

RAMA ZINE

Issue 2 / Ramadan 2023



Set love in motion with

pennyappeal usa

“NONE OF YOU
TRULY BELIEVES
UNTIL HE *LOVES FOR*
HIS BROTHER THAT
WHICH HE *LOVES*
FOR HIMSELF”

PROPHET MUHAMMAD,
PEACE BE UPON HIM

FROM OUR CEO

John Robbins, Ph. D.

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Asalamu Alaikum, Peace Be Upon You,

Ramadan Mubarak! I pray that this month may be a time of blessings, health and renewed hope for you and your family.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, “None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself.” It is in this spirit that we invite you to join us as we SET LOVE IN MOTION this Ramadan to break the cycle of poverty and uplift communities around the world.

With a focus on resilience and sustainability, all of Penny Appeal USA's programs are Zakat-eligible and serve as vehicles for positive change here in the United States to countries across the globe. We are also currently delivering emergency relief to Turkey and Syria after two tragic earthquakes in February left thousands of people vulnerable and in need of urgent help.

Let's set love in motion this Ramadan by exemplifying the care and generosity of our Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and supporting the most vulnerable.

Our FEED OUR WORLD program translates into an ongoing charity, as today's vibrant crops produce the seeds of tomorrow's harvest.

Our ORPHANKIND program provides for the complete health of a child in need - through nutritious meals, school clothes, and shoes - while also giving them an advantage through vocational training when they mature.

Our THIRST RELIEF program helps build entire community centers that elevate young girls from needing to spend hours a day fetching water for their families.

Your ZAKAT fuels change through all our programs and can provide nutritious meals to families, orphan sponsorship, building water wells, and more

Families around the world, and the Penny Appeal USA team, are deeply grateful for the impact you have made. This Ramadan, your continued generosity ensures that communities around the world can continue to grow and flourish.

Thank you for providing essential aid to those who need it most. We pray that you and your families have a very blessed and rewarding Ramadan.

