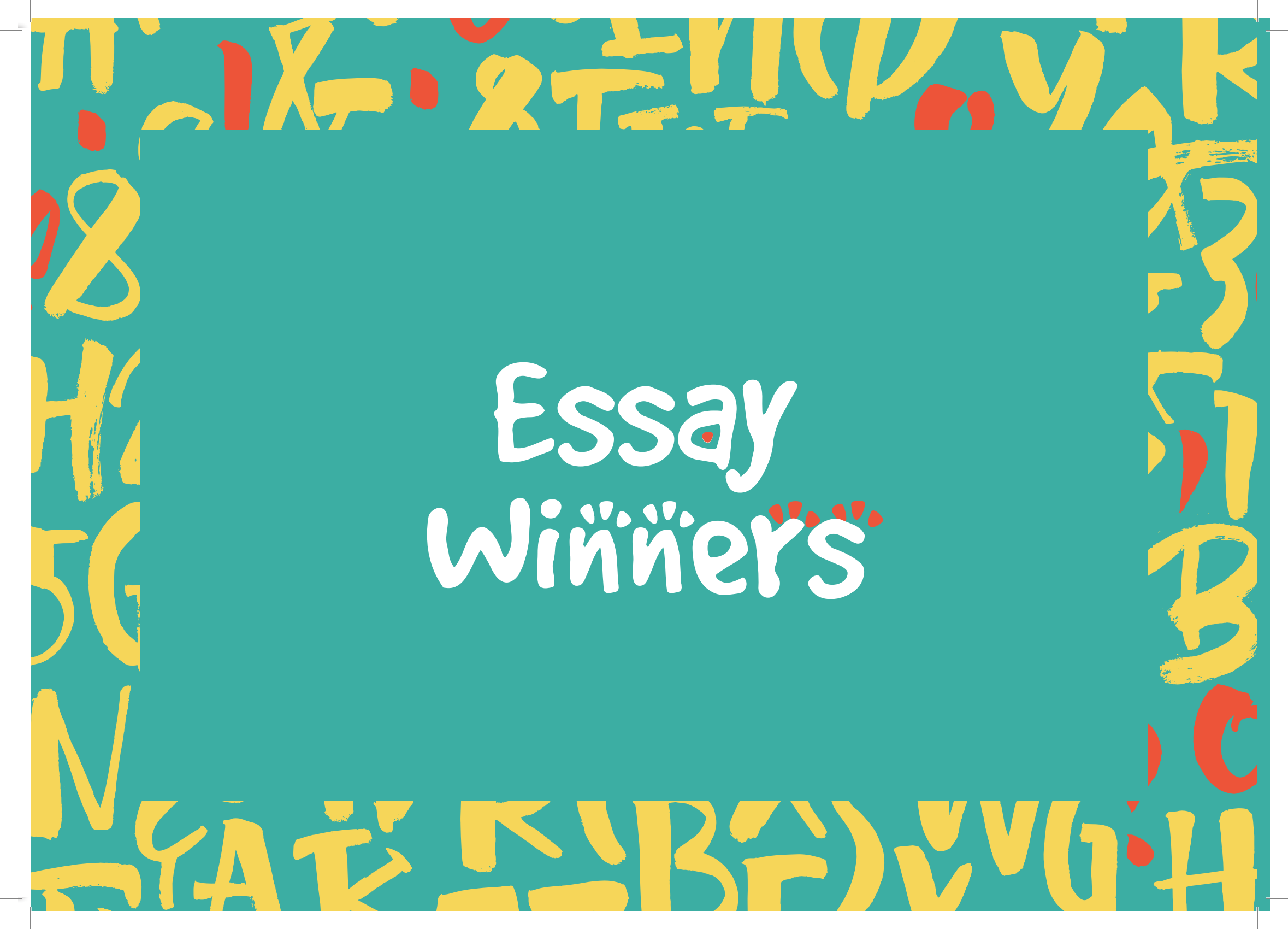
Special Mention

Jonathan Anabwani

School: St. Peter's Mumia Boys
Form: 4

We often encounter situations that define us. This art is a depiction of the suffering of a common mwananchi brought to light with the anguish on his face. It represents a broke nation depicting the challenges brought on by COVID-19. BUT there is hope even if the world seems to be crashing down. The Bible shows that faith is the only thing they can rely on. Life can take a new turn and COVID-19 will end.

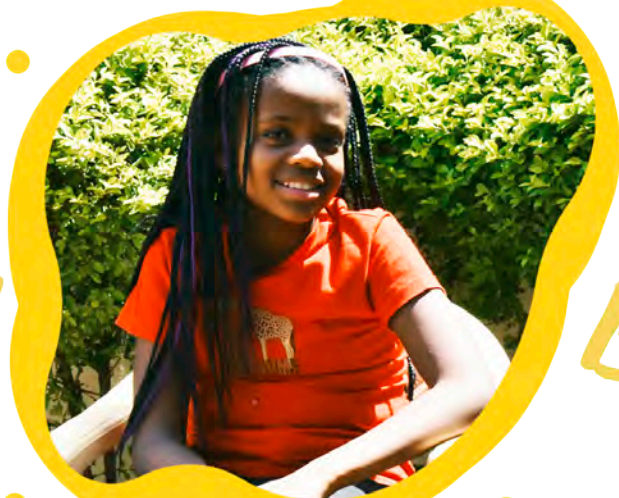




Essay Winners

The background is a solid yellow color. It is decorated with large, stylized, teal-colored letters and numbers. These characters are scattered across the page, some appearing as if they are part of a larger, partially visible word or phrase. For example, 'BTW' is visible at the top, '5G' on the left, and 'H' at the bottom right. The characters have a hand-drawn, brush-stroke-like texture.

Lower Primary



Allana Grace Ndufa

School: Juja Preparatory

Grade: 4

Hobbies are swimming, dancing, singing, drawing, gymnastics, baking and travelling.



I was very happy to have participated in the NACADA competition.



This is My Story

The Covid-19 pandemic has been like a nightmare to me. The first case of this disease was reported in Kenya on the thirteenth of March in the year two thousand and twenty. It is a really terrifying experience to me.

