



July 2020 Newsletter

COVID-19 Response | Eunice Namono's Story | Teachers' Housing | The Richard Stone Fund | JPS Water Project



*James 1:27 Religion that God our Father
accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look
after orphans and widows in their distress...*



Over 25 years of Australians supporting children at Bushikori in Uganda

About us

Editor: Esther Cohen | Graphic support: Alysha Lowndes

The Bushikori Christian Centre is located in a rural village near Mbale, Uganda, East Africa. The centre is not an orphanage but a registered Non-Government Organisation (NGO).

Bushikori is a child sponsorship program, empowering children in poverty to be educated, growing up to become an agent of change in their own community. Care is taken that the sponsored children live with suitable guardians.

Bushikori is now directed by Anne Wandendeya, wife of the founder and late Pastor Sam Wandendeya. The main source of financial help comes from generous sponsors and supporters in Australia, facilitated by the Australian Support Committee, a Christian group of volunteers based in Geelong, Victoria.

Committee members are volunteers of all ages and denominations. We facilitate donations for child sponsorship, the Bushikori Health Centre, Joshua Primary School, the centre fund supporting the day to day running costs and special projects in Uganda. One hundred percent of specified donations are transferred to Bushikori Uganda.

Bushikori Christian Centre Orphan Support (Aust.) is registered with Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission.

Find us

Please advise our committee if you prefer to receive this newsletter by email or download from www.bushikori.org.au

Bushikori Christian Centre,
PO BOX 42,
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General email: president@bushikori.org.au
Sponsorship email: sponsorship@bushikori.org.au
Website: www.bushikori.org.au
Facebook: Bushikori Christian Centre

We would like to thank:

- Stephen Davey at Pagination for hosting our website.
- Christian College, Highton, for photocopying the newsletter.

Spreading the News

We would be delighted to provide information and a speaker for any churches, small groups and schools who are interested in receiving updates or would like to find out more about our mission and child sponsorship in Uganda.

Contact: president@bushikori.org.au

Prayer

Please pray for...



... our people

The children, students, guardians, staff and the community of Bushikori Christian Centre Uganda and especially for those who are anxious at this time.

... our leadership

The leadership team at BCC and for our director Anne. Pray that Anne will receive God's wholeness and strength, comfort and wisdom during this difficult time of guiding the children and her team through the pandemic crisis.

... our health centre

The Bushikori Christian Health Centre, that each carer and patient will be protected and that they will have ongoing resources to meet the demands of COVID-19 restrictions.

Give thanks for the donation and purchase of protective equipment.

...our Government in Uganda

The Ugandan Government, for wisdom and mercy for their nation and that all may live in peace.

... our students

Pray for all students who'd normally receive a meal at school. Now due to COVID lockdown they are more vulnerable in their villages.

Pray for their protection and provision for their daily needs.

We especially pray that each student will remember God's faithfulness and assurance of answered prayers through the love and care of the Bushikori Centre.

Give praise to God for the social work visits to the neediest children and also for government permission and the provision of protective equipment.

Philippians 4: 6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Letters from Dr David Wanendeya



Dr David and Noel Wanendeya and daughter Tabitha



Classroom at Bushikori

April 2020

We are greatly encouraged to know that you have us in your prayers.

We are praying that the virus will not spread in Uganda as earlier feared. To date, the country has 55 cases, 9 have recovered and this has been fairly constant for the past week or so. The current worry is the weak boarder policy with the neighboring Kenya, Tanzania and the Sudan not doing so well.

A lot of truckers have been allowed to keep coming in and they are such a risk. A lot of farmers have been granted permission to keep the planting season going but many of our families are people who don't have any land to farm, they live the hand-to-mouth way and these are a great concern for us all.

We have seen a steep rise in the mother-child pregnancy related deaths lately and this has been related to the unpreparedness of the system with all attention turning to COVID-19. Bushikori Christian Centre (BCC) is permitted to pick up mothers who are in labor from the villages at a cost that will be reimbursed by the USAID voucher plus activity. We have had to ask special permission as we don't have an ambulance, we use the ordinary staff van/matatu.

BCC is functioning in a partial lockdown with only the clinic fully functioning.

The Childcare Department (CCD) and school staff only come in when they have an urgent need to address. The mood is generally one of anxiety people worrying about continuity and how they will manage to go through this phase.