new moon

new habits

new alarms

new naps

new tears

new silence

new cravings

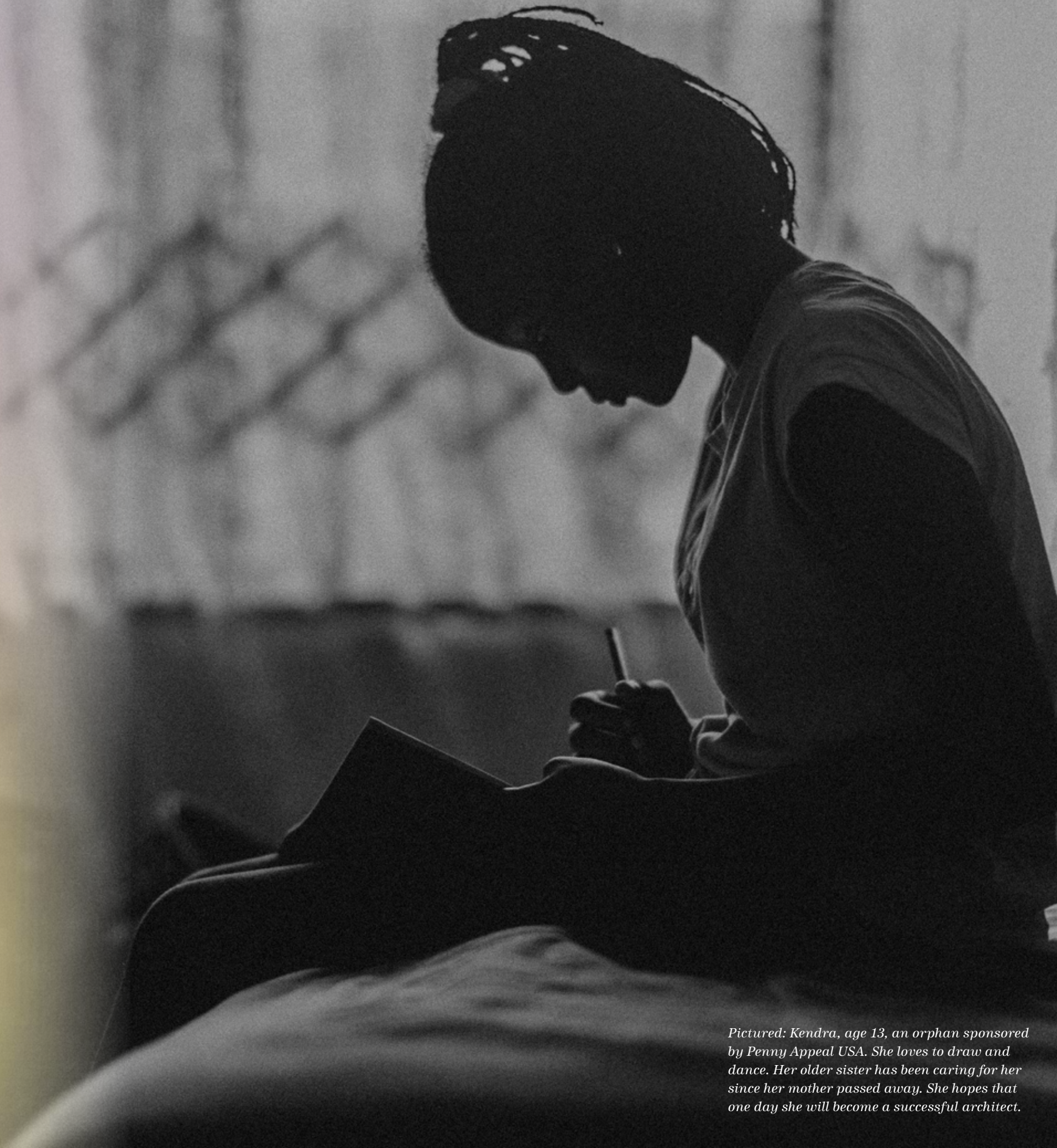
new dreams

new books

new reflections

new healing

new soul



Pictured: Kendra, age 13, an orphan sponsored by Penny Appeal USA. She loves to draw and dance. Her older sister has been caring for her since her mother passed away. She hopes that one day she will become a successful architect.



REVIVING OUR ISLAMIC ETHOS OF SERVICE

By Arsalan Iftikhar

The Islamic scholar Al-Nawawi once reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said that *"Whoever removes a worldly grief from a person in this world, God will remove from him a burden of the Day of Judgement. Whosoever alleviates the burden of a needy person, God will lighten his burdens in this world and the next. God will aid a person as long as a person aids another."*

This central ethos of service to others is a foundational teaching of Islamic ethics. If you look at the history of the prophets- like Jesus and Muhammad (upon them be peace)- you will find that they lived lives of service before (and especially after) prophethood showing the world that true leadership is meant to serve others who are less fortunate.

Long before he was granted prophethood, Prophet Muhammad was widely known as Al-Amin (or "the Trustworthy"). He was recognized by society to be a kind and just human being who served everyone equally and who was known to solve disputes in a fair equitable manner for all parties involved. We should always remember that true leadership is firmly built upon a foundation of trust, from which lasting influence and sincere service rise towards other people.

Did you know that if you make more than \$34,000 a year, you're among the world's richest 1% of the global population? Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said that, "No money ever decreases because of charity". In the hyper-capitalist era that we live in today, we tend to forget that nearly 1/2 of the world's population - more than 3 billion people - live on less than \$2.50 a day (which is less than most of us spend on Starbucks coffee every day). Even more staggering is the fact that nearly 20% of the world's population (more than 1.3 billion) people live in extreme poverty- less than \$1.25 a day.

"Every single Muslim must give charity every single day," the prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) once said in a hadith. When asked how human beings could give charity every day, he replied that "your removal of an obstacle in the road is a charitable act; your guiding someone is a charitable act; your visit to the sick is a charitable act; your enjoyment of good to others is a charitable act; your forbidding of others from wrongdoing is a charitable act, and your returning the greeting of peace is a charitable act" So as we begin another calendar year, let us revive our Islamic ethos of service by helping others who are less fortunate than us by donating our time, prayers and money that we would normally spend on a cup of coffee every day.

Pictured: Students plant new crops in the school vegetable garden. This project not only teaches the children horticulture, but it also is a sustainable, healthy food source for the whole school.

