



July 2021 | Newsletter

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Brian Wananda
2012



Over 25 years of Australians supporting children at Bushikori in Uganda

About us

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The Bushikori Christian Centre (BCC) 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's Acting Director is Mary Wanendeya, the daughter of the late Pastor Sam and Mrs Anne Wandendeya, the founders of BCC. 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

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Website: www.bushikori.org.au
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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 for Bushikori's Staff and Students

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?...But we believe that we shall surely see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Psalm 27:1 and 13

DEAR LORD,

These words from Psalm 27 are so relevant for all involved with the Bushikori Christian Centre at this time in 2021. We thank you for your grace, mercy and constant care for them all, and are grateful that we are a praying community seeking your guidance in all we do.

July is set aside for special intercessions at BCC, Lord we pray for a tangible presence of the Holy Spirit with the staff as they gather in your Name. This is the first time that our beloved sister and mother to all the students, Anne Wandendeya will not be with them.

Strengthen all who mourn her loss, those who are taking leadership roles, please lead and guide as they move forward.

Heavenly Father Uganda is in lockdown again, we pray for wisdom for the government and all in power in the country. We pray that the virus will be controlled and health care available for those who need it. We thank you for the BCC clinic and all the wonderful work they do serving the community.

We pray especially for all the students who are again working at home, many are at risk especially the girls. We pray for protection for them all, and their families and the staff who will be organising study materials for them.

We give you thanks Lord for the privilege of this ministry, and offer these prayers to you in Jesus' name,

AMEN



Mary Wanendeya

Acting Director of Bushikori Christian Centre Uganda

23rd April 2021

The Bushikori Uganda Board of Trustees (BOT) met for the first time without Director Anne. It was a time of reflection on Anne's send off and a time of giving thanks that all the legal documents and high court permits have passed through the Ugandan system allowing a transitioning to a new Executive Director to begin. Ms Harriet Namialo (Alumni) and Mr Michael Kabasa were both nominated to serve on the Executive. Ms Mary Wanendeya was unanimously appointed to be the new Acting Executive Director of Bushikori.



The Australian Support Committee have written to Mary to offer our congratulations and support and to let her know that the role of the ASC is to support her in leading the work of Bushikori. It is important to note that Mary will be supported in upholding the mission of Bushikori and the legacy of Sam and Anne Wandendeya by Dr David Wanendeya and family.

In response to our letter Mary noted that,

"We are often surrounded by dysfunction, God called us to a largely dysfunctional society as agents of change to bring God's agenda which really restores function. Our hearts are open to change".

Please pray for Mary and the team that she leads at Bushikori as they continue to fulfil the great commission of Jesus Christ in word and deed by spreading the word of God, taking care of widows, orphans and other vulnerable children.

Please note: Our March 2021 newsletter gives a short CV of the Board of Trustees & Executive members. Our Nov 2020 newsletter contained an article on Mary. Both newsletters are available on our website www.bushikori.org.au in the archived newsletters.

Chairperson welcomed members of both EXCO and BOT. God took Mama Anne but has given us a new Acting Director Mary who needs support of the BOT and EXCO. We know that with support of Australian Support Committee (ASC), the new Acting Director will be able to run the ministry of BCC. Appreciated the late founders and ASC for starting God's ministry at Bushikori. Asked the new Acting Director to cooperate and work well with HR and all staffs so that the objectives of the organisation are achieved. The new Board is going to be commissioned today to serve in the ministry. Promised that there is going to be regular meetings to support the Acting Director in running the ministry.

Handing over tools of power

The EXCO Chairperson handed over to the new Acting Director Mary the following tools of power:

The BCC articles of Association * The organisation Seal * The organisation official stamp * The Members registration book/ attendance book * The organisation operation licence * All the bank cheque books with a list of leaves unused in each book.

* Later Mary was sat in the chair of the Executive Director and given office keys.

29th May 2021

A Executive/Board Inauguration meeting was held to commission the new Executive Committee (EXCO), and the Executive Director.

Uganda Meeting Minutes

Pr. Titus shared the word of God from 1 Corinthians 1:10; urged members to be united through the power of the Holy Spirit and to love each other for the ministry to grow. Urged members to give the organisation priority like Mama Anne. Welcomed the new Director and urged her to depend on God for guidance and direction



UPDATE FROM RECENT COVID-19 Lockdown

11th June 2021

Greetings,

We are grateful that God keeps us all going forward.

