

St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund Newsletter

March 2013

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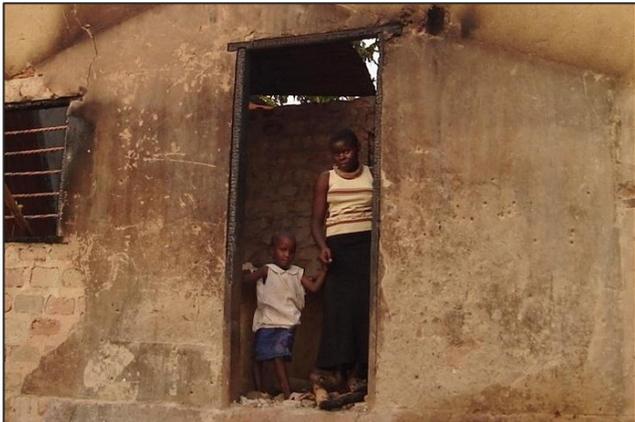
"The blind receive their sight,
the lame walk . . . and the
good news is proclaimed to the
poor."

—Matthew 11:5



Out of the ashes . . .

On a beautiful day in July almost five years ago, we arrived at our office to find three forlorn teenage girls waiting for us. Winfred, Rosemary, and Mable stood there in ill-fitting outfits and tearfully told us that their house had caught fire. Along with all the furniture and household goods, their clothes had gone up in flames. What they were wearing was borrowed from neighbors and had to be returned. The only other clothes they had were their school uniforms.



Jovia and Rosemary in the burned house

The three girls had been in our program for less than a year. Winnie and Rosemary are sisters and Mable is a cousin-sister. At the time of the fire, Winnie was in Senior Four, and the other two were in Senior Two. All three were motherless, and Mable's father was a hopeless alcoholic. Mable stayed with the other girls, and their father, Geoffrey, became a father to Mable. Geoffrey was

an itinerant construction worker and supported the family by looking for day labor jobs at building sites around Kampala.

More than half of the mud-brick house collapsed because of the intense heat. After visiting the site to assess the damage, we responded by providing bunk beds, mattresses, and bedding. We also gave the girls some cash to buy clothes.

It was while we were at the house that we first met Jovia, the girls' five-year-old sister. We noticed Jovia's deformed legs and were told that she had "weak bones." From when she was a toddler she was unable to walk normally, and her leg bones would break if she moved too vigorously. Her father had taken her to Mulago, the government referral hospital, but they were unable to help. The sisters enrolled Jovia in school, carrying her to and from class every day.



We began looking for a way to do something for Jovia. We spent months contacting orthopedic surgeons until we finally found a charitable orthopedic hospital about an hour from our office. "Yes," they said. "Bring the girl to us."

Jovia's initial consultation was in October, 2010, and they operated in November. The actual surgery was free, and we paid all the ancillary charges—consults, x-rays, meds, and in-patient fees. They inserted surgical metal rods to straighten her legs, and we sent her back every few months for x-rays to ascertain her progress.



A year after the initial operation, the rods were replaced (her legs were growing!). Jovia was now able to walk to and from school. Two months ago, the rods were finally removed. Jovia is now in Primary 4, walks to school every day, and actively plays like all the

other children. She is also one of our top performing primary school students. If it had not been for the disaster of the fire, Jovia might not be walking today.

The Three Sisters

Jovia's mother died giving birth to her. She was raised by her big sisters who love her like a daughter. The three girls have proven to be excellent students and young women of high integrity.



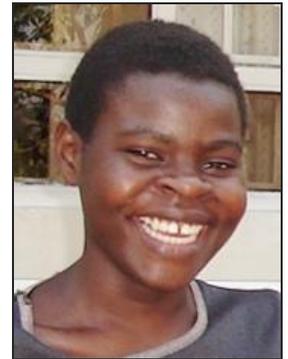
Winfred completed high school with outstanding results and was our first student to earn a university tuition scholarship. She is in her second year at Kyambogo University, working towards a Bachelor's degree in Science with Education. Good high school science teachers are in great demand in Uganda and we have a position waiting for her at the high school our teens attend.



Mable, who completed high school in November, has had a tragic life. Her mother died when she was three and her father's

alcoholism made him incapable of providing for her. His death two years ago made her an orphan in fact, though in reality she had been orphaned long ago. Mable will be entering Nkumba University in August, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Rosemary may be the most brilliant of them all. She completed high school with Mable and earned the highest score on the Uganda national exam of any student who has come through our program—and she did it carrying a science combination of Chemistry, Physics, Math, and Nutrition. Her dream is to go into the medical field. This year's scholarships will be announced in May. We're excited about her prospects and we know that she will excel in whatever she does.



With the help of this organization, three very bright young women are receiving university educations and one little girl is running and dancing. Thank you for being an indispensable part of what we do through your donations and your prayers. May God bless you abundantly in this Lenten season and as we approach the light of His glorious Resurrection.

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.