*faith is a muscle i am trying to build
sometimes my body begins to burn
just from walking
how long will it take
before the thought of flying doesn't hurt*



BUTTER “CHICKEN” MAC & CHEESE

The reason chicken is in quotes is because there's absolutely no chicken in this dish, but the masala that's usually made for butter chicken is the base of this recipe! If you want a protein in there then you can definitely throw in some cubed boneless chicken. I love this recipe because it's super easy and is relatively quick and versatile. This South Asian / southern fusion dish is comfort in a pot and makes for a unique post-iftar crowd pleaser!

by Senna Ahmad

masala:

1 medium yellow onion, chopped
2 tbsp garlic and ginger paste (can be found in your local south Asian grocery store)
1 tbsp red chili powder
2 tbsp garam masala
1 tsp cumin, grounded
1 -14 oz can tomato sauce (about 1.5 cups)
1 cup of light cream (or 1/2 cup water, 1/2 cup heavy cream, combined)

mac and cheese:

1 -16 oz box of macaroni elbows
1/2 cup (1 stick) of butter
1/4 cup all purpose flour
2 cups milk
1 tsp salt
2 cups cheese (I use a blend of American, cheddar, and Swiss)

1

Boil pasta as per instructions on box.

2

For the masala, in a medium pot on medium heat, fry onions until clear in color. Add ginger garlic paste, combine thoroughly and cook for 30 seconds. Add all spices, combine thoroughly and cook for 1 minute. Add tomato sauce, combine thoroughly and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Stir in cream a little bit at a time. Be sure to thoroughly combine before adding in more cream. Simmer on low heat for five minutes.

3

In a large pot, melt butter and combine flour until texture is consistent and there are no lumps. Add in milk a little bit at a time, combining thoroughly. Add salt and slowly add cheese, making sure it's completely melted before adding in more. Add masala mixture to cheese mixture, thoroughly combine. Add macaroni elbows to the mixture, combine thoroughly, and enjoy!

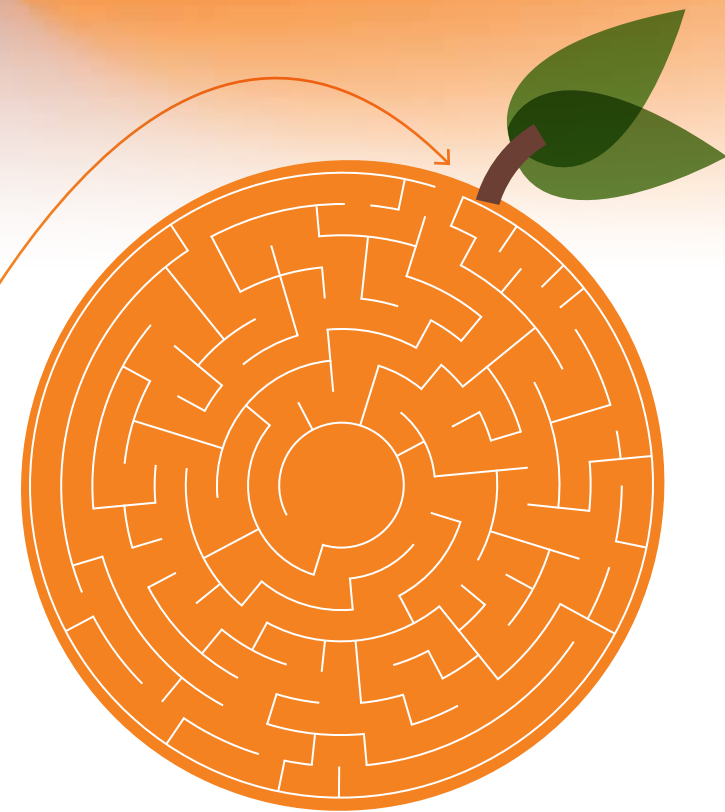


Kids Corner!