I want to say how grateful we are to know that you all pray and support the work of Bushikori especially at a time when we have to navigate a dynamic process of keeping the mission alive after the passing of our mum. Our hearts are open to connect and learn so we can continue impacting as long as the Lord lets it continue.

This week we have had a surge in the COVID cases- 1,317 in seven days so as a result the President of Uganda has sent us into another 42-day lockdown- including all schools. So we have had to send the kids home again. This is very disappointing especially for Joshua Primary School as they were nearing a full re-opening but it is the safest thing to do. It will be challenging to keep up with the needs regarding the teacher's salaries. We have sent the teachers home as well, many of them live on the compound in the recently built teachers accommodation, and now we shall wait for the next 7 weeks.

What does this mean?

The Child Care Department (CCD) was organizing the payment of school fees for all year levels for children that had resumed school, this activity is now on hold due to the lockdown. CCD will continue to engage with the children under SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). They are wary and concerned for the children remaining back in their communities as this usually does not bring very good outcomes- it grows the problem list, children fall back on learning.

What are we doing about?

1. We are praying for the safety of the children, the girls especially.
2. We are planning to strengthen the E- learning service where children can come in small numbers and access study materials at the BCC library
3. We will resume the COVID-19 recess work should the lockdown be extended beyond the current 42 days
4. We are looking to hold a 'one day empowerment conference' each week where we intend to talk about education, child empowerment and sexual purity as a way of preserving and honouring the sponsors' investment in the children
5. We have spoken about running a small skilling project- tailoring to keep them engaged while equipping and inspiring the girls- we are calling it the Girl Child Connect. More news on this when it takes shape.

While we all feel challenged by the current unpredictable circumstances- we will look to God as He is the single most constant and consistent one to look to now and always. We are reminded of the wonderful Psalm 46:10 to "Be still, and know that I am God".

Welle alinde (God keep you)



Dr. David Wanendeya

Board of Trustees member



Love and Care between Australia and Uganda



Lynne Clarke: Sponsor and author of 'A Place for a Friendly Lion' which features Bushikori

I had heard much about the Bushikori Christian Centre in Uganda since moving to Geelong in 2005, and in 2012, when I had been working in neighbouring Tanzania for a couple of years, I took two weeks holiday to visit it.

I told Anne Wandendeya, the Director, that I was not coming just to look, but wanted to be of assistance to them. When I arrived, she had arranged that I should work on the files – four large four-drawer filing cabinets, stuffed full of information about the students and their sponsors. I spent a long time tidying them up and ensuring that they were in systematic order. At my suggestion, a fifth filing cabinet was purchased, making access much easier.

I was fascinated to see how many sponsors came from Geelong, including the names of some people I knew! Geelong people had taken this place to their hearts and

were enabling many children who would otherwise be virtually destitute to gain a sound and Christian education, and have a chance of fulfilment in life.

The Bushikori day begins with prayer, focussing on God's blessings and asking for his direction.

It was school holiday time, so the children were not in class, but the teachers were present, preparing for the term to come. Joshua Primary School had received donations of a number of brass instruments, so for a couple of hours on several days the enthusiastic young band members, some very young, came for practice, entertaining (or assailing!) the ears of all in the vicinity.

I was shown around the school, and having seen other African primary schools, was impressed with this one,

with commodious classrooms, adequate equipment and access to a working library. I was not so impressed with the quality of the concrete flooring in two classrooms, which was very uneven and full of holes, making all the desks and other furniture constantly wobble. They had obviously been cheated by the original contractor. Charles, the Headmaster, approached Anne while I was there, asking for the floors to be fixed during these holidays. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient money available to do so at that time, but I understand that they have since been repaired, enabling life to be much easier for both children and teachers, and for the furniture to last much longer.

I also saw the school kitchen, a building without much in the way of walls, to enable good ventilation, and fireplaces upon which, during term time, large cauldrons were used to cook posho (white maize) and beans, the children's regular lunch, served at about 11.00 am. Otherwise, they would not eat at all until they got home at night, having usually only had a drink of tea for breakfast.

