

# St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter

September 2020

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"A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love."  
--St. Basil the Great



## Irene was thirteen years old

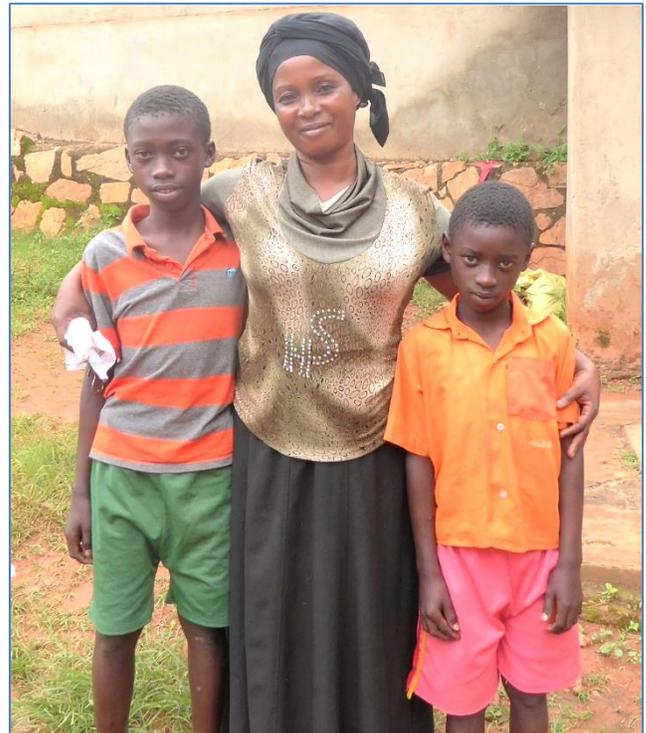
when she applied for school sponsorship with us. She had completed primary school and was waiting for the results of the national exams. Her mother, Milly, had been a cook and cleaner at Irene's primary school. Irene and her sister Mariam were allowed to attend for half tuition as children of an employee. The girls' father had abandoned the family when Milly was pregnant with Mariam.



There is nothing remotely resembling Workers' Compensation in Uganda, so when Milly injured her back at work she was out of a job. Her landlord offered to let the family stay rent-free if Milly would serve as his rental agent. He would also pay her a small stipend for her work. An adult daughter, Maureen, helped provide food, but there was not nearly enough money to pay school fees for Mariam and Irene, especially with Irene advancing to secondary school and Mariam entering first grade. We accepted both girls into our program and they performed well in their studies.

**After almost two years,** Irene came to our office to tell us that the family was struggling and they often went without food. We learned that her older sister Maureen had died in childbirth together

with the baby, and Maureen's three sons were now staying with Irene's family. Now there was no more food assistance from Maureen but there were three more hungry mouths to feed. A niece had also moved in, and her meager income helped a little with feeding, but there was no money to put the boys in school. Milly hadn't come to us for help because she felt that we were already assisting her by sponsoring Irene and Mariam. By the time Irene approached us, the boys had been out of school for eighteen months.



Milly with Calvin's brothers

To ease Milly's financial burden, the youngest boy, Calvin, had been sent to the village to stay with other relatives. He developed an infection in his leg which the village family tried to treat with herbal remedies. We insisted that he return to the city where we confirmed that the infection had entered his bone and that he had developed a severe case of osteomyelitis. We sent him to an



orthopaedic clinic hoping that they could prevent the loss of his leg. For the past few months he's been receiving heavy-duty antibiotics and is showing improvement.



*The family home*

Having agreed to enroll the boys in school, we felt that a home visit was in order. Their "free" apartment was an 8x8 windowless storeroom containing two double bunk beds with no mattresses. Occupying the room were Milly, Irene, Mariam, Calvin and his two brothers, and Milly's niece and her toddler. The best that we could do in this limited space was to provide the family with mattresses, sheets, blankets, and mosquito nets for both bunks.



*Milly and Irene on their new bedding*

Poignant stories like this one may seem incredible to us, but for the poorest of the poor in Uganda they are all too real. With your generosity, we have been able to provide some light in the darkness. Thank you for caring!

*Peter & Sharon*



*Mariam (R) dances in the annual school pageant*

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.**

### **Uganda COVID-19 Update**

There are strong indications that Uganda's schools will begin a phased reopening later this month beginning with candidate classes and university finalists. (Candidate classes are Primary 7, Senior 4, and Senior 6.) We are eagerly anticipating an official announcement from the government.

To date, Uganda has reported 4,377 positive cases and 49 deaths out of a population of around 45 million. Uganda's schools have been closed since March 19<sup>th</sup>. During this time, we've been supporting home-learning programs for our students. We've also redirected our efforts to provide feeding, rent, and healthcare assistance to our most vulnerable families who have been hit the hardest by the economic slowdown.