

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund

Newsletter

August 2022

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"Self-esteem is made up of primarily two things: feeling lovable and feeling capable."

—Jack Canfield



Referrals to our organization can be problematic. They tend to fall into one of two categories: coerced or concerned. A woman may perceive that her neighbor's children have a school sponsor and pressure her for a referral to the sponsor's office. During the interview process, the applicant rarely divulges the name of her neighbor, usually attributing the referral to "someone she met on the street." One of our main criteria for determining need is if the children have not been in school for the past year or more. In most cases, the applicants in this scenario are just looking for an upgrade.

Then there are referrals made from true concern. Caroline's children have been in our program for many years, and she had never sent a friend or neighbor to us until she told us about Lydia. It was obvious that Lydia was depressed. She was subdued, downcast, and clearly overwhelmed by the challenges that she was facing as a single mother. She was so dejected that she was almost incapable of articulating her needs.

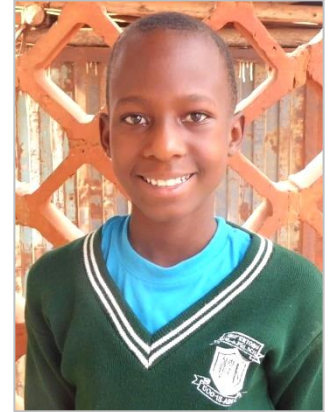
Lydia and her common-law husband had been together for ten years and had produced three children. Their life was a struggle, but he earned enough to keep the children in an inexpensive primary school. Three years ago, he left for eastern Uganda looking for a better job and never returned.

Lydia, who did not complete high school, found work as a part-time cleaning lady and was able to earn enough money to feed the children and pay the rent on their one-

room flat. No schooling in Uganda is free, and there was no money left over for the children's education. At the time of Lydia's interview, Peter, Rose and Esther had not seen the inside of a classroom for over a year.



Esther



Rose

We accept students based on need, not academic performance, and we've found that when children have been out of school for a while, it takes them some time to catch up and get back into a learning mode. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that the three had immediately risen to the top of their classes. Reviewing their latest report cards, we saw that each of them earned Distinctions in all their subjects.

Esther is in fourth grade and ranked third in a class of sixty students. Her best subject was English. Rose, in fifth grade, ranked third in a class of sixty-five students. Her best subject was Science. Peter, in sixth grade, was not only first in his class



Peter

of sixty students but was the best overall performer of all our primary school students. His best subject was Math. According to their class teachers' comments, Esther is self-driven, Rose is responsible and caring, and Peter is hardworking and cooperative.

Adult Education

Single mothers like Lydia become trapped in the day-to-day struggle to support their children and have no prospect of improving their financial situation. To this end, we initiated a partnership with the YWCA Vocational Training Institute in Kampala whose mission is to advance the social and economic empowerment of women and girls. Together we developed a customized course in special cookery designed to teach the women skills in preparing a variety of foods that they could sell in their neighborhoods. An unexpected benefit of this effort was the transformation of their self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Lydia gradually emerged from her depression and became the leader of the group.

Upon completion of the course, we presented each of the ladies with a digital weighing scale and an official YWCA polo shirt.



Lydia is second from right

Olivia was six years old when her mother died. Her brother, Davis, was two. Five years later they lost their father. When we met them, they were staying with an uncle who earned a meager living by walking through the neighborhoods selling seasonal vegetables and fruits. Olivia had been out of school for almost two years and agreed to repeat the last class in which she participated. She completed secondary school and was admitted to Ndejje University for a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication.

After graduation, Olivia worked temporary jobs as an editor in radio and television which led to a full-time position with the Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Awareness Network (SHYNEA). With only four employees, Olivia IS the Communications Department. She is responsible for public relations and manages the website and other social media. She also plans and implements training for neighborhood volunteers.



If it were not for your support and your prayers, Lydia's children may never have had the opportunity to reach their academic potential, and university would have remained an unfulfilled dream for Olivia. Thank you for giving them hope and a promising future!

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
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