

Water, Hope & Opportunity

Stories from
Bushikori, Uganda

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1,000 people

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About Us

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.

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 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.



Please advise our committee if you prefer to receive this newsletter by email or download from

www.bushikori.org.au

Find Us



Bushikori Christian Centre
PO BOX 42
Geelong, Victoria 3220
Australia

Email: sponsorship@bushikori.org.au

Website: www.bushikori.org.au



We Would Like to Thank

- Stephen Davey at Pagination for hosting our website
- Christian College Highton for printing services



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.

Over 30 years of Australians supporting children at Bushikori in Uganda

Editors: Esther Cohen & Pamela Ferrar
Graphic Support: Marnie Leather




Let Us Pray

GUIDED BY **PSALM 46** (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)



*“God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble”*


Dear Lord,

-  You have never let us down, you are always with all those at the Bushikori Christian Centre.
-  You continue to inspire and strengthen all the staff, students and patients as well as volunteers here in Australia.
-  You bless the community with the services available at the Medical Centre where the needy and frail find healing and support.



*“A river brings joy to the city of our God,
the sacred home of the Most High.
God dwells in that city, it can never be
destroyed”*




Dear Lord,

-  We thank you for the Christian foundation of Bushikori with regular Christian worship and teaching for all staff and students.



*“So we will not fear when
earthquakes come and the mountains
crumble into the sea.”*

Dear Lord,

-  You have given us safe and well-equipped boarding houses for the children at Joshua Primary School.
-  Here the children receive a good education, plentiful food, and have new water tanks installed.
-  The services at the Medical Centre continue to grow with safe surgery and ongoing patient care despite many obstacles.



“Be still and know that I am God.”

Dear Lord,

May we all take time to be still, time to pray, time to hear your voice and express our gratitude for all that you do. May we hold onto the promise that you are our refuge and strength whatever happens.



*“The Lord of Heaven’s armies is here among
us, the God of Israel is our fortress.”*

Dear Lord,

We praise your Name and honour you, our Saviour.

Amen.

The Australian Support Committee

KERRY'S REVIEW

It has been wonderful to see so many new sponsors join with us to support children in poverty in Uganda.

I am mindful of the fact we often assume people know about how Bushikori Australia works so I would like to take some time sharing about the Australian Support Committee.



We are a group of volunteers from different churches across Geelong.

Currently there are 9 of us. (More are welcome!) Some of us still work in paid employment, others are "retired" but all of us do our Bushikori tasks in our spare time.

We are not paid, we have no office, we use our own computers, stationary supplies, petrol, phones ... and brains. (No chat bots help us!)

We meet once a month as a committee in someone's home on a Saturday afternoon.



Our database is Filemaker Pro and was custom built for us by Doug Rolfe. We began with a new financial database in 2006, then child sponsorship database in 2008 and both were merged in 2018. It has served us faithfully for many years but some of us dream about having enough time to work on what we would want from a newer model.



Our website was built in 2007 by Stephen Davey (Pagination) and has had a cosmetic overhaul recently but we need to work with Bushikori Uganda to update the content, maybe finding fresher words to express ourselves.

Who are the committee?

And what do we do?

- **Althea Abraham** - helps with grant applications, hosts meetings.
- **Cecilia Bell** - keeps the meeting minutes, hosts meetings.
- **Dennis Grinter** - runs our Edmonds Honey ministry fundraiser.
- **Esther Cohen** - puts financial data in the database, posts out receipts, writes thank you letters to donors, edits our newsletter, speaks about Bushikori wherever invited and hosts meetings.
- **Glenda Salmon** - brings devotions to our meetings.