During my second week there, the results of the nation-wide examinations that mark the end of primary school were published. These determine who qualifies for secondary education, and where it will take place.

...and all of them were in the top two divisions!

Twenty-four children at Joshua Primary School had completed Standard Seven, and all of them were in the top two divisions! Joshua Primary School had achieved some of the best results in the district! We were all praising God, and proud of the children and their teachers.

It was agreed that there were three reasons for this. First, the excellent teaching; second, the small class sizes, less than thirty-five; and third to the fact that the children were fed every day. These were all part of the vision given to Rev Sam Wandendeya, the founder, to care for those in need in the best manner possible.

When children move on to secondary school, they are still sponsored through Bushikori...

as the circumstances of their families - grandparents, a widowed mother, or an older sibling - has not changed. If the child completes that satisfactorily and wishes to go on to tertiary education, Bushikori Christian Centre will continue at their back through the generosity of their sponsors.

The Bushikori Christian Centre was established by Rev. Sam Wandendeya after the time of Idi Amin, when hundreds of thousands of children were orphaned. Sam knew that this was his calling and for which he had been saved from assassination. Now, more than thirty years later, many hundreds of children in want have been supported on their way, enabling the dignity of education for them, and the ongoing development of the country.

A few years ago, it came to my attention that some children at the Joshua Primary School at the Bushikori Christian Centre would have to drop out of school due to lack of sponsorship! How could this be?

Here in Geelong we cannot drop the baton!

I became the sponsor of a young man called Tony, in secondary school. He is not a brilliant student, but I am very happy to enable him to have the best chance possible. I know my funds will be carefully administered, that they will go to the right place, that they will make a big difference to Tony's life.

I have received every advantage of family and education. I have a roof over my head, sanitation, power, clean water, medical care, freedom to eat what I like and to go where I wish (unless constrained by COVID-19!). By comparison to most of the rest of the world, I am dripping with riches. These things apply to most of us in the Western world. What a joy to be part of something like Bushikori, that exists to love and care for individuals who struggle so desperately, and for whom hope in this world is so distant.

We praise you, heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus Christ came among us as one who serves, to declare and to demonstrate your love.

Thank you that the Bushikori Christian Centre continues this calling, in caring so thoroughly for people in need, especially children.

We ask that you will continue to bless the Joshua Primary School with excellent teachers, wise leadership and sufficient funds. Raise up, we ask, more long-term sponsors to enable the children to receive an education. Enable what family they have to encourage them, the staff to meet their needs, and for them to have a chance to achieve their goals.

We ask that through the lives of Bushikori children and staff you will bless the nation of Uganda, and through your Holy Spirit, to use them for your glory, and the service of your kingdom.

In the precious name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



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 LONG-TERM Impact of Sponsorship



In 2013 at the completion of Secondary School, Isaac Kakala, a Bushikori sponsored student, applied for a diploma in Clinical Medicine. However, the course of his life suddenly changed due to his academic ability, wise counsel from others, generous support of sponsors and God's faithful provision of a scholarship.

Isaac received news back from his application that he was able to be admitted for a "higher" course of Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine at Makerere University in Kampala (the capital city of Uganda). This was seen as a more suitable career path given his outstanding performance at school and the subjects he had passed. The course would be longer and more expensive than the finance limit for tertiary education that Bushikori sponsorship is able to offer. We were able to provide a scholarship for him through the generous support of the Kardinia Rotary Club in Geelong.

Eight years later here is an update from Dr. Isaac Kakala.

MY STORY

I came to the Bushikori Christian Centre (BCC) empty handed. I didn't know that these fingers could hold on to something. Our father left us in a rental from which we were kicked out. My mom hurriedly built a mud house which we entered before it had properly dried. It was here that we met an old woman (Jennifer Khaita Wepukhulu) who introduced us to church through which we joined the BCC sponsorship program. Life was really so hard and we couldn't predict where our food would come from, but by the grace of God we could end up having a meal.

Having a bright future was my goal and that BCC was to pay my school fees, this was an opportunity I held on to. I joined Northroad Primary School in 2006 for Primary seven. Passing well in division one inspired me that I could become a doctor. When I joined Secondary school my career goals shifted to learning to be an engineer. When I passed the Uganda Certificate of Education exams, the bond with mommy (our late director) Anne Wandendeya (RIP) grew stronger. She said I had to join a school which would help me become a doctor.

