

We, in partnership with Maxwell Street Presbyterian, the Arthur Jones family, and Troy Presbyterian Church, have completed the first year of a three year program for the Star Shine Kaelor Working Group (119 children) in Kenya through the ZOE organization. The Star Shine Kaelor Working Group are grouped into 34 households each headed by a child between the ages of 14 and 21. These children are orphans or have an adult family member who is unable to provide basic support for them. They have often been abused and discriminated against by their own communities.

So, what happened to this first year of ZOE's three-year program? These children have been trained on health, hygiene, disease prevention, agribusiness, basic business management skills, business start-up skills, and technical trades. They have established income-generating businesses and can now afford basic needs like food, clothing, and education. They have made significant progress toward economic sustainability, food security, optimum health and psychosocial empowerment.

All households were taught how to grow their own food by creating vegetable gardens and planting crops. ZOE provided the appropriate seeds, machetes and hoes. Vegetables like cabbages, collard greens, spinach, tomatoes, onions and amaranth and crops of maize, beans, green grams and sorghum supplement their diets and the surplus is sold. The rains during the October 2016 through February 2017 were not so good, but the children have learned to use food banks, where they store enough food to take them through to the next harvest. Planting season was March 2017. The rains have been adequate, so they are expecting a bountiful harvest.

About 20% of the households received ZOE grants or micro-loans to purchase livestock, including chickens, piglets, rabbits, ducks and sheep. The animals can become a part of the household's food supply or they can sell the offspring to generate income. Through apprenticeships and vocational training, some of the children have received micro-grants to set up businesses in carpentry, hairdressing, dressmaking, welding, knitting, barbering and auto-mechanics. We are looking forward to a report this fall highlighting a specific household in our working group. The financial support we provide is important to this program, but our prayers for these children and for ZOE are important, as well.