

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter

June 2014

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"Children, the smallest, weakest members of our human family, often pay the greatest price for our fallen world's sins."

—Michael W. Smith



The slums of Kampala are a breeding ground for failure. In a city of 2½ million, over 60% of the population lives in the slums. Our children are among the 60%. Nothing in their lives can be taken for granted—not food, clean water, shelter, health care, and certainly not education. Each day brings the challenge of looking for "what to eat." A family can be evicted from their rented mud-brick room with only a few days' notice. A sick child is left to reach a critical stage before she is taken for medical treatment—and often it's too late. How do you effectively utilize a mosquito net when seven children are sleeping on a papyrus mat on the floor?

The Ugandan government boasts about its free primary education program, but this claim is contradicted by reality. Even in the government-subsidized schools, students must buy uniforms, shoes, and school supplies, and pay supplementary fees. Children will be sent home if they don't bring the required roll of toilet paper and a straw broom for sweeping the compound. Lunch is available, but you must pay for it.

Young children roaming freely in the crowded city neighborhoods are also in peril from another menace that has seen alarming growth in recent years—ritual child mutilation and sacrifice. When we first came to Uganda in 2002, it was almost unheard of. Now at least one child disappears every week, and these are just the reported cases. Parents are piercing their children's ears to discourage sorcerers who prefer a flawless victim.

Coming from this bleak and dangerous environment, it is truly remarkable that our children not only survive, they blossom. Education gives them hope, and hope gives them purpose. They love learning and they thrive in the social atmosphere that school provides. They enthusiastically participate in sports, music, dance, and drama. They wear their uniforms proudly and are thankful for the daily school lunch. Their overall health improves through the medical care that we provide, allowing parents and guardians to use their meager resources for food and rent.



Joshua serving lunch

Given the opportunity, improved nutrition, and the right tools, many of our children achieve an amazing level of academic success and begin to develop leadership potential. Here are a few examples of students who distinguished themselves in the first school term of 2014.

Leticia is in sixth grade and will be twelve in August. Her father died when she was four and her mother is HIV positive. When mom is able to work, she cooks food at Owino, the large open-air market in Kampala, for twelve dollars per week. Leticia has two sisters in high school and the girls alternate between staying with their mother and their grandmother, depending on the food situation at home.



Leticia attends Kasubi Family Primary School and placed 1st in her class of 117 students. Her best subject was English and she also earned a Distinction in Social Studies.

Sophia will turn eleven in July and is in sixth grade at Alund'Entono Primary School. Her mother died unexpectedly when she was three. Her father struggles with substance abuse and the household is held together by her older sister and brother, Paraskevi and George. We've had to provide the children with food and clothing during tough times.



Sophia placed 1st in her class of 33 and was our top ranking student in upper primary. She earned Distinctions in all five of her subjects with Social Studies being the best. She loves singing and dancing in school performances and is recognized by her teachers as responsible and trustworthy.

Joyce is fourteen years old and is in seventh grade, her final year of primary school. She and her sister Jovia live with their Aunt Elizabeth and eleven other children in a two-room house. They are what we call "virtual orphans." Their mother abandoned the girls to Auntie when Joyce was two. Their father later went mad and was sent to the village. Elizabeth supports the family by cooking food at a local "takeaway."



Joyce placed 1st in her class of 41 at Bugolo Junior School and was the top performer among all of our P7 students. She earned Distinctions in Math, her best subject, and in Science and Social Studies. She's a confident and outgoing girl and we know she'll shine in high school next year.

These girls would not have had a chance to excel without your support and your prayers. Thank you for being a part of their success.

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.