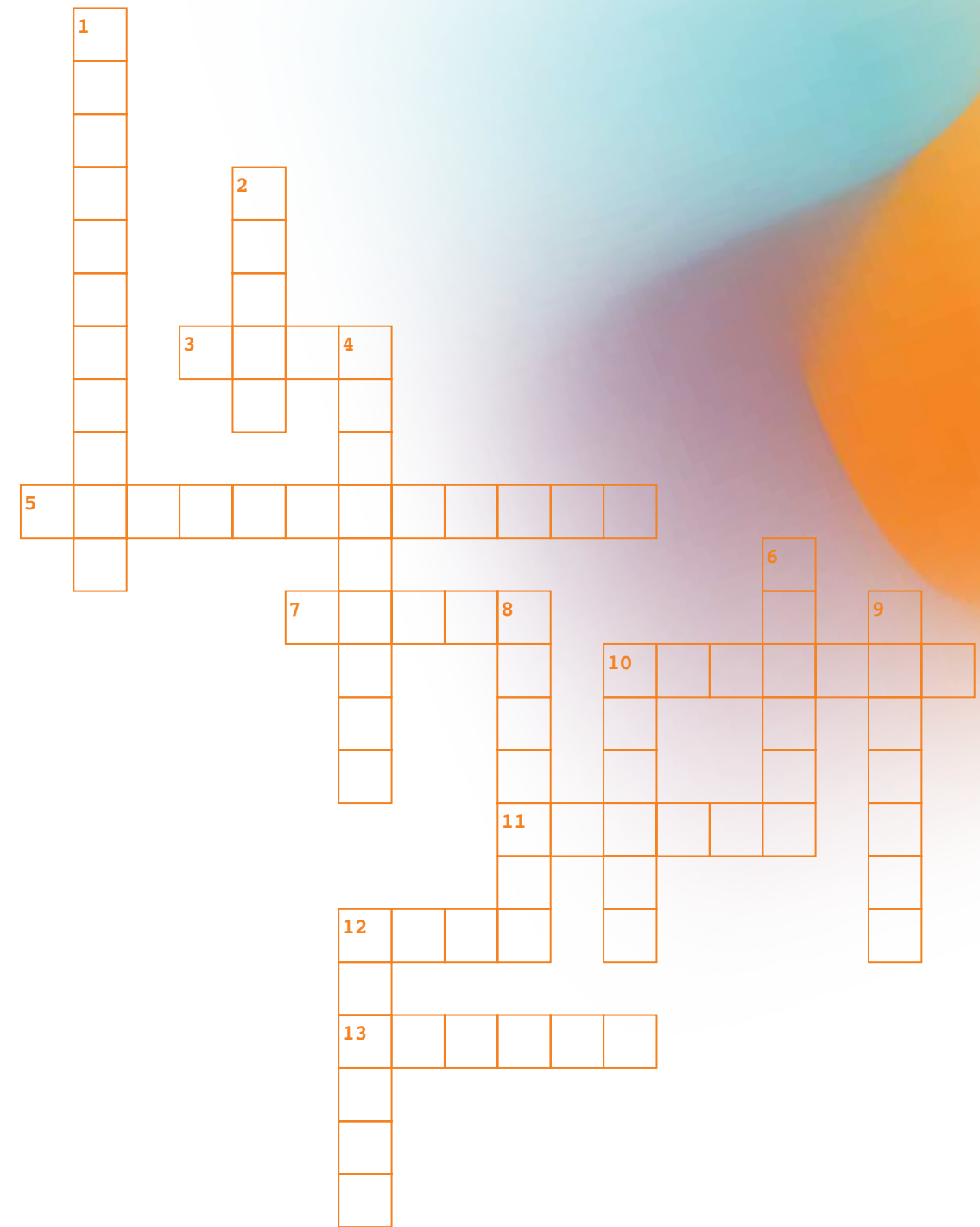
What is Penny Appeal USA?

“Penny Appeal USA helps people by giving them homes, food and school so they can have peaceful lives!” - Yasin, age 7

can you make it through the maze? Start from here and find your way to the middle of the orange!



What does LOVE mean to you? How will you spread love this Ramadan?



Across

- 3. Dried fruit eaten commonly during Ramadan
- 5. A holy night on one of the last 10 days of Ramadan
- 7. Fast breaking meal eaten after sunset
- 10. Charity given voluntarily to please Allah
- 11. Giving money or goods to a good cause
- 12. Ramadan starts when you see a new _____ in the sky
- 13. Morning meal during Ramadan before dawn

Down

- 1. Charity organization that wants to end the cycle of poverty
- 2. One of the five pillars of Islam, donating to charity
- 4. Celebration after the end of Ramadan
- 6. Penny Appeal motto “Small ____ big difference”
- 8. A holy month where Muslims fast from dusk till dawn
- 9. The practice of abstaining from food from sun up to sun down
- 10. The teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
- 12. Muslim place of worship

HOW WILL YOU SET LOVE IN MOTION THIS RAMADAN?