In 2011, I joined Wampeewo Ntakke Secondary School and with God on my side, I made it to university. I got a slot for veterinary medicine which I rejected. When I told mom (Anne Wandendeya) that I would rather go for a diploma in human medicine, she objected to this. In her words, "go for veterinary medicine, it's a virgin area and a few people have exploited this option". (meaning: this is a rare tertiary degree opportunity). She crazily believed in me that I could make it. "Let Isaac go to school, he is not playful". (meaning: he applies himself to study). I agreed. In the second semester she secured me a scholarship with Kardinia Rotary Club, Geelong. With God on my side, I am now a veterinary doctor.

My first job was at Amazon Animal Clinic where we mainly cared for pets. Currently I am working with the Mbale District Local Government, at Busiu subcounty caretaking in Busiu Town council. I earn USD 431 per month. Here I have been able to save animals' lives through surgery, manipulative delivery and ambulatory clinics. I believe in God for more – increasing faith and opportunities of work.



Dr. Isacc Kakala

Past Bushikori sponsored student

MY STORY

I am Madina Nabulondera a 24-year-old student sponsored by the Bushikori Christian Center for the last 15 or so years. I am a final year student of a Diploma in Pharmaceutical Sciences at a university in Mbale, Uganda. I lost both my parents while I was young and have been brought up by my grandmother together with the sponsorship mission of the Bushikori Christian Centre.



Thanks to my Sponsor

Sponsorship has had such a great impact in my life and my family as well. Through the work of Bushikori, I have been able to go to school with ease and this has enabled me to progress with my studies. My fees are paid with ease and I feel like this has given me an opportunity, an edge to build a life. Through Bushikori, a house was built for my family and I. We all have a chance to work at life, to have hope and a bright future.

Plans during the COVID-19 recess

As I wait to complete my studies, I am volunteering at the Bushikori Christian Health Center as a volunteer pharmacy technician. Through this apprenticeship, I am learning the art of managing medical drug stores, serving our community as a dispensing chemist and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and learn from the team here while giving back to the community that has raised me. At Bushikori we share a lot on how we can minister healing to the hurting people of our community. For me, this is the heart of the work of the Bushikori Christian Centre.

Future plans

My future plan is to further my career with a Bachelors' degree in Pharmacy. This will enable me to do more in the field of pharmaceutical sciences and drug management.

I have Hope and a positive outlook on the future. I feel like I have been empowered through education and that beyond my academic qualifications, I can be an agent of positive change to my family, community and wherever the Lord plants me. I am so privileged and grateful for the relationship that I have with the Bushikori Sponsorship Programme.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Meet Our Students



Kefa Kisibo

Kefa Kisibo, born in 2004 is now 17 years old. He lives with an elderly grandmother who is suffering from cancer. Fellow Christians are supporting them with food and general welfare. Kefa's father is mentally disturbed. Kefa has missed years of attending school and has been a teenager in primary school. We hope through sponsorship that he will have opportunity to study at senior school. They live in a mud home and have no food reserves.



Eriya Mukhwana

Eriya Mukhwana, is now 18 years old and in Senior 1. He lives with his mother in a small rented home. His father was a soldier and killed by rebels. They have no fixed source of income. He has been sponsored since 2013 but the sponsor can no longer continue. He is a very competent student and we pray for a sponsor for him to offer him a secure future, the family would have struggled greatly after his father's death.



Irene Nabifo

Irene Nabifo is 6 years old. She lives with an elderly grandmother, her mother left them to go and try and find work. She has not been successful in finding any. The grandmother does not have any means to support her grandchildren. They live in a mud house with iron roofing, with limited land for subsistence farming.



Diana Mutonyi

Diana Mutonyi is 17 years old and in primary school. Her father died of HIV/AIDS, she lives with a blind ailing grandmother who did not have the means to support 4 grandchildren and relied on support of neighbours and relatives.



Aquila Waiswa

Aquila Waiswa is 16 years old. He is in secondary school and lives with his single, unemployed father who due to many challenges has difficulty with finances. Aquila is very keen to get an education and have a more secure future and support his family.

Monthly Sponsorship Rates

Options for 3x instalments or annual payments

Primary Student	\$30
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Secondary Student	\$53
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Tertiary Student	TBA
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Want to learn more about sponsorship?

