

Vallery Shamala

GOOD SAMARITAN

Life in Kibera is not a bed of roses .One may have everything today and lack everything tomorrow .Making good decisions has become a crisis especially for the youths .In this critical environment Vallery Shamala who lived with her dad and three other siblings in maranatha Kibera was going through so much trouble at the age of four.

Her father was a drunkard and her mother was nowhere to be seen. Her father used to cut tress and sell them to get money for food. This was illegal and for this he was an everyday visitor in jail. During this period a neighbor (Mama Mela) was the one who used to give Vallery dad wanted nothing to do with eating food from neighbor but Mama Mela did it anyways.

This was a routine for Baba Vallery to go to jail was like his normal activity. He left his four children without food and when he got little money he always went drinking and came back home fully charged. He would start by beating Vallery's elder sister then brother and since vallery was small she would be spared .Things started getting intense and out of control in 2008.Baba Vallerys stay in jail became longer and Vallery and her sisters and brother started fearing what would be next.

Mama Mela continued helping us and soon my dad had started being jailed for months and even half a year. Inspite of all this trouble with the police Baba Vallery continued his daily job. During the days when he did not return home Mama Mela would sneak food from her house to feed us. She always felt pity for us and wanted no beef with my dad. The neighbors tried to talk my dad out of drugs and alcohol but all their efforts went in vein.

Violence in my home was an everyday thing unless Baba Vallery was in jail during this same year Baba Vallery got jailed for six good months. My siblings and I were able to go one week without food. That weekend we explained to mama Mela everything that had happened and she promised to help us .She started buying us food and feeding us. She took care of us as if we were here own children.

Life continued with Mama Mela as the only person we depended on. She continued feeding us as she asked around for the whereabouts of my father .It was five months later that she learned that my father was in jail. She was relieved and found some of my father's friends to help him out of jail.

At around the same time rumors had reached the area we stayed rumors about SHOFCO and the scholarship it was giving .Mama Mela took both me and her daughter Valentine to come and

register .Upon our arrival we were told that the scholarship is only given to one girl per house and since Mama Mela had brought two girls she had to decide who she is going to register in the program.

She decided that I get the chance and she will take Valentine elsewhere. And when she was questioned about parental responsibilities that were part of the contract she assured SHOFCO that she'd stand in for me.This one decision she made, made me who I am today. She is more than a neighbor to me and every day I think about her it gives me strength to wake up and work hard for a better future. I hope that later in life I will be able to repay this big favor she did.