The closure of schools on 18th March was at such short notice that the head teacher did not prepare a learning package for the children to take home. Because

many of our children are within our community, he has been planning on sending out a package to them. The school keeps contact so we will see how this goes.

All vehicles have been banned from movement, no home visits are allowed as local leaders have been tasked by the president not to have non-residents in their areas. This is really complicated because some of our very vulnerable children may lack basic needs in this season. Our van is still running with strict police checks. We can only carry a maximum of 3 people so we do make several round trips to Mbale to get all the medical staff in. This raises the fuel needed on a daily basis.

The girls' hostel is not open at the moment. The girls have been sent home to be with the guardians. Of course there are many challenges to this. CCD tries to keep contact with field coordinators- these would be volunteers who are a past guardian/ church leader to keep in touch with key contacts.

There are no known COVID-19 cases in the Bungokho area yet. The clinic had a suspected case and the government task force was called in to take over. We need to protect our staff in such cases. We have very basic personal protection for them and are looking to strengthen this here.

We are spending a lot of time in prayer.

We are spending a lot of time in prayer. We have a lockdown phase for the next 3 weeks so we are monitoring the situation. We will keep you in prayers as well. We are encouraged to know that you are praying for us all. Be still and know the Lord is working in the background to bring all things to a desired end. Keep safe and may the Lord bless you all.

Blessings,

Dr David Wanendeya



May 2020

Currently, the lockdown has been extended so this means many institutions are staying closed. There is the possibility of easing restrictions but we have no idea of the time frame.

We have been busy at the Centre working to have function in the departments. It is however mostly quiet and we miss the activity of the kids on compound.

Joshua Primary School

We have been able to get the teachers to take up the apartments and they will now be resident on compound. This will help us engage them better and hopefully we can see a reduction in their turn over.

As a result, they are putting together academic packages and sending them out to the community via a local courier for the children to keep studying. The parents within the community then send this work back to the centre. This is helping us continue working with the children who are in the final year of primary school. This has been made possible with part of the Australian COVID funding we received.

Construction of the Hostel has been able to go on through this season and we are glad to report that we are moving towards the final stages- the plastering of the walls. Windows were placed in, plumbing and electricity is done. We are grateful that we could see progress here.

Clinic

The clinic has continued to function with the greatest impact being seen in the area of maternal child health. The limits on transport have been such that many people in the community have come to the centre. We have been able to purchase gloves, aprons, masks, detergents and hand washing equipment to help the staff to serve safely.

We have continued to move the staff on a daily basis- so we are using COVID funds to help meet these needs. The midwives have been busiest delivering many babies. The staff generally feel safer and can go about work confidently.

Child Care Department

Moses, Mary and the team have been working hard to identify children who are vulnerable and would need an immediate intervention. We specifically picked the 10

HIV positive children, then the children who really depend on having a meal at Joshua Primary School (x 78) and then some in higher institutions (x 32). We continue to make deliveries to them. We are grateful that we have been able to get food for them despite prices being slightly higher than usual. Many institutions are staying closed.

I wish to thank you all for the warm thoughts towards us. I convey thoughts of gratitude from the children, the staff and the community. We are praying that you can keep safe also.

Sending our love and prayers to you all,

D^r David Wanendeya



July 2020

The authorities here have begun easing the lockdown despite the growing number of cases, currently at 850. There are no deaths yet and the recoveries are nearly 60%. Majority of these are truck drivers who are involved in regional trade. There have been clusters of community infections and such places have been locked down.

At the health center, we have seen a drop in the outpatient attendance. People might have difficulty with transportation, money and many try to self medicate until things get out of hand. So we see quite a few very sick children and women.

The baby deliveries have stayed strong. On average five every week. We work closely with the regional referral hospital on these, often needing to rush the mother to the hospital for a scan or neonatal consult. The maternity department has brought smiles to many families. We have helped many mothers have a safe delivery.

The District Health Department gave Bushikori a new fridge for the vaccines, to assist with the cold-chain.

BCC appreciates the work of the Australian support committee and the sponsors in upholding healthcare.

Best wishes,

D^r David Wanendeya

Sponsorship Opportunities

Richard Stone Memorial Fund James Wapakali

The *Richard Stone Memorial Fund* helps each child to have one higher education course. It funds those that need re-sponsoring and provides a top up amount for sponsored children who require it.

