

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter

10th Anniversary Edition - March 2015

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"Fall in love with the people first,
and they will call forth from you
what they need."

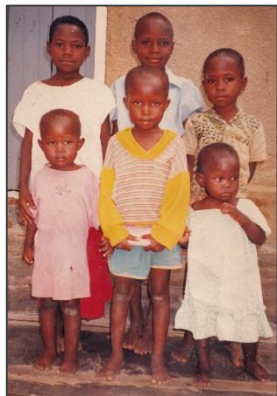
—Sr. Mary Susanne Dziedzic



In the beginning, before there was a St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund, we were serving as missionaries working for the Uganda Orthodox Church. Children were everywhere then, as they are now, and many of them were not in school. We began paying school fees for a few orphans and providing others with school supplies, uniforms, and shoes. We saw the immediate need and moved to address it. By the end of the first year of the Uganda Children's Fund, we were helping over one hundred children—almost all of them in primary school. We didn't think much about the future. Girls and boys were now in school who otherwise would be on the streets. They were learning, singing, eating lunch every day, and receiving medical care. They were happy and we were happy.

Faruk's story – Part I

In July of 2005, a teacher at the local primary school asked us to assist a family of children with school lunch. They had been abandoned when their parents died, and fifteen-year-old Faruk was now head of the household; he was in sixth grade. These children needed more than lunch! We moved them from the crumbling room where we found them to a two-room apartment near us, and assumed full responsibility for their upkeep as well as their education.



Faruk (r) and siblings in primary school

Unanticipated outcomes

Within five years, the number of our students doubled and half of them were in secondary school. Desperate teens were coming to us pleading for an education, and each year a group of our primary school kids moved up to high school. A new reality thrust itself upon us: what next? There are no good jobs in Uganda for high school graduates. We were bonded to these children—could we in good faith just send them back to where we found them? That was when we committed to take them to the next level, whatever the cost. Today all students in our program have the opportunity to continue their studies in university or vocational training to prepare them to take their place in society as productive young adults.

We currently have seventy-five students studying at the post-secondary level. More than forty others have completed their education and are gainfully employed as nurses, secretaries, tailors, mechanics, teachers, hairdressers, social workers, and in other careers. We never imagined such a future ten years ago when we first took a few dozen ragged, dusty, barefoot children and put them in classrooms.

Faruk's story – Part II

Like most of our children from those early years, Faruk progressed through primary and secondary school. His dream was to become an electrician so we sent him to a vocational college to study electrical

installation. He earned his Craft certificate and will complete Advanced Craft this year. The school administration was so impressed with his maturity and strength of character that they employed him on staff even as he completes his studies. He is now the Warden, responsible for the welfare of all male students. Other duties include maintaining the electrical facilities and keeping the classrooms and offices secure. He's come a long way and we're very proud of him for what he's accomplished.



Faruk in his office

Susan and Margie

Susan was eleven years old when she joined our family. Her father had died the previous year and without his income her school fees were not being paid. Her little sister, Margie, was just seven months old at the time. The family moved into a cheap single room, and their mother tried to support the girls by selling vegetables from their home.

Susan was a serious student and performed well in primary school. She continued her academic success in secondary school, ranking in the First Division on the national leaving exams. A few weeks before the start of the new school year, she begged us to consider taking Margie, now of school age. Their mother had not remarried nor produced more children, devoting all her time and effort to caring for the two girls. Of course we accepted, and scheduled a time for her

to come and be measured for school shoes and a school uniform.



When her uniform was ready, Margie was so excited she couldn't stop smiling. She was really going to be a schoolgirl! Susan was also there that day, happy that her little sister was going to have the same chance for an education that she'd received. The love and affection between these girls, ten years apart in age, is both moving and inspiring.

As our children learn and grow—from kindergarten to the workplace—they and we are thankful for your financial support and constant love. May God bless you!

Peter & Sharon



Margie and Susan

We welcome your donations.
Checks may be sent to:

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund
P.O. Box 285
Chardon, OH 44024-0285

Or you can donate online at
www.ugandachildrensfund.org

The St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.