

# House of Mercy Children's Home (HOM)

Lagos, Nigeria

## Annual Report 2012

Charity No CAC/IT/No 21690



House of Mercy Children's Home, Lagos (HOM) is a grassroots NGO committed to helping vulnerable and disadvantaged children. We give a voice to child beggars, help street children to rebuild their lives and provide relief for the most deprived children.

Through our work, we strive to give children the opportunities they would otherwise have been denied. Our focus on education for disadvantaged children is our way of building hope for lasting change and a permanent end to poverty. However, we do not limit ourselves to providing educational services. Indeed, one of our strengths is the diversity of services that we offer.

Our range of services to children includes:

- **Organisation of informal classes** - taking education to the doorstep of the poor and the marginalised.
- **School sponsorship** - providing basic education to the poorest of the poor.
- **Mobile kitchen** - feeding child scavengers and other vulnerable children.
- **Cloth distribution** - providing clothes for needy children.
- **Street outreach** - reaching out to children who are living rough on the streets, under flyover bridges, at motor parks and in deserted areas.
- **Family-based residential home** - providing a safe environment for boys aged between 6 and 15 years. An environment of love, warmth and free from any form of abuse.

We are a small NGO at present but the potential to extend our reach in the community is enormous.

## Highlights from 2012

Everything we seek to achieve at HOM is driven by our main objective which is to directly improve the lives of the children for whom we provide services.

### ➤ **Organisation of informal classes**

In 2012, we helped over 200 children meet their unmet education needs by providing them with informal classes in their neighbourhood. About 50 of them enrolled in formal education in 2012. The numbers of students vary because the children belong to nomadic communities. Education for nomadic children is a challenging task because of their mobility factor.

### ➤ **School sponsorship**

20 children were given the opportunity to receive tuition through our school sponsorship programme.

### ➤ **Mobile kitchen**

Over 500 child scavengers and child beggars benefited from our mobile kitchen.

### ➤ **Outreach to homeless street children**

We established contact with about 50 street children during our street outreaches.

### ➤ **Family based residential home for street boys**

30 children were rescued from the street, 10 children were reconciled with their parents and 15 children opted out of the service from the school they were enrolled in and left the home.

### ➤ **Network with others**

In 2012, we consulted with and worked with professionals - teachers, social workers, medical practitioners and other NGOs who have a wealth of experience on children matters. These professionals gave HOM a valuable perspective on the immediate and emerging issues that children face. As a result of these meetings, we reviewed our services to ensure that it was

responsive and dynamic to meet the needs of children in today's world.

➤ **Aid to other charities: Food Crisis in the Sahel**

During the food crisis in the Sahel where 1 million children were exposed to severe malnutrition, HOM contributed a token and also lent its support to on-going efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to those children in dire need.

## Challenges Encountered

▪ **Street Outreach**

In our determined effort to give street children shelter and education, we often face opposition and resistance from the street children themselves. Their usual lifestyle and the attachment to the feeling of freedom on the streets amongst majority of the street children is one of the major challenges that we encounter at HOM.

▪ **Runaway Syndrome**

Although the street children are offered a home where they can settle and grow in a warm and caring family environment, a great number of them choose to return to a life of wandering the streets. The rescue and rehabilitation of street children is a tough task. The longer the children are on the street, the harder this task is as they find the streets a more attractive option to what they consider a painful transition to a disciplined and routine lifestyle which is foreign to them.

▪ **Dishonest Employees**

Dishonest employees pose huge challenges and risks to HOM. Some individuals have joined HOM with the intention of fleecing and defrauding us and we have had to act immediately to dismiss them because we take our responsibility of accountability seriously and we strive to provide good role models for the children we reach out to. We are constantly strengthening our recruitment processes with comprehensive background checks on all potential employees and volunteers to ensure alignment with our organisational values.

▪ **Limited Resources**

HOM operates on very tight budget and with limited staff resources. We are arguably doing much more than our limited resources can handle. This creates significant concern for us in ensuring the right balance in resource distribution and meeting our obligations.