Immediately the first three cases were reported in Kenya, the president announced that all the schools nationwide should close for the time being. I got worried about my education. A few days later my parents informed my brother and I that there is E-learning on the radio and televisions. I was a bit relieved but not happy that the schools were still closed. I waited for Monday to arrive. At nine in the morning on the first day of E-learning, I took notes of what was been taught. A few days later

we started using Google classroom to do our learning. It was very interesting doing the E-learning. We received work from our teacher and also did our syllabus. Two to three weeks later we were told we were going to have meetings. I was very excited that I was going to see my classmates and teachers. We still continue to do the E-learning to this day.

Our social lives have really changed due to the virus. Visiting our friends has become a big challenge. It is a very sad experience to me. I cannot visit my friends so to keep the virus at bay. I only see my friends once in a while when we are going for a jog or delivering some essentials. I cannot also visit

our friends because there is a curfew from seven in the evening to five in the morning. My parents had planned for a trip to Mombasa with our friends but we cannot do it because of the virus. I am really upset about it. Movement in some counties have been restricted. You cannot leave or enter the counties. You have to wear a mask when you get out of the house. It is really tiring wearing a mask. This pandemic has really affected the world. I hope that the pandemic finishes really soon. I really want to see my friends, go to school, go for swimming, leave the house and more.



Leroy Zuriel Wambua

School: Kangundo Junior Academy

Grade: 3

Loves reading comic books, climbing trees and taking care of various animals in his grandparents' homestead. Every now and again, he helps his aunt in the kitchen because he is learning how to cook.

Stuck at Home During Covid -19- This is my Story

My name is Leroy Zuriel Wambua Mulusya. I am eight years old. I am in grade three. My school is Kangundo Junior Academy. My teachers name is teacher Hilda. I have not gone to school since the end of February when our president announced on TV that we should not go to school because of Corona - Covid 19. He said it is a sickness. All schools are closed

I live with my grandparents and younger sister Shammah. Our home is in Kamutonga village Kangundo sub-county, Machakos County. My parents live in Nairobi. They cannot come home because of the lockdown. We only talk on the phone.

My day starts at 7:00 am. I wake up and take my breakfast. My grandfather keeps cows. I go to work at the cowshed everyday helping to wash the cowshed. He has 25 cows, sixteen big cows, five small heifers

and four bull calves. There is a milking parlour with a milking machine, that milks two cows at the same time. There is a chaff cutter that is used to cut Napier grass and hay. We feed the cows on hay mixed with Napier grass and silage which is stored in big holes dug in the ground. When we wash the cowshed, we must throw the cow dung in the pit to make manure. The water that we use to wash the shed goes to water the banana plantation. My grandmother likes planting trees and flower plants.

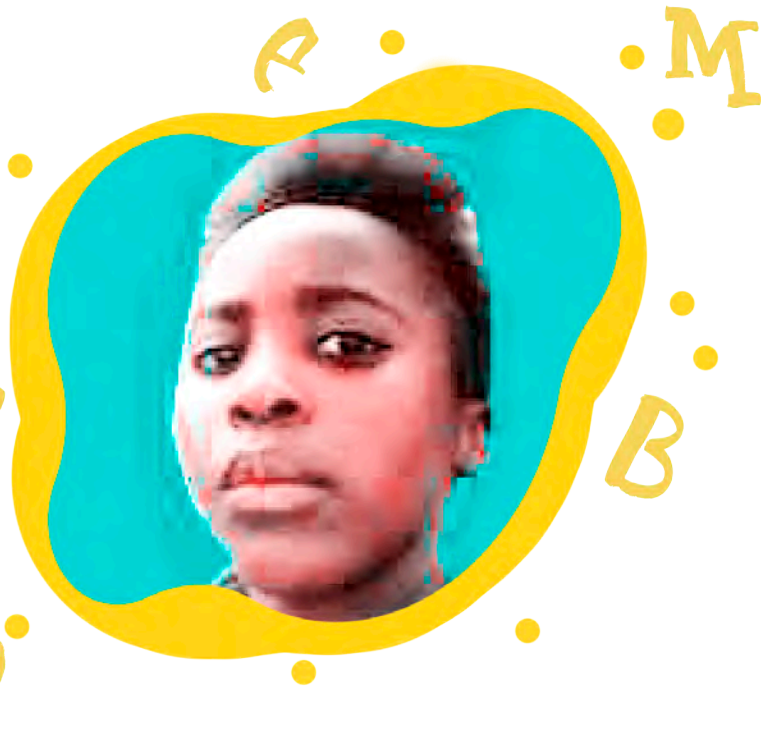
We had 37 rabbits, but 6 died and they were buried on the farm. I sometimes help to feed them. We get urine from the rabbits which is used for spraying to kill insects. We keep worms in forty-eight containers. We collect worm juice to make fertilizer.

After I wash the cowshed, I go back to the house to bathe. I then go to class in the house. I like reading justice league comic books. My grandmother is my teacher. I have a timetable. I do mathematics

every day and another subject. I have learnt my multiplication tables up to table 12. My grandmother says if I know my tables I will be good at maths. I like drawing. I watch TV when my grandfather gives me permission.

We used to go to church every Sunday before the lockdown. Now we have church at home. We sing, my grandfather reads the Bible for us and each of us prays.

I enjoy being at home because I get to do many things. We keep safe at home by washing our hands and staying at home. I still miss school and I pray that the president will announce that we can go back to school because I miss my teacher. I miss my friends and playing with them in the field. I also miss the snacks my grandmother buys for me when she's picking me up school in the evening. The first thing I want to do after the lockdown is to see my mum and dad.



Esther Imani

School: GFE Tumaini School

Grade: 5

Hobbies include reading, travelling, cooking and meeting new people. She would like to be a journalist when she grows up.

Stuck at Home During Covid -19- My Story

The covid pandemic began last December, in Wuhan city, China. Like a wild fire, it spread to all corners of the world. Many deaths, job losses, closure of social and learning institutions have resulted. Infection rates are still rising in many countries including Kenya.

The first Kenyan cases were reported in March. President Uhuru Kenyatta acted swiftly. Schools were closed, social gatherings were banned, a dusk-to-dawn curfew was declared, among other measures.

I suddenly found myself confronted with boredom. Staying inside a tiny house in Mathare slum was a real trial. Though I was spared the long journey to and from school, there was no food to eat. My father, a construction worker, lost his job. He would come home drunk and frustrated. My mother's maize roasting business was doing badly. I missed my friends.

One evening, father came hurriedly into the house. Though drunk, he had narrowly escaped a beating by policemen who were enforcing curfew. We had not eaten any food since the previous day. My mother and I had been anticipating that he would bring some food. We were astonished to see him empty-handed.

