

ChildLine

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The newsletter of the Uganda AIDS Orphan Children Foundation

www.UAOCF.org

UAOCF to Celebrate 10th Anniversary!

In October, 2013, UAOCF will celebrate our 10th anniversary. It's hard to believe! We've come a long way, from Fr. Fred's dream of helping orphan children to the reality of hundreds of lives changed forever.

Planning for this anniversary is one of the main reasons we want to invite you to this year's Heart to Heart celebration. We need your ideas and energy! To help inspire you, we will have a wonderful guest speaker at Heart to Heart: Sr. Enda Gregan, DMJ.

Sr. Enda and her sister, Sr. Mary Rose Gregan, are both members of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph (DMJ) religious community. Both

have spent their careers working in schools. Sr. Enda has taught for decades in California, including at St. Sebastian's and, currently, at St. Paul the Apostle in Los Angeles. Like her sister, Sr. Mary Rose taught for 25 years in California. She then moved to Uganda, where she worked for nearly another quarter century. She helped train young Ugandans to be primary school teachers, and was one of the founders of the Maria Goretti School in Kabale that many UAOCF children attend.

The DMJ continue to be active in Uganda, with a mission that often overlaps with our own. They recently built a new primary school in a very rural area of the country where there had not been a school before and where, like the areas UAOCF serves, there are many orphans.

Sr. Enda will speak at Heart to Heart about the DMJ's important work for the children of Uganda, including a short video featuring the new DMJ school there.

So please join us for our 9th Annual Donor Celebration and help us plan our 10th anniversary party!

Heart to Heart

Sunday, February 10

4 PM: appetizers and drinks

5 PM: program begins

St. Joan of Arc Parish Hall

11533 Gateway Blvd.

(just west of Pico)

Los Angeles, CA 90064

A sad reality – and one that UAOCF is changing

In 2011, an organization called Uwezo conducted its annual education survey in Uganda. Among its findings: At least 90% of children in P3 (the third year of primary school) could not read a P2-level English story. Among children in P4, 10.5% could not even recognize the letters of the alphabet, and a further 25% could only recognize letters but not read. Other findings showed that children whose parents visit their school and whose mothers are educated performed better in English and math. Orphans, of course, even if they are in school, do not have a parent to visit their school or an educated mother to help them. They are at even greater risk than the average Ugandan child.

Knowing this makes the stories of UAOCF children's successes even more powerful. Take the case of Mackline K. The youngest of four children, Mackline's father died of AIDS shortly before her fifth birthday. We don't know what kind of education she may have received during the first years of her

life, but the Uwezo report suggests she would not have learned much. The prospects for her future would have been grim.

Mackline joined the UAOCF program in 2006, when she was ten years old, and that's when everything changed. She graduated from primary school and is now in the second year of secondary school. Here's part of the lovely, articulate letter she sent her UAOCF sponsor this past July:

"I would like to tell you that this term, I managed to get first grade, being the 4th out of 63 students...I will read hard so as not to let you down. You helped me so much, to see that I am in school. By this time, I wouldn't be studying. Some of my friends are there in the village, not even knowing how to either read or write."

Mackline didn't need the Uwezo report to know what her future would have been without the education UAOCF has provided her. That's why she is so appreciative and wants to make her sponsor proud. We are proud of her, and all our children. We're proud of Celestine, who took part in the National Mathematics Contest and finished 34th in the entire country. We're proud of Bridget, who is becoming a midwife. We're proud of Joseph and Florence, Marius and

Annita, of every UAOCF child who is working so hard to make the most of the gifts he or she has been given. And we're proud and eternally grateful to have the support of the sponsors who make all this possible. We share the sentiments of Celestine, our amazing mathematician: *"You should not also forget that the hand that gives is also the hand that receives. So the more you continue to help the needy like I am, the more blessings you get from God."*



Mackline in 2006, an uncertain 10-year-old just starting her journey with UAOCF. How her life has changed!

★★★★★★★★★★

It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.

Mother Theresa

★★★★★★★★★★



Christmas Giving Tree report

Every year, UAOCF collects special donations through our Christmas Giving Trees to provide gifts and necessities for our children. This year, three generous parishes participated in our Giving Tree program: St. Joan of Arc, St. Cyprian's of Long Beach, and Good Shepherd of Beverly Hills. With the help of these parishes, we raised more money than ever, even in these troubled economic times. We were able to send each child a monetary gift that was used to buy new clothing and shoes as well as other items. The children are so grateful, as are we at UAOCF. Thank you to all who made this possible.

Ralphs Reminder

Yes, it's that time again: time to remind everyone who hasn't yet signed up for the Ralphs Community Giving Program to sign up now! Even if you have signed up in the past, remember you must renew your participation every September. Otherwise, you could spend thousands of dollars at Ralphs and it wouldn't help UAOCF at all. How much help are we talking about? In 2012, with only a relative handful of registered shoppers, UAOCF received almost \$1000 from Ralphs! We call it "painless giving" because it doesn't cost you a penny more than you'd otherwise spend. So it doesn't make a difference to you, but it makes a huge difference to our children.

It's easy to sign up. Our website has everything you need:

http://uaocf.org/painless_giving.html

That includes a letter you can give to a checker at any Ralphs. The checker will scan the letter, and that's it! You'll be registered to have a percentage of the money you spend donated to UAOCF.

If you need a hand with this, we're happy to help. Give us a call at 310-479-8396 and let us know; we'll just mail you the letter and you won't have to worry about how to download or print it. Think of it this way: you buy this week's groceries and that gives us the money to feed an orphan. Next week's groceries might buy a child a pair of shoes, or the school books she needs. It's literally food for thought!



P.O. Box 64485
Los Angeles, CA 90064



Status report: Our children's progress

Currently, there are 348 primary and secondary school students in our program. In addition, we support five UAOCF children who graduated from secondary school and are enrolled in institutions of higher learning, as well as four who are in vocational school.

We received the latest grade report at the end of the Summer 2012 school term. We would expect that the longer a student is in the UAOCF program, the more progress he or she will make and the more the grades will improve. This is indeed what we see: overall grades are steadily going up. In spite of the fact that they likely

received very poor (if any) education before joining UAOCF and they now attend the best boarding schools in their districts, 69% of our children now rank in the upper 50th percentile of all students in their schools. Four placed first in their class. As noted in an earlier story, one of our children placed 34th in the country on the National Math Test; another came in first in the entire district of Kabale on the high school entrance exam.

We monitor our children's health to ensure they receive all necessary care. Many suffer from malaria, which is an endemic disease in this part of Africa. All UAOCF children are tested for

HIV; 15 of those in the program currently are HIV-positive. All receive appropriate medications, supplied free of charge by the government. Only one has experienced symptoms severe enough to affect his school attendance.

In short, our children are doing well. We work hard to ensure that they continue to thrive, both academically and physically.

To adopt a child (\$350 a year) or donate any amount, please send a check (payable to UAOCF) to: P.O. Box 64485, Los Angeles, CA 90064. You can also call 310-479-8396, or use your credit card to donate via our website: www.UAOCF.org.