- **Kerry Peacock** - chairs meetings, has internet calls with Bushikori Uganda, sends out sponsorship payment reminders (we do not have an automated system, Kerry collates and writes every email), pays bills, helps with grant proposals and transfers funds to Bushikori Uganda three times each year.
- **Lucy Stone** - began "Friends of Bushikori" in 2012, and has only just stepped down from leading it. (Who are the "Friends"? A core group of supporters who help us in whatever way they can, usually in fundraising ventures. They do not have to be on the committee.) Hosts meetings.
- **Pamela Ferrar** - liaises with sponsors and Bushikori Uganda on the child sponsorship side of things, including sponsorship data sheets and child letters. Enters data into database. Helps write articles for the newsletter. Speaks about Bushikori wherever invited. Hosts meetings.
- **Rick Peacock** - writes out payment receipts, keeps the financial books, does the monthly accounts report.
- **EVERYONE** - prays, helps fundraising ventures, reads sooo many emails, discusses and makes decisions



How does the money bit work?

We are quite flexible about when you make payments as long as your account is ahead.

By "ahead" we mean there are enough funds in your sponsored student's account in Australia to cover the next transfer of money to Uganda.

When we send to Uganda we are sending the amounts to pay for the students' schooling for the coming months. Ie the May transfer from Australia pays for May, June, July and August school fees in Uganda. The September transfer pays for Sept, Oct, Nov and Dec. The January transfer pays for Jan, Feb, March and April.

- For Primary students (\$360 annually) and Secondary students (\$630 annually), the annual amount is sent one third at a time.
- For Tertiary/Vocational students (\$1000 annually), the amount is halved and sent in Sept and January.

As an added bonus - when your money sits a little while in our account we get a small amount of bank interest which helps towards our ASC admin costs - because we do not keep any of your child sponsorship fees or sponsor donations to help with that. (Costs like auditors fees, stamps, PO Box fee).

Quite simply - we need to have it to be able to send it.



Some of you ask about extra needs for your sponsored student.

The sponsorship covers school fees, and the meal they get at school.

The students' guardian or extended family needs to provide uniforms, shoes, bag, work books.

If they board in hostel they need to provide trunk, sheets, mattress, blanket.

If they can not provide, Bushikori tries to fund from the Impact fund - or from extra gift amounts from the student's sponsor.

The following is once a year costs, in Australian dollars

(amounts quoted in 2025)

- Primary - Uniform \$55, shoes and school bag \$45. If in primary 4,5,6 or 7 then work books \$25
- Secondary - Uniform \$75, work books & personal needs \$190
- Boarding - if in Primary 7 until Senior 6 they need - Trunk \$35, sheets \$30, mattress \$35, blanket \$20. (Hopefully lasts for a few years)

A Life of Service

Honouring Thomas Odoi Valentine

It is with deep sorrow and profound gratitude that we remember **Thomas Odoi Valentine** – a devoted public servant, visionary leader, educator, and faithful community builder whose life was defined by service, integrity, and enduring impact.

For 18 years, he served as Executive Chair of Bushikori, guiding the institution with wisdom, steadiness, and foresight. Yet his influence extended far beyond a single role. His journey spanned public health, education, faith leadership, and international exposure – each chapter enriching the next.



A Connection Forged Through Service

Anne Wandendeya came to know Thomas through Dr. Pauline Tsekoko, who had worked closely with him in government and spoke highly of his integrity and competence. Anne had also personally observed Thomas's leadership within the local church community, where his humility and consistency were evident.

When Anne later served as Chair of the Board of Trustees, her working relationship with Thomas as Executive Chair was built on mutual respect and established trust. Together, they exemplified effective governance – strategic oversight and executive leadership aligned in purpose and commitment.

“

He believed that true leadership begins with service.

”



A Leader in Faith and Community

Thomas served as Chair at his local church, where his leadership reflected his deep faith and moral conviction. He believed that true leadership begins with service, and he modelled that belief faithfully.

He found particular joy in participating in mission programmes, especially the end-of-month prayer gatherings at the centre. These were not routine engagements for him; they were moments of spiritual renewal and communal unity that he cherished deeply. His faith anchored his decisions and shaped his character – steady, principled, and compassionate.



A Foundation in Public Health and Public Service

In the 1960s, Thomas served in government as a public health specialist, working to strengthen health systems and improve the well-being of communities.

During this formative period, he worked alongside Dr. Pauline Tsekoko, another distinguished and long-serving board member. Their shared commitment to public health reflected Thomas's deep belief that leadership must improve the quality of life for ordinary people.

