

St. NICHOLAS Uganda CHILDREN'S FUND

Newsletter

March 2019

Email: info@ugandachildrensfund.org

"Any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the slums that damn them is a spiritually moribund religion awaiting burial."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.



Life in the slums of Kampala is characterized by uncertainty, discomfort, confusion, struggle, and sorrow. Housing units are shoddily constructed and packed into poor neighborhoods surrounding the city center. More than 70% of the dwelling units in the city are built with substandard building materials. Slum neighborhoods attract a high density of low-income earners and the unemployed, with a low level of literacy. There are high rates of noise, crime, drug abuse, alcoholism, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS. Residents contract malaria, on average, every three months.



Children are everywhere, left on their own all day while their single mothers or guardians go out with an empty stomach, looking to earn a little money to buy food for the evening. There is no money for school tuition, let alone uniforms, shoes, books and pencils. In addition to the hazardous living conditions, children are in peril from the threat of sexual predators

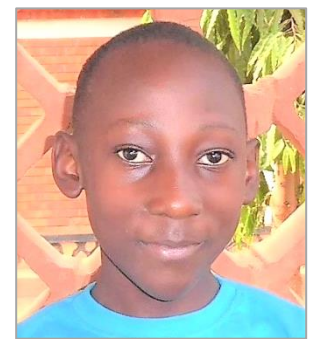
and kidnappers. (We have seen an alarming increase in child sacrifice over the past five years.) This is where we work, and these are our children.

Hidden in the squalor of the slums are children with intelligence, determination, and strength of character. In spite of the apparent hopelessness of their lives, they haven't given up their dreams. All they need is the opportunity to demonstrate what they are capable of. When we replace their threadbare second-hand clothes with school uniforms, they are instantly and remarkably transformed. It's as if they are saying, "Yes! This is where I belong."



Ugandan students sit for national exams upon completion of Primary 7, Senior 4, and Senior 6. Matched against students from all over Uganda, including from the finest schools, our children consistently perform well. This year was no exception. Here are the stories of three of our stars.

Nathan was our top P.7 student, just two points from a perfect score on the Primary Leaving Exam. His results were excellent in all four subjects tested: English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. A confident natural leader, Nathan was elected Head Boy for two consecutive school years. Nathan's father died when he was two



weeks old, and his mother works as a cleaning lady for a local school, earning the equivalent of eight dollars per week.



Last month, Nathan and his classmates happily began their journey to boarding secondary school.



Joyce was our top student in Senior 4, repeating her success four years ago as the best in Primary 7. She and her sister Jovia were abandoned by mentally ill parents and have been raised by their Aunt Elizabeth, along with twelve other

children—both Elizabeth’s own and various orphaned nieces and nephews. Elizabeth supports her large family by preparing food for local workers and shopkeepers.



In A Level secondary school (Senior 5 & 6), students specialize in three subjects. Joyce’s dream is a career in medicine, so she will attempt the challenging combination of Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics.

Frank was our top student in Senior 6, achieving an outstanding nineteen points out of twenty on the national exam for university qualification. His near-perfect score included an A in Economics, an A in Entrepreneurship, and a B in Math.



Frank joined our program in fourth grade when he was nine years old. The previous year, his parents were tragically killed in a road accident involving the public minibus they were traveling in. He was taken in by his recently widowed Aunt Josephine to raise with her own daughters, ages two and four. Josephine feeds the family by washing clothes for neighbors. In August Frank will join Makerere University, pursuing a degree in Statistics.

In response to our praise for his efforts, Frank soberly replied, “Many other bright students have failed to complete school because they had no one to help them.” We are grateful to you, dear friends, for making it possible for students like Frank, Joyce, and Nathan to succeed.

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.