A unique advantage of sponsorship through Bushikori is that students are supported throughout their tertiary or vocational (postsecondary) education. This completes their final education and most of them are able to find meaningful employment with the qualifications they have gained.

Unlike Australia, in Uganda there is no HECS, no welfare payments, no youth allowance and no way to get a loan unless the family own land. Education is the means by young people are able to find employment and a future. This is one of the great blessings of sponsorship through Bushikori.

For those students whose sponsors can no longer continue to support them in their final years of education we have the *Richard Stone Memorial Fund* to help. This is a fundraising priority with our Australian support committee and we are always grateful for any donations towards this fund.



James is 13 years old and in Primary 4 this year.

James's parents left their previous home due to clan conflicts. They are now being housed by their relative but with a lot of difficulties in meeting the educational needs of their children.

They depend on casual labour for their sustainability. He has been sponsored since 2014, however his sponsor is unable to continue.

James has had to repeat a year but is doing much better academically with special monitoring and remedial lessons.

Brian Woniaye



Brian is 15 years old and in Secondary 2 this year.

He lives with his mother on a very small piece of land in a thatched roof house that leaks.

They have difficulty feeding the children or providing welfare and educational support.

Marvelous Mongi



Marvelous is 13 years old and in Secondary 1 this year.

The family migrated from their homeland in Tanzania in search of employment. They ended up in Uganda and are now being housed by another family.

They have no clear source of income to support the education of the children.

Want to learn more about sponsorship?

Contact: sponsorship@bushikori.org.au

Disruption of mail services

Letters sent by sponsors to Bushikori Uganda are being returned to our PO Box in Geelong as it seems the mail is not leaving Australia. To ensure letters are received by your sponsored children during this mail service disruption, our committee will scan and email them to BCC. Please remember to use our address (PO Box 42, Geelong) as the return sender address rather than your own.

Fundraising

Sausage Sizzle

At the St Johns Highton Carols in the Park in December, the South Barwon Lion's Club raised \$700 and generously donated proceeds to Bushikori. A wonderful result and a great memory to have of such a loved tradition. Thank you.



Stamps

Occasionally we gratefully receive a booklet of stamps from donors.

One such encouraging donation came just before "lockdown". One of our sponsors donated many sheets of Australian stamps from his collection. These stamps journey through the history of Australian life through first day issues from 1970's and 1980's.

We are still able to use these for postage so you may notice mail from us with some creative mathematical calculations to use the variety of stamp values such as 27, 5 and 2 cent stamps on one envelope.

A big thank you for this thoughtful support especially at a time when our Australian committee volunteers need assistance with administration costs.



Christmas Cards for Sale

We have christmas cards for sale in packets of 5 for \$5. Each contains a bible verse and warm christmas wishes inside. The photo is of a nativity hut built by Grace Wandendeya at Bushikori.



Christmas Blessings

Edmonds Honey for Sale

We have Edmonds Honey for sale, with profits going towards Bushikori. Edmonds Honey is 100% locally produced, without using chemicals. See our website for purchase locations. www.bushikori.org.au Or for contactless delivery in the Geelong region, call Esther Cohen on +61 439 388 856



During COVID-19 isolation we have been unable to progress with any fundraising activities. Our support committee and friends of Bushikori fundraising group welcome suggestions and offers of help as to how we can be creative in this area.

Eunice Namono

My name is Eunice Namono, I was born in 1997 to the late Mr. Andrew Kitutu and Ms Rose Namarome. I am born a twin and we are three in my family. My father died of food poisoning and I did not get an opportunity to see him because by then my mother was four months pregnant. After the burial, my mother left the place and went back to her parents where she gave birth to us. After four months, she left us with the grandmother because she had to go back to school.

I could not walk long distances because of the pain in the legs and the back

I grew up with my grandmother, sisters and relatives and I started schooling while there. Because of my disability, my sister used to carry me to and from school, I could not walk long distances because of the pain in the legs and the back. When I was in primary two, my parents opted to take me for an operation which did not happen because one child died before my operation and it created fear that I may also die.

In 2009, I lived with my aunt, I went to Bushikori Primary school (government school near the Bushikori Centre) and my friends used to laugh at me. I could cry and feel inferior, I reported to my aunt and teachers who helped and warned them. My aunt hired a motorist to transport me to and



from school to avoid people laughing at me.