Contact:
sponsorship@bushikori.org.au



No food Reserves

Each student registered with the Bushikori Christian Centre has a data sheet with personal details, school year and their living situation. This latter information frequently includes the sentence, 'the family have no food reserves.' Knowing that this probably means that they live hand to mouth we wanted to understand the wider social and physical implications of this issue. Here is the reply that we received from Uganda, Child Care Department and Dr. David Wanendeya:

In Uganda particularly in Mbale where Bushikori operates, most families are extended with an average of five to ten people per household. Most of our children come from such a background. They are taken care of by a guardian who could be a single parent, a grandmother or even a distant relative. These are often too old and frail, might be ill and often have no education and therefore no income through a job and certainly with no access to land to cultivate.

Ninety per cent of the homes lack food reserves as a result and the little they might grow on the land they live on is for daily needs not enough to last a while. Nothing is left for storage. They will not be able to store any seed for planting the next season.

Mathew 25:35

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.

The COVID-19 has hit these families hard as they are not able to find any work to support the daily feeding needs of the family. The small piece of land they might have cannot sustain them, so with limited resources, land hire which is very expensive is not a sustainable option. Many families try to resort to digging (cultivating) for others who have a lot of land so that they can earn or share in the harvest.

It is pretty difficult when it comes to these cases, what we recognize is a continuous cycle of poverty. We try to break this cycle through supporting the guardians in providing an education for the young ones and where possible welfare and access to basic health care. Many times, we come in to support families that are more vulnerable with actual food and other extra basic needs such as housing, clothing especially during times like these

This is a commitment of faith, that one day, the child will grow into a responsible citizen, build a career and change their lives and perhaps that of their families. It happens very often that a child will graduate, find a job and change their story and looking back, every single life changed is so worth it.

It can be overwhelming when we read news of such ongoing need, we need to pray. The answer from the Holy Spirit: Matthew 25: 35: 'for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,' friends this is what sponsorship means. Thank God for BCC and the work they do and our opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many Ugandans.

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.



Bushikori and Covenant College – Appointed by God

Beverley Randall: Sponsor

On a Wednesday night in 1994, a group of people from St Matthew's Anglican Church met in Belmont, Geelong, for their regular weekly Home Group Bible Study. But this week was to be like no other gathering; it was to have an ongoing impact on me, as one of those present, who welcomed a visitor from Uganda - Pastor Sam Wandendaya.

Sam had come to Australia at the invitation of Mrs Margery Hobbs, who, with her late husband Rex, had met Pastor Sam and his wife Anne on a trip to Africa in 1989. There they had been privileged to experience the loving care this couple was providing for orphaned children, including from their own means, in the town of Mbale, in eastern Uganda. A small community, called Bushikori Christian Centre, was 'growing like Topsy' around them in Mbale, where Sam and Anne endeavoured to ensure such children were cared for, spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially and educationally. The vision and the need for this task were becoming huge, but the means by which it could be done were extremely limited.

Recognising that this ministry was in great need of support, Margery was moved to find a way to provide whatever support they could, and the Geelong Bushikori support effort was begun. Subsequently, Sam arrived in Geelong in 1994 where Margery arranged for him to visit as many churches and Christian groups as she could. At St Matthew's, I heard Sam speak at a

Sunday service, and then was privileged to meet him at our Home Study Group that week. Sam shared his own story of how God had saved him from Idi Amin's assassination squad in 1979 and led him and his wife to help many orphaned and needy children in a time when the Aids virus was also killing so many around them. It was a powerful story that needed a direct response.

At that time, I was Principal of Covenant College in Bell Post Hill on the western fringe of Geelong. So I arranged with Margery for Sam to come to talk with our staff and students about God's work at Bushikori. As a result, Covenant students and staff regularly prayed for the Bushikori community and their needs. Over time, Covenant has sponsored a student, made regular contributions towards the newly-established Joshua Primary School at Bushikori, with Covenant staff members contributing to the salaries of the school's staff. Later, John Duffield, a teacher at Covenant College, resigned in order to relocate to Mbale, where he would take up a position of teaching and administration at Joshua Primary School, while his wife, Lyn, worked in the financial management of the Bushikori Christian Centre.

