

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter September 2016

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"When you become a teenager, you step onto a bridge. The opposite shore is adulthood. The bridge is made of wood. As you cross, it burns behind you."

—Gail Carson Levine



The transition to adulthood is a critical phase. Young people leave childhood behind and take on new roles and responsibilities. It is a time of social, psychological, and emotional change. How successfully a young person accomplishes this transition will determine the nature and quality of his or her future life. The role of parents is to guide their children through the challenging teen years, providing love, advice, and the support system necessary to ease their path to adulthood.

This ministry began by providing for the tangible needs of children who could not afford to go to school. We paid tuition, and provided uniforms, shoes, and school supplies. Every child received daily school lunch and medical care. Progress could be measured by report cards and promotion to the next class. While all of those things are still essential components of our support, the less quantifiable has taken on increasing importance. It is the teaching, guiding, counseling, and loving that eases their transition from nursery school to primary school, then to secondary school and on into adulthood.

University education in Uganda presents an atmosphere very different from high school. Secondary schools are based on the colonial British model where discipline is strict and student life is highly regimented. The university campus, by contrast, is an environment that more closely resembles what you might expect to find in the U.S. and Canada. Students

have control over how and when they study, and are exposed to a rich and varied social setting with others from different cultural backgrounds. We encourage them to make the most of the opportunity.



Ndejje University Campus

We also engage our existing students to welcome the newcomers and help them integrate into campus life. In August, three of our high school graduates embarked upon the university experience. Here are their stories.

Aidah was admitted to Nkumba University to pursue a Bachelor of Laws degree. This is a highly competitive program and intake is limited. Applicants must pass a rigorous pre-entry exam that tests aptitude, analytical & communication skills, and knowledge of contemporary issues such as development, politics, and economics.

Aidah is the youngest of five children and has been with us since she was in third grade. Her father died when she was three, and her mother supported the family by selling secondhand shoes at the sprawling Owino market.



Aidah in 3rd grade and today

Years five and six in Ugandan secondary schools are similar to junior college in the depth and complexity of the subject matter taught. Students focus on three subjects that will prepare them for their desired university course. We work closely with each student to choose the best subject combination consistent with their abilities and career interests. Aidah's subjects were History, Divinity, and Luganda (the local language). She also participated in music, dance, and drama, and was elected prefect. Her exceptional fluency in both English and Luganda combined with natural confidence and determination will serve her well in the courtroom.

Dorah is the oldest of three sisters, all of them excellent students. They lost their father when Dorah was nine and the youngest was four. Their mother is chronically ill and is not always strong enough to work. The three girls have a second home at their grandmother's when times get tough.



Dorah is enrolled at Ndejje University studying Electrical Engineering. Her advanced subjects in high school were Physics, Math, and Economics. She won multiple elections as a school prefect, and enjoyed participating in the school debate club.

Nickson came to us recommended by a caring neighbor whose young children were in our program. His father had died five years earlier, and his mother was unable to afford high school tuition on what she earned as a cleaning lady. Tragically, she passed away before he completed high school and he had to go stay with an uncle.

Nickson attends Nkumba University with Aidah, and is studying for a Bachelor of



Science degree in Tourism Operations and Management. His advanced subject combination in high school consisted of History, Economics, and Geography—ideal for a tourism sector which is experiencing rapid growth in Uganda.

Raising a child to adulthood is difficult, and there are plenty of trying times along the way. The ultimate reward for parents is to see their children take their places in the world as mature and responsible individuals who are equipped to care for and guide their own children. This year we are blessed to have eighteen students graduating from university and vocational training. We pray that we will not just have educated their minds, but also their hearts. Thank you for standing with us through your prayers and your support.

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.



Margaret & Fiona graduate from Medical College