"What kind of a man are you? You come home drunk while your family starves to death!" Shouted mother. All hell broke loose. Tempers flared. A fight ensued. Amidst screams, utensils were hurled across the room. One missed my eye by a whisker. I ducked under the rickety bed, for safety.

My brother, Boyi, burst into the room. He tried to rescue mother, only to be threatened and chased out with a knife. During the scuffle the kerosene lamp got upset and went off. The room was covered with pitch darkness. More insults were traded, until father started snoring on the floor. Mother kept turning on the bed. I shivered with dread about our worsening home situation.

The next morning, a distant aunt arrived to pick me up. Together with mother, they had secretly planned that I become a house-help. As a twelve-year-old girl, my dreams of becoming a lecturer evaporated. I felt sad, angry and betrayed. . Having resigned to fate, we briskly walked to her home at Kibera slum, where my new boss awaited me.

Madam Mahindra was a middle aged Indian lady, she mumbled greetings through her face mask. She made me sanitize my hands, gave me my own mask and requested me to sit in the back seat of her car. She gave my aunt some money, before we sped off.

We soon arrived at a nicely built area called Upper Hill. Guarded gates, manicured lawns, posh houses and high

walls were everywhere. My eyes were not accustomed to so much wealth.

Upon arriving, I immediately took my responsibilities; I woke up early and did one chore after another. Cleaning, cooking, and gardening and so on. After work I would read until late at night, the few books I had secretly carried along. On several occasions, Madam Mahindra found me reading books such as 'Heidi, Drawn maiden's hair and Little women'. She was very impressed.

"My dear Esther, you remind me of my daughter who died two years ago. She overdosed on some illegal drugs. I failed her for being an absentee mum. I was too busy, having become a professor at Agha Khan University. I want to make it up." The tender hearted woman blurted out.

My pay was soon doubled. I can now support my poor parents and save a little for the rainy day. She allowed me to learn more using newspapers and electronic gadgets. I was so excited because she bought me a new laptop.

Recently, she shocked me yet again. She said "The tragedies of life have taught me lessons. Being kind to fellow human being, brings real joy. I'm taking you to Riara school soon as this pandemic subsides. I will help you to achieve your dream!" I almost fainted with excitement at the strange twist in my circumstances. It is indeed true, that every dark cloud has a silver lining.



Alicia Bunoro

School:
Grade:

St. Peter's Cape View
3

My Story of Covid-19

My name is Alicia Bunoro. I am a grade three pupil in St Peter's Cape View. It is a very good school and I love it very much. My life has changed because COVID-19 has stopped schools. We had one hundred and twenty-three confirmed cases yesterday. We should all stay at home and sanitize or wash our hands before touching our face every day. We should put on face masks and keep social distancing, and wash our hands ten times a day using soap. The lockdown is continuing and the curfew is from five in the morning to seven at night. The police come at night to confirm if anyone is still outside.

Food and shoes and clothes are a problem to get, children are not allowed to go outside but the adults are allowed to go and find food for their family. I am missing my friends and teachers too. I cannot go to school because of COVID-19. I cannot go anywhere, I am only at home watching TV and playing with my dolls in the house. COVID-19 started on December the 6th on a Friday 2019, that is why it is called COVID-19. The hospital is not closed because of the patients of COVID-19. The shops and supermarkets are open at five in the morning and closed at six in the evening. Some people have food and others don't have food, other people have money and others do not have money.

We should clean the surfaces that are in the house because COVID-19 stays on surfaces for up to 9 days. The virus will still stick on the surfaces if we do not clean them, so they will spread. We should play with clean dolls and play dishes. We should put on face masks in public places and put on gloves. I do not like staying at home because it is boring. We stay at home the whole day. I wish that we do not stay at home for long. I love eating fruits, exercising. I feel sorry for the people who have lost their friends and family due to COVID-19. I feel sorry for the people who have lost their homes due to the floods. I want COVID-19 to end. I don't love staying at home. I want to see my friends and teachers, I want to go to school early. I like staying but not for long, I wish that COVID-19 will end in July 31st 2020. I just want to go back to school, that's all I want. I want to live in peace and harmony without COVID-19. I want the government to open schools and to help the needy and to help us defeat this COVID-19. We should all follow the government and always be thankful. We should respect the government, that is the way to defeat COVID-19, to work as a team. We should hold hands to protect the world. This is the end of my COVID-19 story, Thank You.



Gabriel Amani oloo

School: Bunny House Primary
and Kindergarten

Grade: 4

My Experience at Home During Covid -19

The dictionary definition of a pandemic is a disease that spreads over a whole country or the whole world. A recent example is the corona virus pandemic also known as Covid-19. Covid-19 is a pandemic and a virus that has affected the whole world thus causing what is now known as a new normal. The signs and symptoms are coughing, fever and difficulty in breathing.

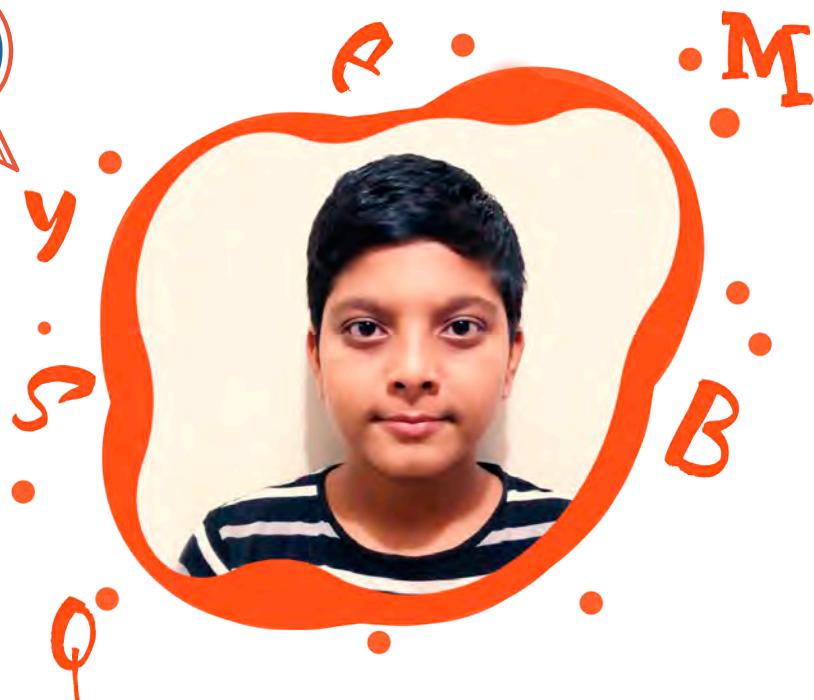
The Covid-19 pandemic first originated in Wuhan city, China late December last year. Scientist say it is a disease related to bats others say it started in fish market. There are many rumours about the virus but all we know is that it started in Wuhan city, China. The country's hardest hit by the virus are Italy, Spain, USA. As they say prevention is better than cure, the government tried its best but we reported our first case on March the thirteenth. The patient was a returnee from the United States of America. We currently have four million plus cases, three thousand plus deaths and one million plus recoveries in the whole world. As they say numbers never lie, and because of

the casual or care free attitude of Kenyans this is what the numbers look like. In Kenya we have one thousand plus cases, fifty-two plus deaths and three hundred plus recoveries.