I received no special attention given my state, the desk was too high and I was short, this made me not to write well. When the head teacher was concerned about that and ordered for a low seat for me, the class teacher refused and asked what was so special about me. I had to bear with the situation until I completed my primary school in 2012.

When PLE results were released...I was very happy

When PLE results were released, I was very scared and good news reached me that I had passed with 23 aggregates in Division 2. I was very happy because I competed with pupils who are normal and counted among the best at that school.

In 2012, BCC (Bushikori Christian Centre) noticed me and took me up for sponsorship. It was a very important opportunity for me, I gained hope of having a bright future. I joined secondary school in Busano S.S, I used to visit the BCC Health Centre for a medical check-up every two weeks. I was referred to Katalamwa Hospital for people with disabilities. When I reached there, I said "thank you God" because there were worse people than me. A lot of exercise was involved and at least I was able to run, sit, walk, sleep but others could not.

I reached a moment where I wanted to drop out of school but by God's grace, my Aunt and Bushikori CCD kept counselling me and I completed my senior four.

In 2014, I lost my grandmother with whom I had lived for years, it was a very hard and trying moment for me. I used to absent myself from school because part of my support was cut. I reached a moment where I wanted to drop out of school but by God's grace, my Aunt and Bushikori CCD kept counselling me and I completed my senior four. I did not pass well because of the challenges I went through. I had to repeat S4 in 2017 but still I didn't pass because of the stress I had when people laughed at me and I was always sick.

Eunice's story was first published in the BCC Uganda Annual Report 2019. This is such a wonderful testament; praise to God! thanks to BCC and to Eunice for her courage. Eunice participated in the games held on the Thanksgiving Day for 25 years of BCC/ASC partnership held in July 2019.

My Story

I was very sad.

In January 2018, we had a career guidance meeting for all students who had sat for S4 and S6 and we were encouraged by the Director of BCC; for those who had performed poorly to either repeat or go for the course of their choice. I opted to join vocational training school for a course in secretarial studies. However, my grades could not attain me that course, I was very sad because I thought it was my best option.

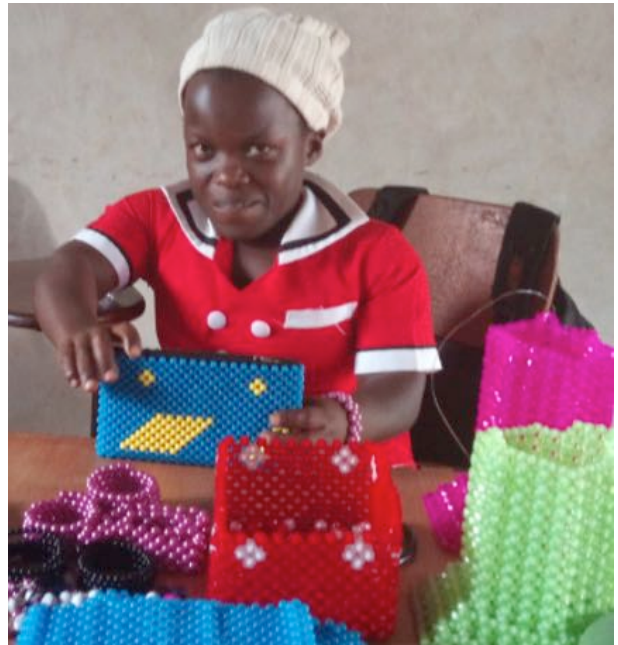
BCC tried to look out for some options but nothing worked out, I stayed home patiently waiting for 1 year. We ended up using the special needs office at Mbale District who gave us a recommendation to one of the vocational schools in Butaleja district. An appointment was made and we went to the school. We met the director and when we presented the letter from the district, she was very rude then she asked; "why has the district deceived you? We no longer have special needs here because it is expensive to maintain this group as everything has to be special. Anyway, how did you perform? Why didn't you concentrate while in school? We can't even admit you because you don't qualify for any course here." We kept silent for a while because we did not really expect such a response from her. She made me feel more inferior and sad.

My hope was restored.

One day BCC called me and gave me good news. They had a special plan for me to do skills in craft work. I was pleased with this and very happy. I had looked at myself as a deserted person because everywhere I go, I was rejected. My hope was restored. Arrangements were made with the teacher and I started my lessons. Currently, I have learnt how to make necklaces, bangles, earrings and small handbags. I am yet to learn big bags, and reusable sanitary pads. I have started selling my things to the public and earn some money for upkeep.

