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Thanks to the following individuals for their generosity in January:

- ◆ Lindsay March
- ◆ Christopher Mahoney
- ◆ Roxanne Gibes
- ◆ Heidi Winklepeck
- ◆ Yolanda Winberg
- ◆ Jordan Burghardt
- ◆ Alex Limpaecher
- ◆ Peter Erickson
- ◆ Brett Bell
- ◆ James Tsou-Wong
- ◆ Lisa McGaffery
- ◆ Lotions & Potions
- ◆ Wesley Kiriinya

January Updates

Website Updated

Hamomi's website has recently been revamped. Check it out to learn more about our projects and see where your support goes.

www.hamomi.org

Another Teacher Supported

We are happy to report that another teacher has been sponsored for the year. The support comes from a book club of teachers and friends located in Spokane, WA. Thank you so much for your generous support!



Learn more about our [Support a Teacher Program](#)

The Giving Ring

At the beginning of the year we learned that Hamomi had been chosen as a beneficiary organization by The Giving Ring, a company that donates jewelry proceeds to select organizations.

The Giving Ring™

Wear it.
Share it.
Widen the ring.

100% of net profits donated to your selected beneficiary.

To learn more visit: thegivingring.com

Facebook Cause

Take a moment to join our new facebook cause; invite friends, donate, and stay updated. To date, we have already raised over \$500 for the feeding program.

DONATE HERE

To donate or learn more about Hamomi visit www.hamomi.org.

To learn more about our fiscal sponsor visit www.liftupafrika.org.

For questions, comments, or removal from this mailing list, please email hamomi.jamie@gmail.com

A letter from Susie Marks, Development Director

To be dramatic, on January 27th, 2009, Hamomi was forever changed. In ways I had foreseen, but also in ways I hadn't even considered. First, let me back up for a second.

In the summer of 2008, Lift Up Africa, our fiscal sponsor, approached me to see if Hamomi might benefit from solar cooking equipment. We emphatically responded 'YES!' and in August bought solar cookers from Solar Cookers International, (SCI). We were told SCI would do a demonstration and hand-off as soon as we had the necessary food and supplies. However, standing in our way was the debt we had acquired from several medical crises and from running the feeding program on credit for three months. Thus while slowly paying off our debt, our hungry students were forced to wait and our solar cookers acquire dust.



Hamomi staff dishing out food after the demonstration

Then came an incredible November. Without much warning, we had three American volunteers at Hamomi—packing Hamomi with fresh eyes and energetic feet to get things accomplished. Yet they all had the same assessment, “The kids are not eating. They need to eat”.

We knew this, but with these new perspectives it truly hit us that the kids were not being fed at home. The volunteers' reactions got reactions out of the American board, and we decided despite our fear, that even without the money, we needed to feed our students. In January I headed to Kenya with this as the number one goal of my trip.

Once in Nairobi, I called SCI and arranged for them to deliver and demonstrate the cookers. I gave Raphael \$25 for one day's worth of food. I was nervous with anticipation, but excited too, because the delivery was following a week of relative success. We were all feeling confident that we were on the brink of some major developments.

The next day three SCI representatives came to pick me up and we headed to Hamomi. We drove into Kangemi, our slum, and turned down the rocky road to get to Hamomi. I had never driven this part of the trek before, it felt much longer and much slum-ier from the car. I could tell from their reactions that it was not normal to go so deep into the slums for a delivery.

Once at Hamomi they unloaded the car, lined everything up right on the dirt outside our office, and the demonstration began. They made rice, beans, boiled eggs, a vegetable stew, and even cake! We learned that



we can pasteurize water with the solar cooker! We will be testing the dirty river nearby to see if it can actually get clean. If this works we will suddenly have free clean water. The Hamomi staff gathered around the whole time, while the crowd around them fluctuated – sometimes so big that people had to take turns going up to cookers to touch the panels to feel how hot they were getting.

Watching the excitement from this crowd I was brought back to our volunteers' shock in November. It's hard to reconcile the ethical pull towards the need for food with the fact that we have literally no money beyond rent and two supported teacher. Sure, there are random donations here and there, but nothing consistent enough to ward off the fear that we're going to have to stop this program after one week or end up in some pretty extreme debt again.

Once the food was prepared and being served, watching the kids so excited and grateful for a small portion of rice and beans, the attempted business woman in me disappeared and I knew the worst thing we could do was be practical. We needed the sense of urgency, pressure to come up with the next payment, and eating needed to not be a special occasion for our students who we expect to learn and pay attention. I gave Raphael \$150 more dollars, 6 school days of the feeding program. Then I began to sweat profusely considering having 6 days to find more money.

This was two weeks ago now. The change in the children is tangible – their energy, their willingness to learn. The effect on the entire community is everywhere – the relief for the parents and guardians and the idea that Hamomi is growing and changing for the better.



So...obvious, right? You start feeding people and they're happier and healthier. But it's more than that. The tone has changed. The pride in themselves. The way the kids look forward to the afternoon and the way the staff is able to teach after break. The excitement that something big is coming. They know they've become this legitimate organization, they know that rent is paid on time, they know there is a website somewhere out there with their pictures on it, but suddenly this legitimacy has brought something to them. Suddenly the goals they have discussed for so long, are actually glowing somewhere visible on the horizon. I can see it in their eyes, in their slightly rounder faces and in the way they shake my hand.

The solar cookers did not make the whole program so much cheaper that we can now afford it when we couldn't before, it just made us bolder and it made the demands for food more real. We have been asking everybody we know to consider donating to Hamomi. Through this effort we have been able to gather donations to keep the program running for a comfortable month or two, giving us time to ensure the months after that.

Thanks to everybody who made it possible. To the donors who got us out of debt, to the donors who then pushed us into trying the feeding program again and to the donors who are allowing it to continue. To the volunteers who traveled so far and gave us so much. To the people who have donated their time and joined the cause on Facebook and sent links to friends and family. To the people who have printed our brochures and posted them proudly at their workplaces and churches and homes. Thank you. Not just from me and the US board, but from the students and the Nairobi staff who can now believe that what they have spent a decade earning is on its way. Please continue to help us in this endeavor and give however you can.

Best,
Susie