

St. NICHOLAS Uganda CHILDREN'S FUND Newsletter

March 2018

Email: info@ugandachildrensfund.org

"The poor work hard and have nothing to show for it; and when they rest, they are still poor."
– Sirach 31:4



Since we first came to Uganda in 2002, we have seen remarkable changes in the capital city of Kampala, especially in terms of development. Construction is going on everywhere: luxury hotels, office buildings, upscale shopping malls. Streets are being widened, repaved, and lined, with curbs and sidewalks added. Previously, major thoroughfares suffered serious erosion during the rainy seasons, causing the road beds to shrink to a single lane within a year or two after being paved. Now culverts are being buried to manage the runoff from the often torrential rains. Uganda and Kampala appear to be making significant economic progress.



The Kampala Serena Hotel

By contrast, the slum neighborhoods that surround the city center have remained largely unchanged. These are the urban "villages" in which our children and their families live. Official statistics indicate that the percentage of Ugandans living below the poverty line continues to decline. That would seem to be a good thing. However, income disparity between the rich and the poor is on the rise. According to a recent report issued by the U.N. Economic

Commission for Africa, Uganda is among the countries with the highest level of income inequality on the continent. A man who makes his living washing the cars of the rich would have to wash a car every day for 75 years to earn enough to buy it.



Downtown in the distance (in more ways than one)

But we don't need statistics to convince us. We experience the reality every time we travel from our home to the office, and when we visit the homes of our children. If these neighborhoods have changed at all, they've become even more squalid and congested. Single moms struggle daily to feed the household and to stay less than three months behind on the rent so they and their meager possessions aren't tossed from their one-room apartments. There is nothing left over for school fees.

Juliana and her two children live in such a place and face such challenges. Juliana is a tiny, energetic woman, not even five feet tall. She worked as a cook and server at a takeaway "restaurant" near our office and brought lunch daily to our staff, Agnes and Frank. Saving enough to buy a charcoal stove, a big frying pan, and a spatula, she started her own little business, frying cassava for local workers.



The business earns a profit of about a dollar per day. Juliana pays monthly rent of eleven dollars, which gets her a small room with a leaky roof. She wears the same dress every day. When Agnes visited their home, she saw no other clothes hanging from the open rafters, for Juliana or for the children.



Grace and Patrick are also tiny. Abandoned by their father when mum was pregnant with Patrick, Grace had already missed one year of school when Juliana brought them to our office. Hoping for a better future for her children, she came to the people she knew. Of course we could not refuse.



Upon measuring them, our tailor said that she had never made school uniforms that small!

Primary School Success

At the end of the school year, in November, seventh grade students sit for the national Primary Leaving Exams. Secondary school admission is predicated on the students' performance. Four subjects are covered—English, Math, Social Studies, and Science. The exams are comprehensive, covering seven years of study. The results are ranked into four divisions, with first being the best. This past year, all of our primary school candidates qualified in the first or second division. Now they are enjoying the excitement and challenges of being high school students.



Peter addresses the new secondary students prior to embarking on the bus to boarding school.

Thank you for contributing to their success! We greatly appreciate your support and your prayers.

Peter & Sharon

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.