The government of Kenya has taken the following measures to keep the pandemic at bay. Wearing a mask when in public, keeping social distance, cessation of movement in and out of Nairobi metropolitan, the coast region and Eastleigh, curfew, banning public gatherings etc. Many sectors have been affected such as the agriculture sector, the tourism sector among others. Many people have also lost their jobs. It has not only affected the country but also my family in the following ways. My parents cannot go to work and I and my siblings cannot go to school. There are advantages and disadvantages the pandemic brings. I am saddened by the rising number of cases and deaths. So, I would urge my fellow Kenyans to adhere to government directives. Tukisonga Pamoja tutafaulu.



Upper Primary



Essak Yahya Baradhia

School: Memon Academy
Grade: 6

Likes visiting interesting places such as Haller Park, Mamba village, Nguni sanctuary and picnicking on the beautiful coastal beaches. He is passionate about eradicating drug abuse.

The Unexpected Teacher Covid19

"Hurray!" I was beaming with palpable joy on hearing the unexpected news of temporary school closure! Swimming in the pool of joy, my mind was already in holiday mood thinking of no home work and no struggles of waking up early. What a great holiday it would be! I started praising something known as Covid19. Little did I know what lay ahead.

The reality of the situation soon dawned on me. Due to the risk of the virus spreading I couldn't even take a step out of the house. To my utter dismay, my best skill swimming was cancelled and I couldn't even visit my doting grandparents. Time flew and the week crawled by, being stuck at home with nothing much to do is when I realized that I was missing school life, my cronies and teachers as well.

Recalling the proverb said by the wise men who never threw dust in our eyes that "there are pros and cons to every situation." I decided to change my attitude. I woke

up at the crack of dawn and after having a scrumptious finger-licking meal made by my doting mother, I saw her tied up to the neck with the house chores. As a preventive measure my family had decided to temporarily lay off the house help services.

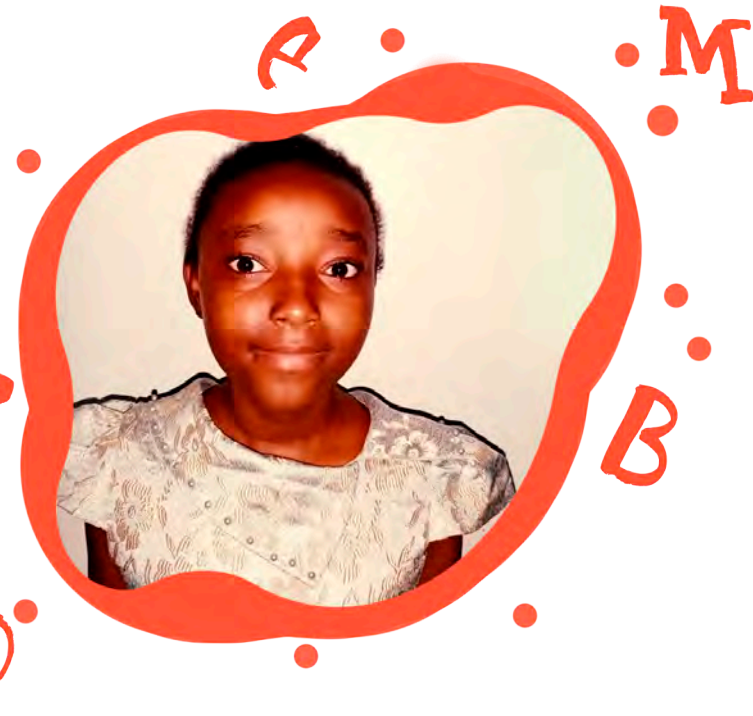
I decided to help my mother and volunteered to wash the utensils. Since it was my first time, I decided to be extra cautious. Feeling pleased with myself, I decided to be more helpful with what I could. As days passed, I learnt new skills such as cleaning the house, basic laundry and even baked some muffins! I had never paid attention to all these chores earlier since we depended much on the house help. I seemed to be enjoying myself and seeing my mother's heartwarming smile every time I helped was a superb bonus!

The sudden news of lockdown in certain areas of the city jolted us all. It meant that my father wouldn't be able to run his business till the lockdown was lifted. We held a family meeting and it was discussed that due to financial constraints we would be using our savings for the necessary expenses. Once again I was feeling very low

since we had been saving for a trip this year and I was really looking forward to traveling abroad. My parents comforted me and advised me that we should be grateful since we are in a better position than many others who had been rendered jobless. The virus had affected the whole world and many businesses were at a standstill. It was better to take all the preventive measures the government was issuing since we all know prevention is better than cure. I realized the truth and whispered a prayer of thanksgiving to the High Deity.

I focused on being positive and watched some useful gardening videos on YouTube. The next minute I was busy planting various seeds in my garden. I started enjoying this new hobby too. Day by day I realized the good changes in me. I felt more responsible and concerned about the current global crises.

Even though I am trying to have a positive outlook, every night I pray that a solution for this pandemic is found soon. Although the virus Covid19 has been an unexpected teacher that changed me for the better I hope everything gets back to schedule for everyone's benefit.



Pauline Muthoni

School: Milimani Primary School

Grade: 7

Hobbies are playing football, cooking, reading novels and storybooks, writing poems and short stories. She aspires to be an author and a neurosurgeon.

MY SMILING SAD COVID STORY

I would not have gotten this chance were it not for my love for reading and writing.

My holiday began on 14th March a day after Kenya reported its first case of COVID-19. The announcement sent shivers down my spine. Nonetheless, I could not hold back my incredulous joy for East or West home is best. Although I believe in that saying, I would like schools to reopen.

