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## City of Long Beach, City Auditor



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### Crying Tears of Joy

Sometimes when we least expect it, an opportunity to help someone in need presents itself. Three days before the 2015 Long Beach Marathon I was told that a young man from Kenya, Richard, was here to run the race in hopes of winning the prize money to help support his family, and he needed a place to stay. I was asked if I would be willing to host Richard for the next three days. My husband and I agreed that he could stay with us, and we really enjoyed spending the weekend getting to know him. He was incredibly kind and genuine.

The night before the Marathon, I asked Richard if he thought he would win the race. He was reluctant and said, "I run my best when I'm at peace." I asked him if he was at peace and he shook his head no. I then asked him what was wrong, and he told me that two of his family's three cows had just died. He explained that these cows were dairy cows which provided important sustenance for his family. I tried my best to reassure him that things would be ok.

The following morning at the Marathon, my husband and I were like nervous parents pacing, waiting and praying for Richard as he ran the race. Unfortunately, Richard did not win the Marathon or the prize money, but out of over 5,000 marathoners, Richard came in 5th place. He had a very good attitude and was very grateful for the hospitality and kindness shown to him by many people that weekend. His flight left shortly after the race, and we said our goodbyes quickly.

After he left, I shared his situation with one of my running friends and she said, "Well, how much does a dairy cow cost in Kenya?" We did some research and found that they were not too expensive. My friend then sent out an email blast with Richard's story to the Long Beach running community. The response was overwhelming, and we received contributions beyond our expectations. One message we received said, "I am very happy to contribute. Isn't this what life is all about?" Amazingly, within just a few days we had enough for Richard to buy two cows for his family.

I had the privilege of calling Richard and telling him the good news. He was overcome with emotion and said to me, "Thank you so much. I am crying tears of joy. This is one of the greatest days of my life."

We all have limited time, energy and resources, but I believe certain people who need our help are placed in our paths. I hope we continue to be aware of opportunities to serve and do what we can to help. It is so wonderful to see the generosity of the Long Beach community when someone is in need.