While Bushikori Christian Centre and Covenant College have both grown immensely under the blessing and grace of God, the ties between them have endured over the years. May our Heavenly Father continue the work of each in His service, by His Spirit, in the name of His Son.



Laura-Beth Filipovski:
Community Development
Coordinator (Covenant
College)

In the 1970s, a director, a green grocer, a minister and a photographer all had a dream. It was the same dream. A school. A school where Proverbs 22 v 6 could be lived out, where the gospel extended from home to the class, where children could go to learn how to walk in obedience to God – and continue that journey into adulthood.

This dream, this school, took physical form in 1979 when it was officially opened on David Street in North Geelong as 'Geelong Christian School'. With 33 children from Prep to year 7. It was a small enough school that on a hot day they could all go down to Rippleside Beach with the Principal and get icy poles. It was a lot of fun – and a lot of work. Parents and teachers sold oranges to fundraise, drove buses,

cleaned the school, did the admin - did everything.

One teacher remembers some of the difficulties of those days – especially when the local newspaper released a mocking article about their efforts. At times, they felt like the crazy joke of the industry, their reputations as teachers and responsible parents were certainly on the line. Over 700 enrolled students and 40 years later, those founders have well received the confirmation that their dream was a good and true one.

With such success, the school quickly outgrew its humble two room facilities at David Street and moved to Bell Post Hill, as well as changed its name from 'Geelong Christian School' to 'Covenant College', in 1982.

Since that move, Covenant College has continued to grow both in size and in service to Jesus Christ. As a school, it continues to employ teachers with a Christian worldview and Christian Education remains the most important focus of the College, despite increasing social and political pressure. With each new day, we praise God for the opportunities he has given us and his constant guiding and protecting hand.

LETTER FROM

Joshua Primary School

Hello Everyone,

My name is John Bosco Wamundu. I am privileged to serve as the director of studies at the Joshua Primary School. I have been involved with the Bushikori Christian Centre for a period of four years now. I became involved upon request from our late director Anne Wandendeya (RIP).

This particular assignment has been a unique one in the sense of what the mission enables us to impart to the children- the desire to have a lasting, life changing effect on those who are under-privileged due to life's circumstances. The experience of watching the children grow into young adults with potential and a chance at life is so priceless. It's a work in the life of the child. Beyond imparting the knowledge, we work to build values.

The past few months have been challenging with the school constantly being affected by the pandemic and our team constantly working out creative ways to ensure that learning continues to happen even at home. We are very grateful to the local management teams, the Australian Support Committee and the sponsors from afar and wide putting in every effort to ensure we keep building a better future.

God bless you all,



John. B Wamundu

Director of Studies at Joshua Primary School



M

"My dream is to become an artist. I just completed high school so I hope to go on to university to learn more, get trained. What inspires me is that art is an expression that is not limited in many ways-you can say out your heart by drawing to anyone.

My country has very few schools dedicated to art and it can be costly. I am confident that The Lord will open a door way so I can be accepted into one of the few schools in Uganda."

Brian Wananda's Passion

Esther Cohen shares:

My first memories of Brian go back to 2012 (see cover photo). I was visiting the Bushikori Christian Centre for the commissioning ceremony of new buildings. This also included a thanksgiving for the small library building.

During my Joshua Primary School visits, I spent many hours in the library and shared in story times that were taken by Jane, the librarian. Liane Foord (our past Child Care Co-ordinator) requested that I make time to travel to Kampala in order to purchase Ugandan story books and "Lego style" play and child development equipment. The school children attending the library had never experienced play with Lego and they gathered in small groups of 5-6 with a handful of treasured pieces. There was so much joy and it was fantastic to see their creative and artistic gifts being encouraged outside of the strict curriculum. In the midst of this activity a young boy was brought forward with a story he had written and he wanted it published as a book... later this was fulfilled. ("Ivan's Story")

At that time another boy's gift was also being discovered. I had requested if some of the children could draw images of their lives so that we could use their art perhaps in fundraising... some of these pictures were later used in our "Tea Towel" fundraiser.

One artist with such impressive talent was Brian, his artwork was later used in another story book published by Jane, the librarian. ("The Secret of Egrets and Cows"). I remember thinking to myself...how does a child living in poverty in a village in rural Uganda find an opportunity to develop this gift in order for it to become his career? Could he draw pictures for a sustainable living? Can he be inspired to continue using this gift through his years at school? I recall praying with a hope that one day this may become possible.