In most families getting angry is common. Before this pandemic one used to calm down at school or at work when angered but due to the strict measures taken one has to practise forgiveness. If one member of the family is filled with unfathomable joy, we all are.

Family prayers had not been compulsory but they are now. Despite churches closing our faith remains firm. Everyday before meals and retiring to bed we pray as a family. Every Sunday morning, we all attend Mass viewing it from our television. Later in the afternoon we occasionally go on walks. This pandemic has truly brought us closer.

Cooking which before I was an amateur is now my hobby. Practice makes perfect and I will continue learning.

Moreover, I am able to plan a timetable and follow it to the letter. This is no mean feat as it requires self discipline and determination. That however, does not create a reason not to study. Lack of resources to learn are common excuses but can't one read previous notes?

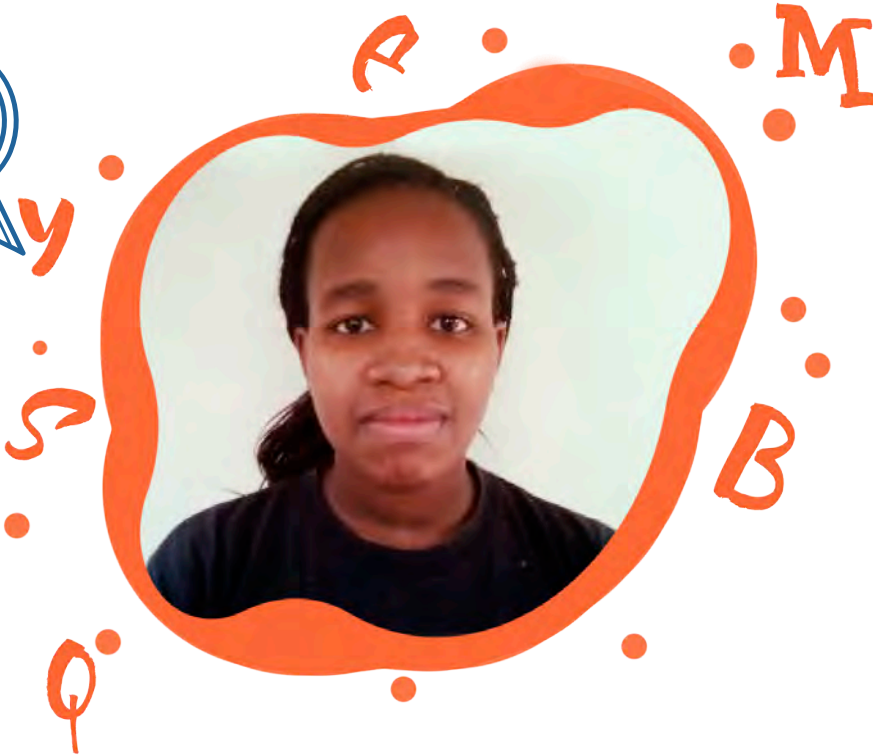
During this pandemic, bad company is inevitable. The youth are however more vulnerable to drug abuse. Nevertheless, some are lured to drug abuse by curiosity. Staying at home, avoiding unnecessary strolls and controlling curiosity might aid in ceasing drug abuse. Alcohol and other drugs are abused without thinking of the effects. The effects are truly fatal!

Observing curfew and social distance, hand hygiene and wearing masks should be adhered to. This pandemic has increased people's caution and intelligence. The government has done a great job in flattening the curve but politics is clouding their judgement. Why do leaders sabotage others efforts to help its citizens? All say that 'the big person sent me.' Who is this?

The government should put politics aside and help its citizens. Yes election will come but not now! Nothing comes on a silver platter and all must do their part in containing this pandemic. Every cloud has a silver lining and this pandemic will cease.

This COVID holiday will remain vivid in my memories till I sip the cup of demise.

I am indebted to NACADA for giving me an opportunity to participate in a national writing competition. I wish the winner all the best.



Amerie Wanjiru Mufuri

School: Thika Road Christian

Grade: 8

Enjoys preparing meals for her family in her free time. Her hobbies are reading novels and storybooks and designing artwork. She aspires to be an international chef.

My Experience as a Candidate During the Coronavirus Pandemic

"Ring, ring" sounded the four-o'clock bell signifying that the school day had ended. We quickly packed our homework books and bade each other goodbye knowing that we would meet again the following week. Little did we know that it would be the last time we ever saw each other! On reaching home, I greeted my mother and immediately embarked on my school work. Sometime later, my father arrived. It was so unusual for him to be home at this hour. Without saying a word, he switched on the television and there we heard the breaking news by the Cabinet Secretary saying that the country had reported its first coronavirus case. "The virus," he said, "is highly contagious and that it can be transmitted from one

person to the other without any person knowing of it.”

Some days later, the president placed some various measures to curb the virus. He banned all social gatherings, shut down all learning institutions, and placed a dusk-to-dawn curfew. With all the measures it was almost impossible to continue life in its normalcy. At home, we found it hard at first to cope with the situation. My father was usually the breadwinner of the family. With the work he was doing, he earned a good enough salary to fend for our daily needs and more. We also had the opportunity of taking my autistic sister for therapy. She had really made great improvements until the news of the virus came. Her therapy sessions had to come to a halt because of this pandemic.

At school, we were all looking forward to do our end-term examinations and close for the holidays. Now that schools have been closed down, my studies have really been affected. Instead of being in a

classroom learning with other students, we are just at home. Although it has been a challenging time, I have learnt to appreciate the value of technology in education through apps like Google Classroom and WhatsApp, which our teachers are using to assist us in learning.

While at home, I quickly adjusted to the new changes. Not having to wake up early to go to school was what I loved most. I enjoy helping my mother around the house for I am free for the better part of the day. When I would run errands for my mother, things in the supermarkets would be very different. Though we were close, we were separated. Usually everyone would be socializing and mingling with each other but it now seemed that everyone just wanted to protect themselves. Cash payments were discouraged and money transactions was the new way of money exchange. I can no longer visit my close friends or my neighbours. Everyone has been advised to keep social distance. It was very hard; being at home and not socializing with each other.



