

# St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter September 2013

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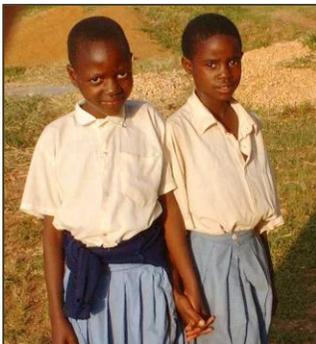
"A faithful friend is like a safe shelter; whoever finds one has found a treasure."

—Sirach 6:14



There is a town on the Kampala-Entebbe highway called "**Abayita Ababiri.**" The name is derived from a traditional proverb of the Baganda people: "*Abayita ababiri, bejjukanya.*" The general meaning is that "two who travel together look out for each other." Similar wisdom can be found in Ecclesiastes Chapter 4: "Two are better than one . . . for if they fall, one will lift up the other."

One of the more rewarding aspects of this ministry is seeing close friendships develop among our children. It happens at all levels—from kindergarten through university. When friends from high school who are now attending different colleges meet by chance at our office, they greet each other with hugs, laughter, and tears. In each school that our students attend, they form a little family of brothers and sisters. New students are welcomed into the family by older students whose own friendships have stood the test of time.

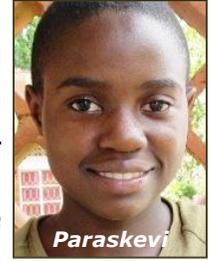


Brenda & Paraskevi in '05

Brenda never knew her mother and lost her father when she was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. She's lived with a stepmother ever since. Paraskevi's mother died tragically in childbirth seven years ago and her father



Brenda



Paraskevi

struggles with substance abuse. The girls' closeness and the St. Nicholas family have been the two constants in their lives. They're polite, humble, well-behaved, and very serious about their studies. When Paraskevi was recovering from eye surgery, Brenda was always by her side.

**Titus and Ronald** joined our St. Nicholas family in 2007 and they've been best friends ever since. They are excellent students and completed high school at Mengo Senior School (*Newsletter June '13*), studying together every evening. Ronald's father died when he was a baby. His mother, who has health problems, struggles to support the family by selling vegetables from a stand near their home. Titus lost both of his parents when he was too young to remember and was raised by his widowed HIV-positive brother. He declined to stay in a university dormitory so that he would be available at home to help his brother during his frequent illnesses.

Both boys are in their first semester at Makerere University in Kampala studying Biomedical Laboratory Technology. Only one third of all applicants to Makerere are admitted, so it's quite an accomplishment for them to have been accepted into this difficult health science degree program.



Sharon with Titus and Ronald

**Edith, Jerin, Janey, and Joweria** are four little girls in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who are inseparable. If one of them has a need, they all come to our office together. Like most young children, these girls are amazingly resilient when it comes to the difficult circumstances of their lives.



Edith is one of our "virtual orphans." Both parents are living, but they provide scant support to her and her brother Charles. Their mother began to show symptoms of advanced HIV yet refused to be tested.

Fear and anxiety deranged her mind and she was taken by her family to the village. Edith and Charles are looked after by an out-of-work half-brother and a half-sister who was a teenage mom. Their father, who has a second family, occasionally drops off food at their house. The children know that they can come to us whenever their food at home runs out.

Jerin and Janey both lost their fathers when they were small. Jerin's mother was left with a small three-room house and rents out one of the rooms to supplement the meager income she earns by washing clothes for neighbors. Janey's family had been living in a crumbling house in the middle of a swamp when we made the decision to move them to a high and dry location near our office (Newsletter December '10). We also provided a little



capital for her mother to set up a vegetable stand on the main road which runs through our neighborhood. When school is not in session, we often see Janey helping out at the family business.

Joweria was abandoned by her mother at birth. She is the youngest of more than a dozen orphaned children raised by a

determined grandmother. Tragedy struck last year when Joweria was hit by a car and broke all three bones in her right leg. She was put in a body cast and had to remain immobile for six weeks.



Joweria's chief concern was that she would miss too much school and have to repeat 1<sup>st</sup> grade. We called a family meeting and her older cousin Nulu volunteered to take her in and tutor her until she could return to class. Over time, the bones healed perfectly and the cast was removed. Thanks to Nulu's help, Joweria passed her exams and is one of our top primary school students this year.



*Edith Jerin Joweria Janey*

We offer to you our heartfelt thanks for making these special friendships possible.

*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](http://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.**