“For me, it’s important to check in on my friends’ & families mental health in Ramadan. A lot of us associate Ramadan with cheery memories of warmth & togetherness but you’d be surprised to find that for so many people Ramadan is a time when they feel the loneliest. But a single invite can change the trajectory of someone’s Ramadan and overall social life for good. Community is a gift that keeps on giving and taking a moment to check in on someone’s mental & social health is fundamental in cultivating a culture of love and inclusivity. By checking in on one person, you never know what kind of ripple effect you can set off from one simple moment of love.”
-Ammar, photographer (@ammarhabib)

“Love to me means to be cared for—genuinely & unconditionally.”
-Momina, lifestyle blogger (@mominaaab)

“Love is deriving fulfillment by providing happiness in other. It can be as small as putting a smile on someone’s face, or as big as big as being there for them in a moment of need. Love is seizing the opportunity to make others happy. I will set love in motion this Ramadan by praying for others without their knowledge. The greatest form of love is Allah’s mercy and happiness on them”
-Zaid, comedian (@zaid.fouzi)

“Love can be found in quietness. Stillness and presence is love.”
-Bayadir, poet and mental health advocate (@yourbaya)

“To me, love is truly unconditional, full with respect, trust, and appreciation. Whether it’s in a relationship, a friendship, with family members, or with yourself, love means that at the end of the day — regardless of what you’ve been through — you will be there for them through anything. Ramadan is a great time to express love to those in your life, and I’ll be doing so by looking out for the needs of those around me and working to meet those every single day inshAllah.”
-Osman, city council candidate (@osmansalahuddin)

“Love to me means genuine happiness and support for one and another.” “As a full time physician and mom of four I really want to try and slow down this Ramadan. I want to be able to absorb all the blessings of Ramadan which means loving every second of my day, by being fully present and intentional with my actions InshAllah.”
-Sarah, doctor (@drsarahkiani)





PLANTING A SEED OF HOPE

By Shafaq Zia, Chief Programs Officer

Your Sadaqah Jariyah, or perpetual charity, can go far beyond the flowing waters of a Thirst Relief donation. While there are great benefits in providing clean water to those in need, there are also endless blessings in supporting the planting of trees and food.

Our sustainable Vegetable Garden projects help women to feed themselves and their families for life, transforming entire communities for generations to come. The vegetable gardens provide vulnerable, women-led families with access to land, agricultural training sessions, seeds, tools, as well as training on how to sell their surplus produce in local markets. The program ensures that families in vulnerable communities are given all the tools they need to create not only a nutritious supply of food for their households, but also the opportunities and expertise to offer their produce at local markets.

One of the beauties of this program is its adaptability. We're planting gardens in South Africa, Palestine, Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia, and even though the project may look different in each country, it ultimately bolsters agricultural production, jumpstarts local market activity, supports micro-enterprise initiatives, and enhances a vulnerable community's access to sustainable sources of food and income.

One of the first programs I ever contributed to helped support the provision of bread through a bakery in Syria. The program aimed to meet the caloric needs of Syrian refugees and internally displaced peoples, however, it didn't provide a sufficient supply for these families, nor did it provide a balanced and sustainable solution to their hunger. Through sustainable vegetable gardens, a more consistent diet and supply of food was attainable. To now witness gardens across the globe, adapted per country, such as the ones on rooftops in Palestine, brings me great hope for how we feed people around the world. It was a full-circle moment when I visited a Penny Appeal USA school garden in South Africa where students are learning about the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, which are then used for their lunches, and excess is sold to finance more planting.

Through 'learning by doing' we're equipping beneficiaries with vegetable cultivation skills, from land preparation to harvesting and post-harvest management. The most vital component of our Vegetable Gardens program are the training sessions that happen before and after the implementation of a program. In addition to the weekly meetings, we offer food production workshops with agricultural engineers, and Improved Agriculture Business Development training. This type of skill development allows

beneficiaries to maintain their financial security, generate income, and earn dignified wages. In the long term, this gives them and their family an opportunity to escape the cycle of poverty.

During Ramadan, as we abstain from food and provide communities with food packs to get them through the month, we also encourage introspection about how we can meet the demand for a more continuous and sustainable supply of food for those in most need. How can we ensure that these blessings can be long-lasting and provide beneficiaries with dignity? Although it may seem to be a simple solution, with each vegetable garden we're planting, we are also planting seeds of hope for communities around the world.