Harsley Gosset okumu

School: Nyabondo Primary School
Grade: 6

My Experience During the Covid 19 Pandemic

One chilly morning I left home for school and on the way I could overhear my fellow pupils talking about a disease corona virus. Upon reaching school we were advised to leave immediately and go home and wait for further communication. We left and went home hurriedly. It has been a very hard time with this pandemic, learning at home has been very difficult because sometimes if you are learning through radio, television or phone, the moderator is too fast thus one cannot follow and understand what he or she is teaching.

I have been saddened seeing a lot of people dying outside the country like Italy, Belgium, Spain and Asia. Reported cases are now over five million people worldwide. My advice to people is to stay at home during this Corona spell and always stay one metre apart in public places.

My relationship with family, friends and teachers have been so low since I neither visit nor play with them anymore. We used to play many games like football, tennis, basketball and volleyball. I have also been staying home and I miss my cousins a lot.

My parents have been advising me not to walk during the day due to this pandemic. To add salt to the injury, I have seen a lot of girls lying to their parents that they have gone

to read with their friends but they go to their boyfriends and this may result in teenage pregnancies and make them become truant or even eventually drop out of school.

Drug abuse has become a day to day activity for some of the village boys as they became friends with bad company. Their alliances has resulted to bad activities maybe driven to action by the drugs they abuse. They have become thieves, murderers and rapists.

During this pandemic period people have become jobless and so they have been cut from their daily source of income as some companies and organisations have closed up. As a result they cannot afford the basic needs for their families. This has been a double-burden for patients suffering from antagonising diseases such as Cancer, HIV, Diabetes and also the pregnant and lactating mothers not forgetting those with special needs.

As the world fights this COVID-19 disease, some people still face other threats, the big one being floods that have swept across the Sub-Saharan Africa making lives more difficult as people lose their houses, crops and assets. They now have to be in crowded places as they live in camps, schools and churches missing the social distance rule. This pandemic can be very dangerous in such places as it spreads faster than bush fire and containing it can be a bit difficult.



Immanuel Kiptoo

School: Apostolic Carmel Primary School
Grade: 7

THIS IS MY STORY: STUCK AT HOME DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic, also known as the Coronavirus, has ravaged our world in an unprecedented scale. It emerged in China, in December last year, that a peculiar respiratory syndrome had erupted, supposedly in a laboratory.

Out of the blue, it started to be the main topic in most of our day to day news, with many saying that it was a normal flu or cold and that it would just come to pass. In no time, our government reported our first COVID-19 case in the country, in March 2020 and life was never the same again.

Many of us went into a panic mode as schools, bars, restaurants, golf clubs, most entertainment and recreation joints were shut. To us pupils, it was an abrupt halt to our just started academic year, and had to cope up with E-learning and home schooling. It was difficult because, for most of us, we were used to being taught by our teachers. Phones, laptops and tablets began to be the new norm.

Since the curfew was imposed, most people had to go home early and this brought friction in most families. Churches and mosques were also not left behind. For me, a staunch christian, it was like separating myself from my God. I would no longer go about my Sunday routine. It felt like I was a pagan, who had no God or Creed, but I managed to follow the Sunday sermons via television.

Gosh!, for now we had to deal with the new normal of sanitising, wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands and staying at home. The Kenyan Government imposed safety measures and guidelines so as to contain, if not arrest the situation. It was annoying and caused a lot of inconvenience, to us children and adults alike for we were not used to wearing masks and sanitising as medics normally did. But, as time went by, we gradually got used to it and the abnormal way of doing things became the new norm.

Time began passing and I was missing my friends back at school, my teachers and fellow classmates. I was left in the dark, formless and in a desolated world with no one to socialise, rewind and recharge. It was a bad feeling and surely it saddened me. But a limelight shone upon me with the presence of my family. Family meals, joint programmes and jokes made us all feel that we were not alone after all. I then appreciated good family life, and warmth.

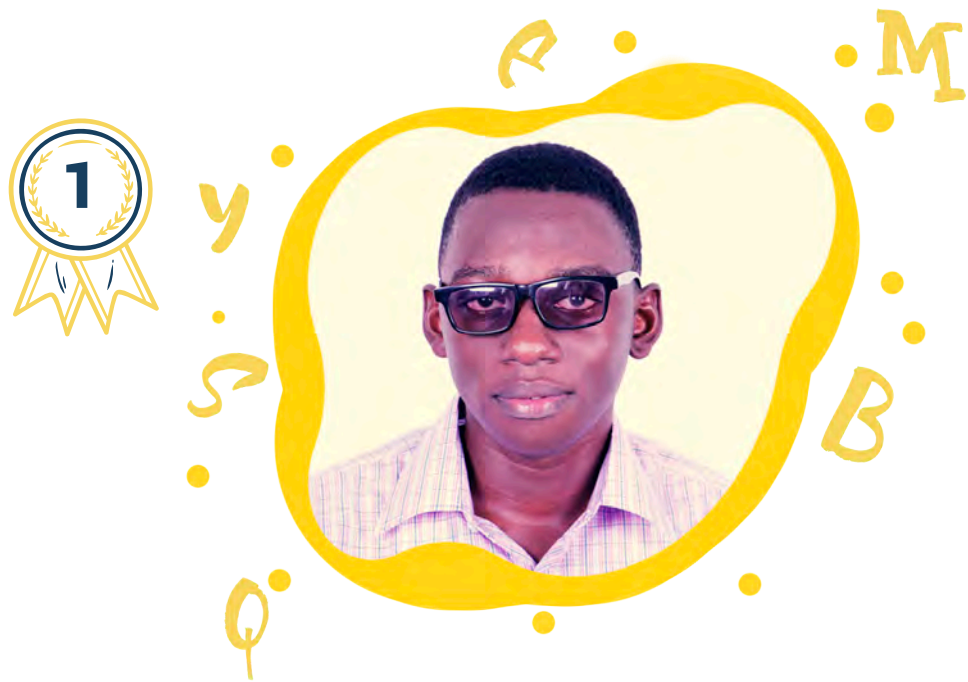
To curb the transmission of this Pandemic, with no known vaccine, we must all take individual and collective responsibility to follow all directives given by our dear government through the experts.

This pandemic has taught me to be more cautious of my hygiene and environment.

I look forward to reopening of schools and resumption of studies in my new class as there is light at the end of the tunnel with the president hinting at a major announcement soon.

The logo features the words "Secondary School" in a white, rounded, hand-drawn font. The word "Secondary" is on the top line and "School" is on the bottom line. Several letters in both words have small yellow dots above or below them, giving it a playful, hand-drawn appearance. The text is centered within a dark blue rectangular area.

