

LIFT THE LID!

AND SEE WHAT'S INSIDE ...

July 23th, 2025

Dear Writers of Happy Family Children's Village,

Hello, and congratulations on completing the Happy Family Children's Village 5th Annual Writing Competition hosted by Lift the Lid! I can't tell you how much I enjoyed reading your essays. It is astonishing when I see the progress you make every year, getting to the point of your essay upfront, sharing the events of your experience in order, and adding detailed descriptions, dialogue, and emotion. Bravo!

Some of you were incredibly brave to write about a difficult time or challenge in your life. Some of you showed a real talent for humor and proved that you are confident enough to look back and laugh at yourself or a particularly scary time. I am very proud of you and look forward to sharing your hard work with our donors. They will learn from and be inspired by each of your essays!

I will share examples from your essays of how you successfully answered the four questions for critiquing your own writing:

1. Have I learned something more about myself and life?

John wrote, "But that struggle taught me something bigger than how to wash clothes – it taught me discipline, personal hygiene, and that hiding from your responsibilities only makes them stink more in the end."

Michael wrote, "That bicycle taught me more than how to balance. It taught me about persistence, courage, and how sometimes you have to fall a hundred times before you find your way forward."

Neema wrote, "I left them there and went on with my own things, and I continued doing and practicing [my English]. Other times, I tried to do my best to be patient and tolerant, because I was feeling very bad."

Olivia wrote, "The next day, I went on the school bus and went back to school. I was very happy, and my fellow pupils told me they were sorry [that I had gotten sick]. When I remember this experience, I laugh at myself for no reason, but I also laugh because I was crying, thinking I would die."

2. Have I pushed myself as a writer to be clear, using periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation points? Have I ended every thought with a punctuation mark and started the next sentence with a capital letter? (I made a few corrections below.)

Adam wrote, "One day, I went back to the river and started swimming, but in a little while, I saw a big black snake passing around the water. I was very scared. I started screaming, 'Help! Help!'"

Isaek wrote, "She asked me a question, 'What is the benefit of water?' I didn't answer her. I went to eat lunch, and afterwards, I went to the shop, and I bought some bananas and watermelon. We ate so much and enjoyed it so much."

Joackim wrote, "One day, in March of 2021, I was walking when I saw a snail. I

carried it and took it home. I started keeping it in my cage. Suddenly, my younger brother named Joji appeared. Joji was afraid of the snail and wanted to kill it."

3. Have I taken every opportunity to use descriptive words? Here are a few opportunities to consider: describe your grandmother's smile. What does it remind you of? What kind of songs would you play on the harmonica? What does the watch you were given look like? Was it difficult to win chasing the chicken? What does your father do for work, and what does your brother look like? What kind of gifts did your father bring home?

David wrote, "Bibi would cook for us while humming old songs, and my grandfather, when sober, would tell stories that made us all giggle. Life felt safe, even beautiful."

John wrote, "It's a routine part of life, but for me it felt like a mountain I didn't want to climb from a young age. I hated washing clothes. I'd rather play football, climb trees, or chase goats with my friends than stand over a bucket of soapy water, battling with muddy shirts and sweaty socks."

Michael wrote, "Again, I crashed into a thorn bush, then into a pile of firewood, and once into our neighbor's chicken coop, scattering feathers everywhere. My elbows were scratched, my knees were bleeding, and my pride was bruised beyond repair."

4. Finally, have I expanded the hearts and minds of others by sharing my story and who I am?

David wrote, "Life is not perfect, but it is filled with resilience, hope, and quiet strength all because of Bibi. Her love carried us through darkness, and her courage gave us the light we live in now."

Wow!!

Many careers involve writing and communication, such as being a journalist, a politician, an editor, a speechwriter, a technical writer, a screenwriter, an author, working in marketing, public relations, or business, as well as being a teacher, researcher, or professor. I've said before, writing is exciting because it is an ongoing opportunity to learn, to think more deeply, and to share who you are – and to help others learn, think, and reflect, too. This is why writing is such a powerful tool!

This year, I've made corrections and provided feedback on your essays, which I have attached here, along with our competition results. If you have any questions or need clarification on my notes, please don't hesitate to ask.

First Place Winner: $75 each for personal education or to benefit the class:
***Peace David**
***John**
***Ebenezer Michael**

Second Place Winner: $45 each for personal education or to benefit the class:
***Adam**
***Neema**

Honorable Mentions: $30 each for personal education:

***Olivia**

***Isaek**

***Joackim Robert**

Congratulations to all! You showed courage and dedication just by entering the Competition!! From my heart, I can say that you're all winners, and I always look forward to reading more of your writing and seeing how much you improve with every essay you write. Feel free to send your work anytime!

God bless,

Sara Goff
Lift the Lid