

I am Agnes Ochieng. I was born in Kakomego county in the village of Shikoti in 1995. My parents Aggrey and Kisper were devout Christians in the Anglican church of Kenya.

Unfortunately I do not know what happened between my parents. When I was four years old my mother disappeared from home. The neighbors and relatives tried to search for her but they did not succeed. At that time my father decided to run away claiming that he was going to look for her. My life at home became very difficult at that point. I was unable to stay alone and survive.

In time, my grandmother chose to take care of me. I stayed with her for about a month when we got a call that my father had killed himself. After the burial of my father I went back to live with my grandmother at her home. This is when we discovered my mother had re-married.

I continued to live with my grandmother and when I was 11 we got a call that my mother was suffering from leg cancer. She suffered for 7 months without proper treatment and she finally died.

After my parents died I continued to live with my grandmother. When I was six years old the former Kenyan president introduced free education for grade school students. At that time my grandmother was stricken with eye problems from an unknown source. She suffered for a time and finally went blind.

I did not lose hope even though I was moving around to various community members borrowing clothes, food and other basic necessities. My cousin Patrick decided he would take care of me and my grandmother until I was in 6th grade. My cousin introduced me to Rev. John who is the program coordinator for COCED Christian Outreach for Community Empowerment. Rev John and others in COCED started to support me. They provided me with food, clothes, necessities and also prayers. Their support encouraged me and gives me strength to continue with my education until I got my primary certificate in 2011.

After finishing primary school the situation at my grandmother's home worsened. My uncles and other cousins abused me in all kinds of abuses, but I was encouraged by a verse in the bible which tells me that the life of a human being is held by God. I persisted through all those challenges knowing there is **still hope** in hopelessness.

At that time one of my relatives confused me and took advantage of me. She cheated me and sent me to work as a house girl for her sister. I stayed there about one month working as a maid. I worked under difficult conditions I had to eat while standing after everything else was fed including their dogs. I was treated harshly and my payment was food and worn out clothes.

A month later I was washing a vehicle in their garage when I got a call from my cousin Patrick telling me that I was going to attend secondary school. My cousin supported me all the way from Busia to my grandmother's house. I was happy to join the St. Paul's Girls Boarding High School in 2012, I was sponsored by COCED. In God's will and graciousness I am now in Form 2 this year.

I would like to ask that Rev. John and COCED continue supporting me and other orphans. I would like to finish High School and join a college and finally finish university and get a job. It is my mission to study and fulfill my dream of being a doctor so that I can care for others as I was cared for. I want to be able to promote the economy of my county. I would like to pray for partners to join Rev. John to support me and other orphans that are suffering in our community.

I am also very thankful for the support of Christ Church in La Crosse – through prayers and other funds you have enabled me to continue my education.

May God continue providing for you and empower you with every strength to continue being His servants to manage your mission. May God bless you, greetings to you and my best wishes to you. **I may** not be able to reward you but may God reward you more. I hope one day we will meet.

Your daughter for Christ,

Agnes