

St. NICHOLAS Uganda CHILDREN'S FUND

Newsletter

April 2024

Email: info@ugandachildrensfund.org

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."
--Helen Keller



Two men of good character

When we are considering students for admission to this program, we prioritize children in primary school. In addition to providing an education, an important part of this ministry is to raise up a new generation of young people grounded in integrity and strong moral values. When a student has been in our "family" since primary school, they are much less likely to misbehave in secondary school. But for most students in their mid to late teens, their character has already been formed and counselling often falls upon deaf ears. There have been exceptions, however, and this newsletter features two young men that we took a chance on and who have not disappointed.

Charles lost his father when he was seven and his mother died eight years later. After her death, he and his two brothers were taken in by their maternal aunt who was caring for four young children of her own. As their aunt was not able to support three more children, Charles apprenticed himself to an experienced carpenter and earned enough money to pay for his final year of primary school. He found a sponsor for O Level secondary school and convinced the school to hire him to do carpentry work.

His sponsoring organization supported students through Senior 4, so Charles came to us asking for our help to attend A Level (Senior 5 & 6). At this time, we were already sponsoring his brothers in primary

school. His results on the national exams were very good and we were impressed with his work ethic, so we enrolled him in Senior 5 as a day scholar. He turned down the opportunity to be a boarding student because he was doing carpentry in his free time to augment the household income. He was admitted to Ndejje University for a degree in business administration, and attended evening classes so he could work during the day.



Charles and his handiwork

After graduation, Charles was hired by a real estate management company and enjoyed the work. After a few years, he started his own company and is building a client base. He is also the area chairperson for the Association of Real Estate Agents in Uganda (AREA) whose mission is to regulate the real estate industry in the country.

As a leader in the community, he established a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO) that operates out of his real estate office. This is a voluntary organization that encourages savings and makes credit available to its members at reasonable interest rates. Charles has expanded the vision beyond finance, and this SACCO provides additional benefits such as financial support in case of death of a member or a close relative, and emergency medical support. Starting with thirty members, they now have ninety-two shareholders, and the number is growing.



Michael's parents died when he was in primary school. He stayed with his grandmother in a village until he completed primary, then he came to Kampala and was taken in by an older brother. A cousin was principal of a secondary school and Michael was able to attend at a reduced rate. He also contributed by writing and composing the school's anthem.

Michael's world collapsed when his cousin left the school and his brother got married and moved away. He was doing odd jobs to survive and sleeping on the verandah of a church. A compassionate lady, a church member whose children were grown, took him into her home. She worked in a restaurant and obtained a job there for Michael. With his earnings, he was able to pay partial tuition for Senior 5. He now owed a lot of money to the school and could not advance to Senior 6, his final year, until the payments were current. That's when he found his way to our office.

We listened to his story, met his "auntie," and agreed to sponsor him through Senior 6. Michael was our second-best performer on the national exams and was accepted by Ndejje University to study for a degree in Computer Science with Education. He worked as a teacher and then an assistant principal, supplementing his income by working as a chef during school breaks.

As computer studies became mandatory in secondary schools, Michael wrote and

published a textbook to align with the required curriculum. When COVID closed Uganda's schools for almost two years, he got a job as a loan officer with a finance company. During this time, he gathered a group of out-of-work teachers and organized private classes for our secondary students.



Michael is now a Credit Supervisor with a major Savings & Loan company in Kampala. He is married with two lovely daughters.



With our support, encouragement, and guidance, these two young men have survived and thrived. They have broken the cycle of poverty into which they were born and have become strong men of good character. Thank you for being an essential part of this ministry!

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
Zelle info@ugandachildrensfund.org

The St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.