We are all created for a special purpose and God made me fearfully and wonderfully.

I have learnt not to under look myself because I am an important person to the public, also there are even worse people than me. We are all created for a special



purpose and God made me fearfully and wonderfully. This gives me confidence to move on. I now have an opportunity to interact with many people and I have made friends. I can freely move and market my products. I am very proud of myself out of school but by God's grace, my Aunt and Bushikori CCD kept counselling me and I completed my senior four.

May God Bless you,

Eunice Namono

Please pray for ...

We give thanks for Eunice that she is a witness to others and for her courage to overcome.

We pray for the markets to sell her work.

Lord Jesus help all children with disabilities to know they are loved and they matter to you. We give thanks for the Bushikori Christian counsellors and the support of education and healthcare.



James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...



The childcare department with Mary in the middle

Childcare Department

Mary Wanendeya

We hope you are all fine. We are fine too here in Bushikori. In Uganda, schools are not yet open, other activities are open but with restrictions. However, this has not stopped us from progressing with our work. Social work has been going on, visiting our children at home and encouraging them during this pandemic. We did this after asking for permission at the sub county to move in the community with protective health measures in place.

Teachers' Housing

Many thanks from BCC to the O'Neill Family

Joshua Primary School at BCC was established in 2003. A great need arose to have teachers residing at the school. This has an enormous advantage to support students with various needs, especially after school hours for their study and increased pupil-teacher time.

The building project commenced in May 2019 after a generous grant from Norman O'Neill.

Four units were built to house 8 teachers.

After several months of hard work, the teachers house was commissioned on the 10th December 2019. The ceremony was attended by the O'Neill family — Norman, Sue, Elliott and Robert .

The house will provide decent, and the first available, accommodation for teachers of Joshua Primary School.



Life during COVID-19

My name is Innocent Wamutu and I would like to inform you about how I am coping with COVID-19 at home.

Previously during a holiday, I had a number of activities I usually take up to make myself busy, for example going to church for choir practice, playing football, visiting friends and reading, among others. Due to the restrictions on gatherings, I am not able to play football, make unnecessary visits to friends and congregate in church buildings. At home we resorted to praying together as a family and sharing the word of God.

As per now, I have only about two activities I am doing which are digging and reading. This has made me live a very lonely life due to social distancing.

During the first days of lockdown, I did a lot of garden work since the rains had come, although the work did not last long. Now all I can do is try to read books and attend lessons on radio which is also difficult to cope with. Using a radio for lessons is somehow impossible

because I had just joined Senior Five and the teachers were still giving the introductory parts of each subject. I am not able to look at the teachers' gestures during the lesson especially for the practical subjects like Biology, Physics among others. This makes it difficult for me to understand unlike the students who can access a television.

Most of us are depending on food from our gardens. For example matoke, sweet potatoes and cassava. Nevertheless, the lock-down has helped us to know each other at home.

My relationship with my guardians is stronger. I have learnt to do many things like cooking and weeding, which we normally don't do while schools are open.

All in all, I hope the situation will go back to normal so that we can resume school and continue studying.

Innocent Wamutu

Water Project Joshua Primary School

Grace Wanendeya, Estates Team
Before COVID

There is heavy water usage at the school wash areas for the six hundred pupils that attend Joshua Primary School on a daily basis. This implies that the monthly water bills from national water and sewerage corporation have been so high over the years – a big financial inconvenience for the charity based organization to comfortably handle and thus the birth of ideas like sustainable water sources. In Uganda, we receive a lot of rain most of the year which makes rain water the best alternative in sustainable water sources.

In April 2019, we were privileged to acquire some PVC water tanks of capacity 5000 and 2000 liters to harvest rain water at the school! We soon realized we could not make good use of them in the wash areas and thus the decision to install an electric water pump with which we would pump the rain water to an elevated tank at the school toilet facility (ed. refer cover photo). We now rely heavily on the rain water and the impact has been a great reduction on our monthly water bill! Praise God!

Many thanks to Geelong College Junior School which

donated the funds; \$316 received January 2019 and \$296 received September 2019 - equivalent to 1.550.758 Ugandan Shillings.

This was used as follows:

- Tank stand and pump cage (materials, fabrication and installation)
- Power Pump and Plumbing Material
- Electrical Materials
- Concrete Works





If undeliverable, please return to:
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