Faith is my kind of hero

**NOTHING HAPPENS JUST** for the heck

of it. When I met Faith 20 or so years ago,

I did not know I would later need her. I often

wondered why on earth a young woman like

her would go out of her way to keep desperate

babies in her apartment in Kayole. Was it

not wise to rent it out and make money?

I later learnt that Faith had named her children’s

home Imani, which is Kiswahili for her

first name. How appropriate. As fate would

have it, I found myself caring for babies that

had no one else. I did not know where to turn,

especially when HIV-positive mothers died

under our care. I had put all attention on the

recovery of the mothers and forgotten about

the vulnerable children. I was still naïve and

never attended to even a single child’s case,

expecting that I would lose.

So it came as an emergency when I found

myself with babies without caregivers. Most

times I did not know where else to turn but to

Faith for custody and upkeep.

**Faith’s labour of love**

You will not find Faith calling press conferences

to express her opinion on children’s

predicament or the myriad challenges she

faces. She does her best to ensure that these

children live humane lives. In essence, she

is rescuing our abandoned future leaders.

If there are people who deserve tickets to

heaven because of the selfless work they

do on earth, it is Faith and her staff at Imani

Children’s Homes. She has a big, big accommodating

heart. These folks are nurturing

over 3,000 children ranging from days old to

some at university.

There is another side to Faith that I admire.

As opposed to KENWA (read me), she takes

in any needy baby. Personally, to take or consider

a child’s case, HIV must be mentioned

somewhere to justify it. It is either HIV or

the highway. To us, the child qualifies to be

needy if both parents are dead and relatives

are MIA. Even under such circumstances,

we demand a letter from the local chief if

we cannot get a death certificate indicating

immune suppression… or such terms that

“baptise” Aids-related deaths.

**Walk of faith**

When I recently visited Faith in Kayole, she

told me she is organising a walk from Nairobi

to Malindi to raise funds to build a *nyumba ya*

*wazee*. Her workers are old and have nowhere

to go. She wanted

me to support her

in whatever way I

could.

“Faith, I

can’t even attempt to walk from Kayole to

Embakasi,” I sighed.

“No,” she went ahead with her usual smile,

as if indicating that I cannot walk even three

metres to save my life. “I don’t want you to

walk; I just want you to flag it off.”

Faith has scheduled it for 1 December,

which is World Aids Day (WAD). I asked her

why she had settled on, of all days, WAD.

“No one ever told me 1 December is, er,

WAD,” she countered.

Faith is not pretentious. She has no time

to catch up with the same old same old “recurrent”

affairs. Her world consists of babies

from all walks of life.

“Asunta, please tell your friends about this

walk so that they can join us.”

Me? I do not want to merely tell you about

Faith’s walk. I want to toot the horn of this

unsung heroine who has committed her

life to rescuing our needy children. She has

sacrificed wifely and biological mother ambitions

and in return has become the mother of

multitudes. Faith once told me that she cannot

even keep a relationship.

“Which brother will date a sister with over

3,000 children all calling her Mom? When will

she even have time for him?”

Speaking of time, Faith’s daily focus is how

to get food, (formula) milk, clothes, firewood,

and getting her sick children to hospital. As

if that is not enough, she is always being

called to take in more abandoned babies.

At times she gets children who really need

special care. Recently Faith got a baby with

no genital organs. They had to do a quick

surgery to allow passage of stool and urine.

More surgery is scheduled for the limbless

and genderless angel. After delivery, the

baby’s mother walked away. She refused

to have anything to do with the malformed

baby. Faith says the baby is her favourite. Do

not ask me why.

I appreciate and celebrate this woman. I do

not know how those who select our national

heroes pass over Faith.

If you are reading this, kindly support this

unsung hero in her walk and work.

SHE IS THE MOTHER OF 3,000 CHILDREN

This is the diary of Asunta Wagura,

a mother-of-five who tested HIVpositive

26 years ago. She is the executive

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