A story from the field

Chaman Bibi (pictured below), a former farmworker in South Punjab, Pakistan, was drawn to Penny Appeal USA's project supporting smallholders and landless families. With the opportunity to learn new cultivation techniques and lease land for growing vegetables, she applied and received training. She transformed the small plot of land allocated to her into a vegetable and fruit garden, utilizing vertical structures and organic pesticides. Chaman Bibi's new skills have not only improved her family's food security but also generated income from selling surplus produce. In just 41 days, her garden was ready for harvest, and she's already saved PKR 200 (76 cents) daily on vegetables, totaling PKR 28,160 (\$107.61) in a single month.





REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

By Chancey June

I began 2023 with my heart steeped in gratitude, traveling across South Africa to visit and document orphan support programs with Penny Appeal USA. When I think back on my time there and the people I met, I will think of the country's stark juxtaposition of beauty and pain at every turn. I will think of the way soft light looks in a hard city. I think of unabashed joy and utter heartbreak. I will think of mouths curling into silly smiles, revealing gaps left by fallen baby teeth, and of gentle eyes giving way to tears, revealing canyons carved by grief for fallen babies. I will think of the sharp, snagging edges of reality and the undefined, ever-expanding perimeter of hope. I will think of Mariam, a 7-year-old autistic orphan, running towards that hope, chasing butterflies, singing and laughing and loving everything that is. I will think of Abigail, a recently widowed mother of three, the sun shining on her golden highlights, telling us not to worry, that she prayed all night for us and so there will be no shooting today. I will think of how safe I felt wrapped in her prayer. I will think of Aminah's strength, Raihanah's sass, Nilaze's poise, and Maheera's confidence. I will think of Sophie gushing over her new home, built by Penny Appeal USA, and her excitement over having her own room for the first time in her life. I will think of her tears of gratitude. I will think of cramped dwellings and five people to one bed, and five people to one slice of bread, and doors that don't shut quite right, and doors that, if you were to rest your ear upon them, you would hear the ocean. I will think of the way a life begins and ends at a precise time and in a precise place, how every life has an exact number of seconds to breathe and gasp and hold and love, and love — I will think of the way it exists outside of time. The way it can feel like breaking and the way it can teach you how to breathe again.

The people I met in South Africa face struggles most of us will find difficult to comprehend, from gang violence that threatens their lives daily, to food insecurity and unemployment, to a lack of access to the most basic human rights. And yet, they are more vibrant, more joyful, and more grateful than anyone I have ever met. When I think of my time with them, more than anything, I will think of their light.

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, is sitting on a bed or floor, reading an open book. He is looking down at the pages. The room is dimly lit, with a window in the background showing a sunset or sunrise. The light from the window is soft and warm, casting a glow on the boy and the book. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a window with curtains and a view of a landscape with hills or mountains under a colorful sky. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

*the air smells more fresh in the middle
of the night as the eyes and soul flutter awake*

*your ego is more fragile now
it whispers your innermost wishes
hoping they reach the heavens more quickly
at this hour without the noise of everyone else's desires*

*your body feels lighter because it's begun to commune with the divine
will you let go or tether yourself to your worries and fears
peace peace peace, you are after
peace until the rising of the dawn*

THANK YOU

Penny Appeal USA's mission is to bring about an equitable world by tackling the root causes of poverty while bridging the gap between funders and poor communities in order to work together on long-term solutions that can help end intergenerational poverty.

Learn more and support our work by scanning the QR code below or visiting pausa.org.



All Penny Appeal USA programs are Zakat-eligible. That means your Zakat can bring nutritious meals to families, sponsor orphans, build wells, and more!

images & poetry

The portraits featured in this zine are the result of our Creative Director, Chancey June's recent trip to South Africa, where she captured the essence and humanity of our beneficiaries. Through her lens, we see the real people who are impacted by our work, and we are reminded of the importance of our mission. These powerful images serve as a call to action, inviting all of us end cyclical poverty and to stand in solidarity with those who need our support. We are proud to present these portraits and to share the stories of those whose lives have been transformed by Penny Appeal USA.

The poetry featured in this zine are written by Nesima Aberra. Nesima is a writer, poet, and communications strategist for social impact. She was one of the founding members of the Bay Area Muslim Writers Collective, an organizer for the DC Muslim Writers Collective, and is an alum of several writing workshops including VONA, the Poynter Institute, THREAD at Yale, and Catapult. Follow her writing on Instagram at [@nesima_writes](https://www.instagram.com/nesima_writes)

Ramazine designed by Senna Ahmad
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small change. **big difference**