Secondary School



Reinhard Graham Odenge

School: St. Mary's Kibabii Boys High

Form: 3

Reinhard is a sixteen-year old Form Three student at St Mary's Kibabii High School. His best subjects are Physics and Computer Studies. He likes to think of himself as an innovator. He has participated in Kenya Science and Engineering Fair up to the regional level. His dream career is to become an aeronautical engineer. Apart from academics, he enjoys singing worship songs both at school and at their local church when schools close.

He has also developed the desire to serve others and motivate his fellow youth through motivational videos in his You-Tube channel, Reintech TV so as to bring out the best in them. His hobbies include reading novels and cycling.

This is My Story

Life has this habit of giving us both ecstasy and uncertainty in almost equal measure at some point. Funny enough, we have to swing with the waves that come with it. As a form three student, my year started with enthusiasm since this would mark another milestone in my academic journey. All I recall is that life at school was running smoothly until one Sunday evening when I realized there was much noise in the dormitories. As chairman in charge of boarding in my school, I went to find out what was transpiring. Word was doing rounds that there was a presidential order in place for nationwide closure of schools due to the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic. I dismissed it as a rumour resulting from examination fever.

The next morning, being a Monday, we held an assembly and the principal, Mr. Ogeto, delivered the shocking news. Two days later, we were at home. What was it about this disease that made it daring enough to bring learning to a halt? My curiosity made me gobble up information on the disease.

especially from the internet. Things were no longer normal, hence, the term 'new normal' tossed around. Watching updates on television made me all the more afraid as I kept wondering whether I would be the next victim. To say the least, anxiety was at its peak.

It has been a season of remarkable change. What an experience it has been to study at home! Instead of the usual library, I have had to grapple with the idea of accessing learning materials online. It is quite a challenge with limited electronic gadgets in the family and diminishing income which cannot adequately cater for internet bundles.

However, life's lessons in hygiene have been practical. In the past, I only washed hands before and after meals. That is now a thing of the past. Additionally, I have learnt a lot about virtual conferencing as I helped my dad to hook up meetings on various platforms such as zoom. Moreover, I have witnessed

the re-birth of such words as social distancing, quarantine and self-isolation.

Staying at home is key to safety as it minimises meeting chances of infection. Besides, it has improved our family relationship by creating a platform for fellowship, playing and cooking together and, therefore, discovering our hidden talents.

That has not been the case with all families. By watching the news, one realises that many teenagers are into drug and substance abuse just because they lack motivation to keep them on the right path. How could I touch hundreds of my fellow teenagers in my own small way and change their world? This question in my mind propelled me to launch a YouTube channel in April called Reintech TV to inspire young people through spoken word and motivational videos.

All said and done, the pandemic has taught us two valuable lessons: to always be prepared for the unknown and to help others.



Charity Adoyo Juma

School: Butere Girls High

Form: 1

Charity Adoyo Juma is a fourteen-year old Form 1 student at Butere Girls High School. With a great passion for creative writing, reading storybooks, camping, and visiting new places to explore, She aspires to be an architect. She is the subject prefect of Kiswahili for her class and a member of the Journalism Club at Butere Girls. She recites Shairi in readiness for school competitions. In January 2019 as a Standard 8 pupil at Fountain School Tigoni, Charity led Central Region in Taifa Leo Insha competition. She was also part of the top contenders for Nation Media Group's 2019 national insha contest. She likes and plays football at school but dislikes swimming for fear of pools of water. Her favourite meal is chapati with chicken. She has a soft spot for domestic animals especially dogs and rabbits. She cannot entertain untidiness and disorder, inspired by the great example of her dad's work culture.

Coronavirus the Game Changer

It had been a bumpy ride from school owing to the bus driver who had been chewing on khat. We had pleaded with him to slow down but it bore no fruit. He simply stared at us with his bloodshot eyes. His face was a fashionable network of pimples and scars. That was one hideous man.

As soon as the vehicle halted, we hurriedly disembarked. We all let out a sigh of relief since we were out of the woods. The normal hustle and bustle of the city was still on. There was no minute to spare since crimes were most prevalent then. We had no option but to board a rickety motorcycle which took us home safely. True to the adage, all's well that ends well.

At home, everyone was present. I was used to my parents working up to dusk since they had to commute daily to earn a living. We used to relax outdoors and go shopping frequently but all this was now in the past. It had now become the new norm for all family members to meet in the living room at 3pm. We would all be eagerly waiting to know the number of tests

and positive cases in the previous one day. During such occasions, faces of the Cabinet Secretary for Health and his Chief Administrative Secretary did not miss the camera men.

Moving on to education, things were tougher than expected. Yes, studying at home is relaxing, but since home rules are more relaxed, it paves way for distractions. It is difficult to read in such a comfortable environment.

I tried finding out what my friends had been doing since the schools closed. Most of them are having a really hard time revising and often got bored. Some shared with me online platforms where they could interact with their teachers. It is true that technology is changing how we learn. Our church teens' class meetings are also taking place online. I have learnt how to hold meetings on Zoom and to interact with the other participants.

Families that were apart now have an opportunity to know one another well. However, it may be a nightmare to those not used to staying together. Worse still, they are confined to their homes by the dusk to dawn curfew.

It was during one of these curfew nights that I was woken up by screams making me jerk out of bed. I struggled to open my eyes fully owing to fatigue. Alas! A turbulent fire was ravaging the property of a helpless Kibera resident. Children were screaming as others threw out furniture and other valuables that were within reach. I was drowned in the river of sorrow since there was nothing I could do but pray. True to the adage, fire is a good servant but a bad master.

Undoubtedly, if we continue to behave normally this disease will treat us abnormally.



Faith Wanjiku Irungu

School: Graceland Girls Senior School

Form: 4

She is a Form Four student at Graceland Girls Senior School, Nyahururu. Her favourite subjects are History and English. When not engaged in school work, Faith finds leisure in reading novels and writing poetry. At school Faith is a member of the St. John Ambulance club. Her other interests include travel and camping which she believes gives her a clearer view of the world. She also finds quotes by philosophers like Socrates very exciting. In future she would like to give back to the community by pursuing a course in Film Production or Medicine.

