

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter

June 2012

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"The first step toward success is taken when you refuse to be a captive of the environment in which you find yourself."

—Mark Caine



Two motivated young men

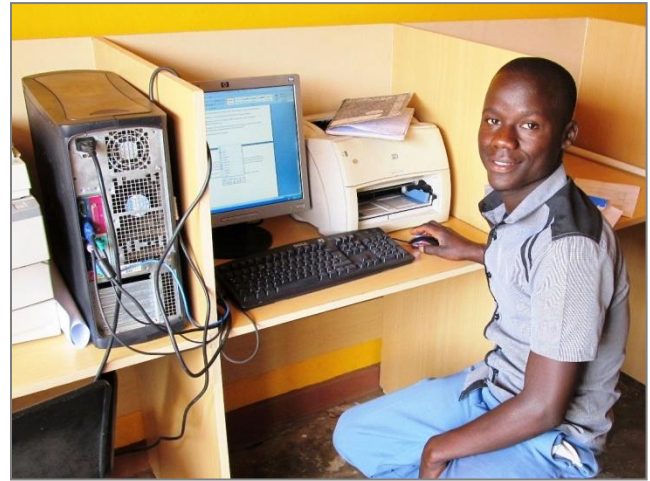
Charles and Mubarak had every reason to give up. Both were orphaned in their teens and had fallen two years behind their age-mates in school. Their home situations were difficult. Though they hadn't known each other until their final year in high school when they met as fellow students in our program, they possessed one attribute in common—a burning desire to succeed.

Mubarak will be twenty-one in July. His father died when he was in second grade and his mother when he was fourteen. In the first four years following her death he was bounced from relative to relative—changing schools, disrupting the continuity of his education, and losing two years in the process. Since then, he has been staying with the family of a former classmate. In spite of these challenges, he achieved excellent results in high school, ranked second among our 2011 graduates, and easily qualified for university.



Desiring to contribute to the household income, Mubarak persuaded a local office services shop to hire him in spite of his lack of computer skills. We promptly enrolled him in a month-long basic computer course and he began his new job in February. In August he hopes to pursue a degree in Computer Science at Ndejje University. We offered

him the opportunity to be a boarding student, but he respectfully declined. He chooses to be a full-time evening student so he can continue working and earning during the day.



Mubarak at work

Charles is about the same age as Mubarak but doesn't know his actual date of birth. His father died when he was seven and he lost his mother six years ago. Since then he and his two younger brothers have been living with their maternal aunt and her four children. She is an uprooted village peasant and has limited wage-earning skills. The expanded family of eight stays in a one-room flat located in a low-lying slum intersected by drainage ditches. During the rainy season the area floods regularly and is known locally as "Kosovo" because of the belligerent nature of its inhabitants. The family stays there because it's all they can afford. We've placed both of Charles's younger brothers in boarding high school to help alleviate Auntie's burden.

Charles was fifteen at the time of his mother's death. His brothers were ten and eleven. Charles immediately got himself apprenticed to a carpentry workshop and began to learn the trade during weekends and school holidays. The income he earned often saved his family from going to bed on empty stomachs. Over the past six years, his skills advanced to the point where he is now an expert builder of bed frames.



Charles at work

After visiting Charles's shop to evaluate his handiwork, we decided to supply some small capital so that he could make and sell beds at a profit rather than work for a minimal daily wage. In August he also will enroll at Ndejje University for a degree in business administration. Like Mubarak, he prefers the evening program so he can continue to work and provide for his family.



A talented girl

There are some children for whom creativity is as natural as breathing. Twelve-year-old Millie is one of them. Place a pen in her hand and she writes a poem, a story, or a prayer. Put her in a play and she inhabits the character. Give her colored pencils, and you will receive an outpouring of flowers.

Millie's father died when she was five, leaving her mother, Beatrice, HIV-positive. But Mom is positive in attitude as well, and provides for her three children by making and selling paper bead

jewelry. When we organized our Parents and Guardians Association, Beatrice was elected president by consensus. Millie emulates her mother's cheerful outlook and is never seen without her charming and delightful smile.



Millie, Sharon, and beads

These success stories are yours, dear friends, and young lives are changing for the better. Thank you for your faithful support and for 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

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