



UGANDA UPDATE JANUARY 2019



Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings to you all. An update is due!

I (Mary) returned home from a 5-week trip to Africa on November 5th. Week One was spent in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where we caught up with friends and sponsored children there – “we” being myself and Sheila Royle, our friend from Bridgnorth, who has been a long-term supporter of our work and accompanied me on 5 trips to Africa.

On October 6th we attended the wedding of Moses’ elder brother, Zemen, to Bethlehem. What a happy occasion – very different from an English wedding with photos taken in the street! Moses came up from Uganda and was one of the five Best Men. We also visited their new home in a condominium block of flats. They make a lovely couple – so happy together and well-suited. May God bless their marriage!



On October 8th we headed down to Uganda and were met in the “Green Lady” (our very old car!) by Aaron and Ben, two long-standing team members. We stayed at the home of Valerie Crowhurst in Mukono – the English friend and missionary who runs a centre for disabled children, with whom we network. It is a safe and very convenient place to stay. Moses lives in a two-roomed apartment in her compound. We are truly blessed by her hospitality.



The first week culminated in the official opening of our Starfish Clinic on October 13th. This is situated in a very rural setting in Kayunga District, about 2 hours drive from Mukono. Sheila has been the main funder for the refurbishment of the clinic building – formerly Hope Christian High School. A wonderful job has been done to transform the premises into an attractive, hygienic clinic with facilities and equipment for physiotherapy - so many of our

“Making a difference –one by one”

young patients are disabled children. We now have 54 on file! This requires a lot of follow-up work. We have two full-time paid workers – an orthopaedic clinician (in charge), and a nurse. They live together in a room at the back of the premises. Felix, the Lay Reader from St Luke’s church, Namusaala, is also a very active Starfish team member. He mobilises patients, helps sensitise the community about the clinic and takes Flavia (our orthopaedic officer) for home visiting on his boda-boda (motorbike.) Not all patients can access the clinic and some homes can only be reached by motorbike.



The clinic opening was a very happy occasion, well-attended by local people and many patients and families. Two of our older disabled young men gave testimonies, Ben Lotet acting as interpreter. Refreshments followed the ceremony and a good time was had by all. We pray for God’s blessing on this venture – the potential to help many is enormous.



The clinic comes under the “umbrella” of our now officially registered Christian NGO - “Starfish Foundation” - based on the poem about stranded starfish on a beach being rescued one by one and returned to the ocean. Our motto is “Making a difference – one by one.”

Our sponsored families also come under Starfish Foundation – we have many children for whom we pay school fees and medical bills and generally help in times of crisis. No NHS or Benefit System in Uganda! This involves many home visits and liaising with schools.



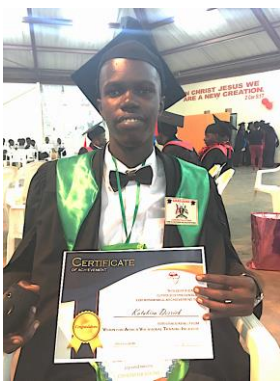
We now have an official Starfish Office in Mukono, thanks to the generous offer of Aaron and Christine Mbalule. They have re-organised their own home to accommodate an efficient, well-run office which is proving a great Headquarters for the Foundation. Aaron and Moses work so well together, sharing what has become a very busy organisation. Aaron’s daughter, Ruth, is a qualified accountant and has been a great help to Moses. Plans are in place to make her our full-time Administrator/Accountant.

“Making a difference –one by one”

The on-going HOPAM Widows and Orphans Group still meets regularly at St Andrew's church, Misindye. Our Secretary, James Lubega, has increasing medical problems and has needed a lot of support which will be on-going, especially with eye problems. He is in his late 70's and has faithfully over-seen the running of the group for over 20 years. What a faithful, committed man...



The hostel in Mukono continues to function – the rent providing school fees for HOPAM members' children and grandchildren. Ben Lotet oversees the running of the hostel, liaising with Patrick SSebyaala, the Global Care Representative in Kampala.



Our last, but not least, area of ministry is "Empowerment" for independent living. This is ongoing as we seek to see children through Primary and Secondary education and on to Vocational Training or University. It is very encouraging to see positive results. Derrick Katabira is now a qualified electrician and car driver and it was thrilling to attend the graduation of Ivan Duku, who had an arm



amputated years ago. He has gained a Second Class Honours degree in Human Resource Management from Uganda Christian University and is now job-hunting.



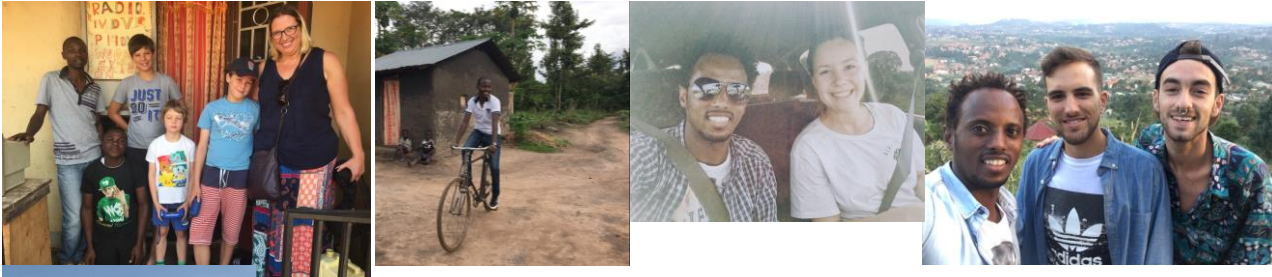
Luis, our first "patient" and a paraplegic, is training to be a Radio Presenter and attends UMCAT School of Journalism in Kampala. He is loving city life and coping admirably.

We have two older lads who are now at Kyambogo University studying "Education" and we are keeping them there by faith! If anyone feels they would like to help them, we would be delighted!



So – as you can see if you have read thus far, Starfish Foundation is very busy! Many thanks to all who make it possible through your prayers and practical support. Friends visiting from overseas have been a great encouragement. Networking is vital as we seek to secure funding from people and agencies in the UK and elsewhere.

"Making a difference –one by one"



THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING TO UGANDA!! ☺



There is much to give thanks for!

May God bless us all wherever he has placed us to work for him.

With love and grateful thanks – and we wish you all a Very Happy and Blessed New Year!

Mary and Moses. Xx

“... I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me... Truly I say to you, as you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.” – Matthew 25:35-36,40.

As committed Christians, all our work is based on our understanding of the Bible and we seek to encourage all our families in their faith through example, counselling and mentorship. We continue to work with the Gideons International, distributing Bibles to schools, hotels, colleges and prisons.

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