

ChildLine

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The newsletter of the Uganda AIDS Orphan Children Foundation

www.UAOCF.org

A New Year, and Many Thankful Children

As you may know, the children we support write letters to their sponsors at the end of every school term. We'd like to share with you some of the things the children had to say in the last batch of letters we received, last August. Even at their young age, they can communicate the enormity of what your donations make possible far more eloquently than we can:

Moreen A. is 16 years old. Her father died when she was just an infant and she lives with her mother, who is also sick. She has been in the UAOCF program since our first years in operation: "I have written this letter to thank you for whatever you have been giving me, may you continue with that loving

heart. I am very happy because of being in a nice school like this one. Everything I need can be provided by you my loving dear one. Other children are suffering without someone's love. Why me? How lucky I am to be able to get one. The good Lord... may he reward you abundantly for everything you have been giving me such as clothes, school fees, scholastic materials plus your parental love and care."

Benjamin T., also 16, has been sponsored by UAOCF for five years. He lost his father in 2001. He wrote these beautiful words to his sponsor: "Oh dear, I have no way of expressing my impression of your caring and humane ability that

you are contributing to my success in life...Not only your beneficiary Benjamin feels it but also our entire family do feel proud of your charitable work towards me... However advanced level is hard with a lot of challenges, I promise to continue struggling harder not to let you down."

With tens of thousands of orphans in this part of Uganda, it is not surprising that Moreen would ask, "Why me?" Benjamin answered her question: it is because of you, and the care and love you show these children. They are grateful, and so are all of us at UAOCF.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

~Nelson Mandela

Success Stories

What happens to the children we sponsor once they finish high school? Can they continue their education? These are questions we have been asked by our donors, and together with our colleagues in Kabale, we have been actively exploring the options available. (This is one of the topics we will be discussing at Heart to Heart in a few weeks – please join us!)

For three of the children we have supported, those questions have already been answered. We consider these to be great success stories: orphans facing a life of stigma and desperation whose futures were changed forever thanks to the generous heart of a stranger.

Jennifer K. was one of the first children to be "adopted" through UAOCF. She worked hard to take advantage of that gift and to thank her sponsor in the best way possible: setting high goals and reaching them. And reach them she did! Recently she received a nursing scholarship. For any Ugandan student, this is a most impressive achievement. This is what every parent hopes for: to see their child blossom and become an

adult, able to care for herself and become a vital, contributing member of her community. Jennifer's sponsor must feel very proud.

Isaiah A. is another UAOCF-sponsored child who is going on to further studies. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of his sponsor, Isaiah has enrolled in the Kiyori Teachers Training School. Like Jennifer, his education will allow him to meet a critical need in his community, and to give to a new generation of students the same wonderful gift that was given to him: a good education.

The letter that Meresi K. sent her sponsor in August tells of her success (and gratitude) as well: writing from the Tourism and Hotel Training Institute, she reports that she started her industrial training in the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in September. This National Park is a UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site; approximately half of all the critically endangered mountain gorillas in the world live there. So Meresi too has set herself on a path to make an important contribution and improve her community, her country, her world.

Is it a coincidence that all of these young people have chosen to further

their education in a way that not only provides for their future, but serves their community as well? We at UAOCF don't think it is. The letters we shared with you above demonstrate that the children we "adopt" understand and value the gift they have been given. It comes as no surprise that they would want to share that gift with others. Our greatest hope at UAOCF is not just to change the lives of individual children, but to enable change that reaches their entire community. Now we see our hope become reality!

You are invited to
HEART TO HEART
Our annual donor celebration

Sunday, February 21
4pm in the SJA Parish Hall
(just east of SJA School
at 11561 Gateway Blvd.)

Wine, cheese and appetizers
A brief progress report

We hope to see you there!

Third Term Evaluation Report

At UAOCF, we feel it is important that we keep you up to date on how our children – *your* children – are doing. Our staff in Kabale give us a report at the end of each school term summarizing the children’s activities and the successes and challenges they faced during the term. Here is what they told us about the third and final term of 2009.

For the first time ever, some of our children have taken the final exam to graduate from high school. Twenty-four UAOCF children are currently awaiting the results of their exam. Congratulations!

The overwhelming majority of our students – 90% - finished the school year with good scores and

were promoted to the next grade. Considering that virtually all of our children start at a disadvantage, this is an impressive showing. Before being “adopted” into the UAOCF program, all were attending poor public schools (or no school at all), and they had a lot of catching up to do. Our staff report that our children performed better in the third term than in the second, and that the administrators and staff of the

Kindness trumps greed: it asks for sharing. Kindness trumps fear: it calls forth gratefulness and love. Kindness trumps even stupidity, for with sharing and love, one learns.
~Marc Estrin

schools they attend have been working hard to help our students.

Some end of term reports we have received in the past detailed a number of serious health problems that children encountered (malaria, etc.) Like all children, we expect our children to suffer minor ailments from time to time. Happily, we saw very little serious illness this term. Only one child was ill enough that she was not able to finish the term. We will continue to follow her progress as her health improves and she is able to return to her studies.

In short, our Kabale staff’s visits to the schools, and the children’s performance reports revealed that this has been a successful year. Our staff concluded that the children’s health and performance was good. May 2010 bring more of the same!



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Support for UAOCF Growing, Spreading

UAOCF was born at St. Joan of Arc Parish in West Los Angeles. We have been, and continue to be, tremendously grateful to the support that Fr. Jim Barnes and the entire Joan of Arc community give us. That generosity has spread to new communities, allowing us to help more and more children.

Thanks largely to the efforts of a new UAOCF volunteer, Michelle Nicholas Inoscencio, St. Cyprian’s parish has joined in support of UAOCF. Michelle led a “Change for Change” program with 3rd, 4th and 5th graders at St. Cyprian’s, with the children contributing change to help our orphans. Michelle also worked

Congratulations!
Melissa Lee and David Brodie have volunteered their time and effort to make a video to promote UAOCF. In November, these wonderful and generous young people were married. All of us at UAOCF wish them a lifetime of happiness!

with the pastor, Fr. Jason Souza, to put up a Giving Tree before Christmas, which led to \$2500 in donations! Thank you Michelle, Fr. Souza and all of St. Cyprian’s!

St. Paul the Apostle parish also contributed to our organization in 2009. With the support of their pastor, Fr. John Ardis, this generous parish gave 5% of the donations they received on December 13th to UAOCF: enough to support three more children. Thank you!

In December, we received an amazing donation out of the blue: a very large check from Agape in Austin, Texas! We don’t know where this group learned about us, but we are grateful and humbled by their generosity.

Even in the terrible economy of 2009, more people opened their hearts and wallets to help these orphans. To all of our supporters, old and new, we say this: you are our angels.

If you would like to adopt a child (\$350 a year) or send a donation in any amount, please make your check payable to UAOCF and mail it to: P.O. Box 64485, Los Angeles, CA 90064. Or call 310-479-8396. You can also donate with a credit card on our website: www.UAOCF.org.