

Nutrition and School Performance

Cheril Munters tells a moving success story

Cheril Munters

Volunteer, Ramala Women Group



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Children learning from an RWG volunteer about the importance of good nutrition (front cover of the 2/2004 issue of this magazine)

Ramala Women Group (RWG) Food and Nutrition Program

Confronted by a nutrition crisis among children under the age of five in Kenya in the early years of this century, Ramala Women Group in Kenya set up a Food and Nutrition Program that was lucky to receive very timely support from *Sight and Life*. I write as a beneficiary of that program.

Targeting severely malnourished children below the age of five from communities of Migori and the neighboring counties in Kenya, the program used integrated approaches to fight micronutrient deficiencies. In 2003 – when I was a severely malnourished three-year-old on the brink of death – I had the good fortune to be introduced to Ramala Women Group by a social worker. Through their Food and Nutrition Program, I was given food enriched with Mix Me™ (provided by *Sight and Life*) from the day of my inclusion in the program. If *Sight and Life* had not supported RWG's Food and Nutrition Program, I would not be

here today to share my story about the value of proper nutrition and how it positively influences performance at school.

My success story

Close to one year into the program, my health significantly improved, as highlighted in *Sight and Life* 2/2004. Investing in young Kenyan lives means investing in the future of a great nation. Fighting micronutrient deficiencies provides hope for vulnerable and marginalized children in the country. I am profoundly humbled to be able to testify just how much good nutrition influences children's performance at school.

I attribute my successful performance in the KCSE 2016 at Ogande Girls High School first and foremost to God, and secondly to *Sight and Life*. Today, I am among the 88,000 young Kenyans who have attained the minimum grade of C+, allowing them to pursue any Bachelor's degree course of their choice at



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Cheril Munters in pre-school at Rongo Baptist Kindergarten, holding food enriched with MixMe™ micronutrient powders



Cheril Munters today

any university in Kenya. *Sight and Life* gave me a new lease of life and a vision to help the many young children who today are still suffering from micronutrient deficiencies in Kenya, just as I suffered myself 14 years ago.

Today, I am a volunteer at Ramala Women Group. My main role is to visit households and schools, sensitizing them to understand the value of proper nutrition, the importance of micronutrients, and the dangers associated with micronutrient deficiencies. My ambition is to educate the masses about nutrition and micronutrients by sharing information and educating children, households and communities in the subject. I hope to take a degree in either food or dietetics or in education, and to follow this up with a postgraduate degree in one of these subjects. I believe that studying at university will equip me with the skills and tools I will need in order to be able to communicate the importance of good nutrition to children, households and communities in Migori and neighboring counties within the Republic of Kenya.

A passionate appeal

I would like to make a passionate appeal to *Sight and Life* to resume their support of Ramala Women Group so that many more children like myself may not only have hope for the future but may also have the chance to share their understanding of the value of proper food and nutrition within households and

schools. In my daily work as a volunteer with RWG, I have met so many children who are like I was 14 years ago, and my heart grieves for them: Who will come to their aid as *Sight and Life* came to mine? They are destitute, and in dire need of the support of every person of good heart. Please, *Sight and Life*, come to their assistance as you came to mine. Thank you again, and God bless you.

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Stop press

We have just learned that Cheril has secured a place to study for a Bachelor's degree in Journalism at Maasai Mara University, Narok, Kenya. This is a very competitive course, and receiving a place on it is a great achievement in itself. Our sincere congratulations go to her! We wish Cheril every success with her studies, and look forward to being kept up to date on her progress [Ed.].