Living Through a Pandemic

When the rumours of the possibility of going home got to us at school they were welcomed with open arms, especially by us candidates. Personally I knew this year was going to be hard. It was going to require a lot of sacrifices but I guess Jesus said it best; "the spirit is willing but the flesh, is weak". Sooner rather than later, we were informed that the President had given a directive that all schools should be closed. Our school organized for our transport to various towns to be handed over to our parents. The vans were sanitized by our matrons armed with Dettol dissolved in warm water. It was strange and comical to be honest. Hard to believe that this was now the new norm.

Upon arrival, what I had imagined the situation to be like and what was there in reality did not add up. The town business center looked normal; I even had my lunch at a hotel. I was confused. I asked questions, read the newspapers and went through social media trying to figure it all up. Despite it all, one thing was certain I would still be required to sit for my final exams as per the schedule. At least our Principal made sure we understood that.

Covid-19 press releases, safety precautions, helpline numbers; it all became the new norm. And trust social media to lighten things up. There were memes and vines everywhere. It was comforting till the cases started to rise and there was tension everywhere. Just when we were starting to get comfortable, a dusk to dawn curfew got implemented.

My father, a man of few words, had nothing much to say about this. He always says that one should not have opinions where they have no responsibility. My mother is submissive, she reorganized herself. My sister cared the least; being a hardcore introvert she had no business being outside. I was trying to figure out how the virus and night were connected. Confusion was all over. I started experiencing my friends' multiple personalities.

The more I saw and heard the more convinced I was that our generation needed redemption. People started falling into depression. Sad posts flooded social media. It all started getting to me when I started seeing videos of police brutality in the name of enforcing the curfew. News headlines were sickening. The depressed 'trend' died down, as soon as social media declared it was.

Being the good book we all read from, my friends stopped talking about their feelings and another 21st century saying surfaced, opening up is a scam. I am not innocent either, it is hard to speak up when society will label you an attention seeker. I confided to my notebook, I wrote poems and made up quotes. I noted down whatever it was I felt, sometimes it was anger, family can really get on your nerves.



Eugene Ndichu Ndungi

School: Mang'u High School

Form: 1

LEMONADE OUT OF LEMON.

Amid a pandemic, worry threatens to rob my time yet time wastage is never my option. As a result, forming daily schedule is my new normal. Discovering that there is much to do has been a lesson and a half. Workout is now a routine I follow to the letter and the results are breathtaking. Soon, I see myself in good shape. New chores including feeding chicken, trimming our hedge and slashing grass round our compound have kept me engaged. I spare time for watching a film, playing video games and enjoying a read. Studies are included. Time for my stomach is not ignored. With time, joy has bidden me welcome and chased away all dismay.

Online learning is something new, fresh and fun; a chance I would hate to waste. Zoom, an app which holds video meetings has come in handy. Learning with my colleagues and teachers in a new way has fascinated me. TV lessons have also assisted me make a step forward academically. Armed with my erect ears and good eyesight, I keenly follow the lessons with a pen and notebook at hand, determined to utilize this gold fully.

Another day, I was buried in a newspaper when I came across an article that discussed the importance of talent. I was challenged. Had I realized mine? Then an idea came through. An idle crochet lay in my drawer. Why not put my skills to the test? With mere

help from my mother, I produced neat work that wowed me. I was proud. I felt fulfilled. My love affair with knitting began. Talent is ever hidden in us, I have learnt, only if we search hard will we find.

Too bad I have to part with my friends. Reunion will be delayed. I am hurt badly. Nonetheless, family time is now given quality time. A day begins with my mother's prayer. At noon, we recite the Catholic Angelus and before we hit the hay, my father reads one or two Bible verses. On the Sabbath, we gather at the living room in neat attire ready to watch Mass on TV. Such leaves me spiritually nourished. Satisfaction eats me up.

During meal times, family chat begins. We talk at length and crack jokes occasionally. Stories are told, lessons are learnt and memories are built. All that time, I wear a smile; a smile of jubilation that communicates I feel lucky and loved.

With a push from my sister, cooking is my hobby. Every now and then, we agree on a recipe and teamwork for the best finish. Many a time, we surpass our wild imaginations and thrill our parents' tastebuds yet other times, things go wrong and we learn from our mistakes. In the process, I relish much fun.

All in all, I feel improved; better than before. In this cloud of gloom there is a silver lining. Like the stars in the night, there is light in this darkness.



Sherry Anne Birech

School: Bishop Gatimu Ngandu Girls High
Form: 1

Stuck at Home During Covid -19- This is My Story

As times change, so do we. The Covid -19 pandemic has changed our learning experiences; our emotions and our social interactions. Knowing that your neighbour might have the disease frightens. In such circumstances, people and children cannot intermingle with their neighbourhood friends but instead stay at home. Those who must go to their workplaces are nervous, thinking about accidentally bringing the virus home. This has led the government to encourage employees working from home.

The education life for students took a turn, hence the need for distance learning and so E-learning took over from the traditional methods of learning. E-learning has become part and parcel of our lives as students, even though we are not yet used to it and no time for orientation on the same. We learn the system as we work through the school assignments and classes. Parents have now turned to teachers providing support to their children in E-learning and supervising learning processes. However, e-learning has disadvantaged other learners who cannot access technology. Others may use technology for the wrong purpose due to social media distractions and limited supervision by parents.

Speaking of social media distraction, my mother keeps hovering around my brother and I while we are on e-learning just to check that we are actually studying! Moreover, this period has strengthened relationship with family. We get to bond and spend most of our time together. It is also the main source of information on Covid-19, preventive measures and effects.

This period has also become a time of misinformation. There is this rumour spread through the country that the use of alcohol could prevent Covid-19 but the authorities have disputed this. Shockingly, closure of bars has not stopped Kenyans from flouting the government directives.

One Saturday afternoon, some of my friends would go strolling together in the estate and other places. Having been invited and turned down the invitation, they still went. However, the next day, I decided to take a stroll around the area, just to see how things were going on outside, just to find that the changes witnessed at the start of the period had faded away. The once fearful community had turned into an ignorant one. What a shame!

People from all walks of life could be seen together, talking and sharing gossip. Others drinking and smoking. To my surprise, some of my friends were among them. But it seemed that they had another surprise in store for me - drug abuse! I didn't expect such from my friends. They told me it was their new normal because they were idle and that drugs had the power to cure Covid-19, taking me to the realization of ignorant friendships. Disgusted by the thought of speaking to them, I decided to go back home. Shockingly, even as the Covid-19 numbers grew by the day, they still went out often. Our bond was broken and I vowed to learn from my mistakes and keep friends who can tell right from wrong.

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