

## Secondary School Begins for 8th Grade Graduates

On February 10, 2010, Hamomi's first set of Form 1 students (high school freshmen) began attending secondary schools throughout Kenya. We have already received word that they are adjusting well to the high demands and pressures of this new environment. We are happy to report that Hilary Hampha joined the Nkubu Boys scouting club, Clinton Ndori is on Hopewell Academy's soccer team, Godfree Adede is on the Igembe Boys rugby team and Briton Adegu recently spent the weekend at a new friend's family's home. We are so proud of all that they are doing!



Hilary Hampha practices tying his tie on the first day of school

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**PING PONG TABLES NEEDED:** Bellevue High's Hamomi Club will be holding a Ping Pong Tournament in late spring and is currently in need of ping pong tables. [Contact us](#) if you or someone you know has a table they can borrow.

## Hamomi's First Annual Dinner and Auction Raises \$33,727

We are pleased to announce that Hamomi's First Annual Dinner and Auction, held on Saturday, February 6, 2010, was an incredible success, raising \$33,727. With South Lake Union serving as the backdrop, 129 guests were treated to an evening of African music by Shi Daa, silent auction, dessert dash, dinner, and a presentation by Executive Director, Susie Marks. Beyond the bidding wars and frantic dessert grabbing, it was a night to celebrate Hamomi—its inspiring history, phenomenal accomplishments, and exciting future. It was an opportunity to raise money, bring friends together, and promote awareness, but also our first *real* chance to “come out” and articulate to supporters our solid goals, thoughtful implementation strategy, and motivation to accomplish whatever we set out to achieve.



Money raised from the event will allow us to confidently expand the feeding program to three meals a day, seven days a week, pay our teachers and raise the salaries of our two Kenyan administrators. Huge thanks to our Table Captains and all those who attended or volunteered. You helped make this a memorable night for Hamomi!

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## Feeding Program Celebrates its One-Year Anniversary

It feels serendipitous that the final expansion of our feeding program to three meals a day, seven days a week happens to coincide with the one year anniversary of its inception. Looking back, it is astounding to see where we were and just how far we have come in one year.

Beginning the feeding program in February 2009 was a tremendous but necessary risk. It was evident that our students were not receiving adequate food at home; they were lethargic, prone to illness, and unable to concentrate throughout the full day. However, our donor base was still growing and we felt nervous about increasing our operating costs by so much so quickly. What if we could not raise enough money to fund it each month? Was it fair to potentially lift our students' hopes only to have them crushed months later if the program ended? When it came down to it, we knew that offering them a first-rate education meant they needed to eat even if this meant only one meal a day or that the program might only last for a month or two. Deep down we knew that we had to take this scary but necessary plunge.



We began by offering lunch, Monday through Friday and the results were immediate; attendance rose to near-perfect, exam results improved and students were more energetic and healthier than ever before. Proof of the undeniable change came when our Volunteer Liaison, Simon Sakudah, was visiting Hamomi and asked if we had gotten an entirely different set of students, because he could not recognize these kids. But indeed they were the same kids; only now they were being fed and given the ability to look and act like healthy, nourished children. In April 2009, we felt financially secure enough to expand the program to begin providing breakfast and lunch, Monday through Saturday. As expected the results were phenomenal: medical costs plummeted and exam scores soared.

Over the past year we have seen the tremendous impact food has had on our students' lives. It took a leap of faith and an unwillingness to ignore the depths of our students' poverty. If we had focused on creating a first-rate educational facility while neglecting the brutal reality that students with even the most loving parents often received less than one meal a day, where would we be? A student with a rumbling belly will not retain what is taught in class, will be more susceptible to illness, and will ultimately receive only a partial education. If we've learned anything this past year, it's that a multi-million dollar facility means nothing if students are not learning within it; long-term development must go hand-in-hand with short-term development. With this in mind, in April 2010 we will finally complete the feeding program, offering breakfast, lunch and dinner, seven days a week. We can now shift our focus to Hamomi's long-term development.

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