Fast forward to May 2021. At our Bushikori support committee meeting we were remembering students who were looking for tertiary placements and I heard Brian's name raised in our prayer time.

Please join with me in a prayer for Brian.

Living Lord Jesus,

We give you thanks for leading and guiding Brian during his school years. We thank you for his sponsors and the gift of education and hope. We now pray that doors will be opened for Brian so that he can pursue his hopes and dreams in further University studies. May his gift of art express the heart of his faith and provide inspiration for many who view it.

Amen



John Watts Interview

Interviewer: Pamela Ferrar

About

Hello John, thank you for your willingness to be in the spotlight! Your passion for Bushikori and ongoing commitment to our Lord and to the cause is highly valued, we would love to get to know you better.



When did you first hear about the Bushikori Christian Centre and what drew you to the mission?

I first heard about Bushikori through members of my church St John's Anglican Church, Highton who were fortunate to hear the late Sam Wandendeya talk at our church in 1994. I was not there the Sunday that he spoke. The late Richard Stone, a member of St John's and a part of my small group and a member of my Rotary Club was on the Australian Support Committee. I remember Anne Wandendeya attending a Rotary meeting as a guest of Richard on what must have been her first visit to Australia. Richard continued to serve the committee through a long battle with cancer.

Can you share with us why you joined the committee and became secretary? What have been your highlights?

Richard Stone's devotion to and support of Bushikori was the reason I joined the committee, in 2005. When the secretary's position became vacant that year I volunteered because I thought I felt equipped to meet the need. The highlight for me in the time that I have been on the committee is to be able to witness the growth of Bushikori through God's work into a sustainable ongoing organization that never forgets its mission "To fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ in word and deed by spreading the word of God, taking care of widows, orphans and other vulnerable children". The other highlight is to me is that we are a support committee based on trust and prayer. There have been many enjoyable experiences in serving on the committee and in particular being a part of "Friends of Bushikori", a support group that raises funds for Bushikori. My communication with Anne Wandendeya through sending summaries of our meetings and other correspondence and her gracious God filled responses is something that I will always value. Her legacy will continue to expand and grow.

You have been a teacher and a school principal in Australia, from this experience you would have seen lives transformed in the school and students benefiting from their education and going on to live

productive lives. This is our aim and mission for students in Uganda, can you speak more on this please?

One of the most important aspects of providing the opportunity for children to learn and grow is the influence of Christian teaching and principles, this is what happens at the Joshua Primary School. When the committee a number of years ago decided to support children through not only their primary education but also their secondary and in some cases tertiary education they helped fulfill the wishes of Anne Wandendeya. There are so many success stories of young people who are now members of the Alumni and are making a contribution to life in Uganda.

You travelled to Uganda a few years ago, can you tell us more about this journey?

In 2012, through my connection with Rotary and the partnership that we have with "The Pink Umbrella Foundation" I received a phone call to say that through Rotary there was an ultra sound machine available if someone could take it to Bushikori. I mentioned this to my daughter who told me that taking the machine to Uganda was a no brainer and she was happy to come with me despite the fact that she would have to leave her two year old son for two weeks. She may have had doubts that I could make the trip by myself! The welcome was warm and sincere, the faith and belief of our friends in Uganda displayed on all occasions, unforgettable. It was also special to have my daughter with me. I look back on my brief time at Bushikori with fondness.

When you are not working for Bushikori what are you passionate about (AFL is the next question)?

I have been a widower for nearly twenty years. I have three children, two sons and a daughter and six grandchildren. It is of great sadness to me that my wife Meryl did not get to know them. My eldest son lives and works in Stockholm. Before the pandemic I visited Stockholm on a regular basis to have fun with my two young granddaughters. I have regular contact with grandsons in Melbourne and Geelong although COVID-19 has made a difference.

What AFL team do you support?

I have been a Geelong Cats supporter all my life and have tried to influence my grand children to be the same without much success. (For the reader, John being a Cats supporter is an understatement!)

What are you reading at the moment?

I'm reading The Enchanted Wanderer by Nikolai Leskov.

Thank so much for taking part in this interview John!



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