

# St. Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund

## Newsletter

September 2024

Email: [info@ugandachildrensfund.org](mailto:info@ugandachildrensfund.org)

"Never underestimate someone's potential when you give them the gift of trust and faith."

—Robin Crow



### University-Bound

We have often stated that children are admitted to our program based on need, not academic potential. Therefore, it is always rewarding when our students achieve academic success. At the end of Senior 6, their final year of high school, students sit for national exams, the results of which determine the next level of their education—either university or vocational school. Our students attend Munta Royal College, one of the best secondary schools in the district just north of Kampala. This past year, Munta Royal had one hundred twenty students sit for the exams. Four of our students ranked in the top ten in the entire class. Overall, seven of our eight finalists qualified for university.

Three of the seven expressed a desire to attend Law School. Nkumba University offers a Bachelor of Laws degree, and students must pass a pre-law exam to be accepted into the program. All three of our students passed and have begun their first semester.

**Jovia**, one of our three law students, has been with us since she was in Primary Two (second grade). Her mother died when she was an infant, and she was raised by two teenage sisters. Not understanding the nutritional needs of a developing child, the older girls fed her on a diet of traditional starchy foods and tea. Lacking calcium, Jovia's legs did not develop properly, and they would break if she tried to walk. We first met Jovia when the sisters joined our program in high school. She had

previously been examined at Mulago, the government referral hospital in Kampala, but they were unable to help. After much research and many phone calls, we found an orthopedic clinic about an hour from our office. "Yes," they said. "Bring the girl to us."

They inserted surgical metal rods to straighten and strengthen her legs, and we sent her back every few months to ascertain her progress. We supplemented her diet with calcium tabs and multi-vitamins, and a year after the initial operation the rods were replaced. Her legs were growing! By the following year, the rods were removed, and Jovia was able to walk, skip, and run normally. During the procedures, she never complained about the pain or discomfort.



Jovia's sisters both graduated from university with first class honors (equivalent to summa cum laude). Her older brother is in his final year of university, completing an engineering degree. Perhaps because she was coddled as a young child, Jovia's performance in primary school was barely above average, showing little signs of the family genius and little ambition to improve. She began to get serious in high school, and by her Senior 5 year, she must have realized that she had the capability to rise to the top of the class. On the national exam, she and two of our other finalists tied for the second-best score in the school. Now in the first semester of law school, she has emerged as the spokesperson for our group of freshmen.



**Joshua** never knew his father and was raised by a single mom. Her income from selling fish had been sufficient to pay his school fees through Primary Two. When he was eight years old, his mother went to the shores of Lake Victoria to buy wholesale fish for resale. While she was gone, she left Joshua with "Aunt" Anna, a neighbor. When Anna learned that his mother had died at the lake, Joshua was passed off to Josephine, another neighbor, to work as a houseboy. Josephine's husband lost his job, and they moved back to the village, leaving nine-year-old Joshua alone in the teeming city to fend for himself. An elderly gentleman who lived nearby had pity for him and took him into his home.

He couldn't afford to pay for school, so he brought Joshua to our office. What began as a temporary act of mercy turned into a thirteen-year relationship, and Joshua continues to stay with him during the school breaks.



Joshua was an average student through primary and O Level secondary school. We had him slotted for vocational school after the Senior 4 exams, but he managed to marginally qualify for A Level (Senior 5) and we agreed to give him a chance. He



made the most of the opportunity, and when the final exam results were released, he earned his opportunity for university. Joshua is now in his first semester at Ndejje University, studying for a bachelor's degree in information technology.

**Shadia and Aisha** joined our program when they were in Primary 5. They were living with their mother and four younger brothers in an unfinished house with no

doors or windows. The family knew that they were going to be evicted when the owner completed construction. The children were wearing the only items of clothing that they had. Shadia was the elder by two years but had missed more schooling. Both girls are very bright and finished 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> among our students in both the Primary Leaving Exams and the O Level secondary exams. Shadia is one of our first-year law students, and Aisha is studying for a Bachelor of Science degree in public health.



*Back row: Aisha, Public Health; Shadia, Law; Karim, Law; Juma, Finance.  
Front row: Shirah, Business; Diana, InfoTech; Jovia, Law; Joshua, InfoTech.*

When each of these children entered our lives, we wept over how they had suffered. Now, years later, we rejoice that they have become young adults who are confident and capable. Thank you for partnering with us in 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](http://www.ugandachildrensfund.org)

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