

Sathya Sai School of Kisaju Spreads HOPE Programme in Kenya



The Sathya Sai School of Kisaju, Nairobi, Kenya was founded in 2002 and serves around 180 students in grades 3 – 8. This school provides a holistic education which emphasizes the human values of truth, righteousness, peace, love and non- violence. In November 2014, the Chairman of the School Board Mr. Kuldip Bahra initiated the HOPE (Honouring Our Parents Everyday) programme for the students of the Sathya Sai School. Parents are revered in all cultures and religions. "Mother is God, Father is God" proclaims *Taittiriya Upanishad* of the *Vedas*. Fifth of the Ten commandments in the Holy Bible is to honour your father and mother. Inspired by these spiritual ideals, the Kisaju HOPE programme provides an inspiring method of fostering and strengthening the love and respect of the school children for their parents.

The Sathya Sai School of Kisaju has earned a stellar reputation in the community for emphasizing human values and character development of its students. The commanding police officer of the OCS Ruaraka Police Station (located in a densely populated slum at the outskirts of Nairobi) approached the Sathya Sai School in May 2015 seeking its help in combatting the rising incidence of child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, theft, child pregnancy, parental indifference, student truancy and youth radicalization. Mr. Bahra immediately considered the HOPE programme as an opportunity to help the community and practice the teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. He felt that the confused young people who were mired in this difficult situation would benefit greatly by the HOPE programme.

On June 3rd 2015, the HOPE initiative was launched at Baba Dogo primary school in Ruaraka. This primary school serves over 1600 students daily with a staff of forty teachers and over ten auxiliary staff. Village elders, youth and community leaders also attended the launch in addition to the OCS Ruarka police commander.

After the HOPE presentation, the OCS police commander expressed his desire to turn the entire Ruaraka village into a HOPE zone. In addition, the Baba Dogo primary school headmistress was so impressed that she requested that their teachers be taken to Kisaju School for SSEHV (Sathya Sai Education in Human Values) training course. Since then, the message of HOPE and SSEHV has continued to spread, and as of now, the Sathya Sai School of Kisaju has trained over 70 teachers representing 14 schools. The Sathya Sai School not only provides spiritual and educational enrichment but also provides food packages to attending family members during some of the training sessions.

The HOPE programme emphasizes the following important concepts to students. Parents are representatives of God in a child's life, functioning as primary caregivers. Caring for their parents is the child's duty. Students should recognise that parents are responsible for their existence in the world and it is the children's duty to love and respect their parents.

Students should express gratitude towards parents for the effort and love which they continuously provide. HOPE programme emphasizes "Filial Piety" - Honour your parents, and the programme instills love in students towards their parents and helps them realise that parents are verily embodiments of love. HOPE emphasizes the relationship between parents and their children is one of love. Honouring parents should be done every day, not limited to Mother's Day and Father's Day. Teachers and parents serve as role models by taking care of their own parents and living exemplary lives. Abandoning their parents into old age homes is to be discouraged. These principles are inspirational and have been transforming children and parents. The HOPE programme is truly providing hope to the communities in Nairobi, Kenya by teaching and propagating the human values inspired by Sathya Sai Baba.

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