\*Copies of our financial statements are available upon request.

## Targets for 2013

In the past 12 months, HOM has grown enormously to respond to the growing needs of the children and the growth in the number of children that we support. In 2013, we face the challenge of remaining flexible and responsive to the children's needs and also keeping the standard of our service high.

As much of a challenge as this presents, HOM is confident of continuing to offer the very best services to disadvantaged children in Nigeria. In the first quarter of 2013 (January - April 2013), we will be working on a fundraising strategy and outline a plan to take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities to expand our work.

❖ **Mobile Kitchen**

Our mobile kitchen services will grow to reach more children in need.

❖ **Child Sponsorship Programme**

We will continue exploring how education can be successfully provided to the most marginalised children through our child sponsorship programme

❖ **Informal Classes**

HOM will continue to run projects at the Beggars' Camp in 2013 with the main emphasis on education. We aim to enable as many children as possible to enrol in the formal education system in Nigeria.

❖ **Home for street girls**

Homeless girls are easily enticed into prostitution. They spend less time on the streets and are not so noticeable. Few advocates speak up for these girls, and few street girls have family members or concerned individuals willing and able to intervene on their behalf. Our goal is to open a home in order to give these girls back their childhood so they can thrive and graduate into adulthood with good education, employable skills and a sense of self-worth.

❖ **Street outreach**

In 2013, we will continue to focus on tailored preventive programmes to stop children from finding and living on the streets. For those who are already living off the streets, we will strive to provide the best possible rehabilitation services and ensure family reunification (where possible) and return to school or offer them the opportunity to learn skills which are on the long term, effective and marketable.

### Acknowledgements

The global economic picture is gloomy, companies' profits are down, unemployment is up, and individuals and families are struggling to maintain a decent standard of living. And yet, within this rather dark scenario, we have been privileged with support from people who have given a ray of hope by their generous donations of time and resources. It is to the enormous credit of all those associated with HOM that we continue to steer a steady course towards achieving our objectives.

Special thanks to these corporate organisations and institutions:

- Quantum Travels Ltd for donating foodstuff, toiletries and provisions.
- Stak Property Investors Ltd UK for donating 100£ (₦24,816).
- Church of Pentecost Anglican Church, Festac for awarding HOM a grant of ₦30 000.
- CWEO for donating 150 T-shirts.

Our sincere gratitude to the following individuals:

- Mrs. Busola Abatan for donating ₦70 000.
- Mrs. Kehinde Olaleye-Akib for donating ₦25 000
- Mr. & Mrs. Magnus Nebdal for donating 150€ (₦29,994).
- Ms. Louise Healy for donating 50£ (₦12,408).
- Ms. Ndidi Dike for donating foodstuff.
- The Babington-Ashaye family for donating ₦62 000 and boxes of clothes and toys.
- Mr. O T Oluwatosin for donating ₦50 000.
- Mr. & Mrs. D. Ashiru for donating ₦50 000.
- Mr. R. A. Adenola for donating ₦35 000.
- Mr. Wole Adeosun and his friends for covering the expenses of our Christmas party for needy children.
- Mr. Joseph Yobo, Captain of the Super Eagles, for donating food items, gifts and toiletries.

HOM is a small NGO and workers play a crucial role in assisting us in carrying out our duties so a big thank you goes to our entire staff team for their dedication and hard work in 2012.

We are also extremely grateful to our HOM Coordinator for all the hard work, selfless determination, enthusiasm and passion with which she relates to every child HOM supports, giving them an assurance and hope for a better and decent future.

Finally, we acknowledge and salute all who have given of their time and resources in 2012. We thank you for believing in our vision and for journeying with us in this last year to positively affect the lives of many needy children.

We look forward to the coming year with optimism as we continue to invest our energy and resources in the lives of these leaders of tomorrow.

With sincere gratitude,

Bunmi Awoyinfa