

FEATURE



# ACTIVIST ALICE WANJIRU PLANTS 5,000 TREES

It is a chilly Saturday morning after a rainy night, but 10-year-old Alice Wanjiru and her friends are determined to plant trees at the Ruai treatment plant.

Being black cotton soil and swampy, it takes a lot of effort to navigate in the vast area, which holds Nairobi sewage dams and a few shrubs. By 11 o'clock, Wanjiru looks worn out.

"Although I am tired, I am happy after planting 5,000 trees today!" said the Hummingbird Movement ambassador.

The Grade Five pupil at Brookhouse School with the guidance of other stakeholders has decided to begin an 'Adopt a Tree movement' as an ambassador of change.

"As an ambassador for climate change, I invite all to actively participate in different programmes that help reduce the negative effects brought about by climate change," she said.

Although she has made some strides, Wanjiru outlines her objective of targeting more trees in the ecosystem in the next five years.

"The biggest objective of this movement is to ensure we plant at least 10 million trees by 2027. This will require collaboration with like-minded individuals," she said.

Alice has resolved to follow in the footsteps of the late environmental, and political activist Wangari Maathai to mitigate the climate challenge we are facing today.

"Climate change across the world is posing a threat to our environment and society with no clear remedy. The effects of these weather changes are also resulting in frequent extreme droughts, floods and landslides," Wanjiru said.

In recent days, the government has been at the forefront of advocat-



ing for various environmental programmes, including setting a day for planting trees nationally which Wanjiru has embraced with zeal.

"As a movement, we align ourselves to the government's environmental agenda. But we are also alive to the fact that the government will do its part, but as responsible individuals and being a part of the society," she added.

On January 13, Wanjiru used her birthday to launch Birthday for Climate Awareness for December and January babies.

The event brought together 27 different schools, green army and climate ambassadors, both young and old who managed to plant hundreds of trees in Ruai.

The event culminated in the cutting of a cake at Afro-Sayari, Nairobi.

"We would want to take this campaign far and wide and where possible, work with stakeholders to facilitate students with seedlings so that we can become agents of change," she said.

Wanjiru, the lastborn in a family

of four said the biggest objective of this movement is to make sure that we plant at least 10 million trees in the next four years. She said that this is a vision that calls for collaboration with like-minded individuals.

Wanjiru reiterated that if the present generation fails to handle this threat as boldly and swiftly as possible, then we will risk irreparable catastrophe. This noble assignment to change the environment for a better future should not only be left to the scientists and experts.

RAISING THEM RIGHT

## LOVE ALWAYS WINS

It is easy to talk about love and even believe that we are good at expressing it but it is not always so natural; as you have probably realised. Your child needs your absolute love and will thrive more in an environment that exudes compassion.

The way of love is varied. It can mean giving your child a beating when he is in the wrong. It can also mean a gentle hug after a long day at school. It can also mean a celebration here or an intensive training exercise on how to make his bed properly. All these are steady expressions of love.

You can also take it a notch higher and verbally express your love and appreciation to your child. By constantly reminding him of his giftedness to you, you are planting a forever seed of sincere and deep connection.

Your child expects love from you and it should ring in your mind as more of a duty than just something you do from time to time. In a world full of many ups and downs, your child should be able to depend on you for reliable and steadfast love. [Agnes Mwandawiro]