This grounding in disciplined public service shaped the principled leadership he later brought to Bushikori.



International Exposure and Broader Perspective

Thomas's experience was not limited to his home country. He spent a year in the London Borough of Barnet, where he gained valuable exposure to systems, governance structures, and community development models in the United Kingdom.

He also travelled widely across Europe, observing institutions, educational frameworks, and administrative practices. These experiences broadened his perspective and deepened his understanding of organizational development. When he returned, he brought with him a wealth of insight and comparative experience – knowledge that proved invaluable to Bushikori during its growth and transition.

His international exposure sharpened his strategic thinking and strengthened his capacity to guide institutional development with confidence and foresight.



A Visionary in Education: Founder of Oxford High School

Thomas was also the founder of Oxford High School (Mbale), an institution that has had a meaningful impact on education and youth development. Through this vision, he created pathways for young people to access quality education and build promising futures.

Oxford High School stands as a testament to his belief that education transforms lives and strengthens communities. Its continued impact is part of his living legacy.



Eighteen Years of Transformative Stewardship

As Executive Chair of Bushikori for 18 years, Thomas provided consistent, disciplined, and forward-thinking leadership. He strengthened governance structures, fostered collaboration between management and the Board, and ensured that institutional growth remained grounded in accountability and service.

- He brought stability during uncertain times.
- He brought experience when complex decisions were required.
- He brought wisdom shaped by decades of service – both locally and internationally.

A Legacy that Endures

Thomas Odoi Valentine leaves behind a legacy woven through public health service, international exposure, educational vision, faith leadership, and institutional stewardship.

He was a builder – of systems, of schools, of communities, and of hope.

He will be remembered not only for what he achieved, but for how he led: with humility, discipline, faith, and an unwavering commitment to the greater good.

His work lives on in Bushikori, in Oxford High School, in his church community, and in the countless lives he influenced.



May his legacy continue to inspire us.



May his example guide future generations.



And may he rest in eternal peace.

WATER TANK PROJECT

CLEAN WATER, HEALTHIER LIVES, STRONG COMMUNITY.

The Australian Support Committee (ASC) has had links with Rotary Kardinia for over twenty years. In 2003 Richard Stone, a valued member of Rotary Kardinia became the honorary Treasurer for the Bushikori ASC. Over the years we were fortunate enough to have speaking opportunities and in 2010 (after Richard's death) the Richard Stone Tertiary Scholarship was created. Since then Rotary Kardinia has contributed \$2,000 per year to assist exceptional students achieve further education. So far the Scholarship Program has helped produce a Clinical Officer (Medical), a Veterinarian, a Pharmacist and a Doctor of medicine and surgery.



IN MAY 2025

an application for funding a Water Tank Project was made by the ASC to the Rotary Foundation District Grants Committee.



A Letter of Need and Hope

Mary Wanendeya, Executive Director wrote:

“ Dear Rotary District Grants Committee,

Greetings to you from Bushikori Christian Centre Uganda.

Thank you so much for considering us for a water tank project here in Mbale Uganda. We have had issues with running water supply several times on our compound because we have a primary school, a medical centre and sponsorship programme. **On a normal day, we could have over 1,000 people on the compound** including students, staff, patients, as well as cooking, cleaning and the surrounding community that receives support at the centre.

Why the need for water tanks?

The number of people on the compound each day is quite large. The national water supply is not sufficient as many times we have run out of water, making it costly and hard to keep these numbers on compound. The costs for national water are very high each month and in the dry season the water well runs dry. The only company that is allowed to supply water is the fire department and police. We plan to do rain water harvest to allow enough supply therefore the need for water tanks.

How we plan to maintain the water tanks and constant water supply?

Bushikori Christian Centre has a department of the estates. They take on all maintenance for the organisation, from buildings to water, electricity, and sanitation. I am confident this is a project that they can maintain.

We have worked with Rotary club of Kampala South over several projects at our medical centre. We have had medical camps and worked together to support the mothers and children in our community. (Maternal Child Health)

We look forward to working with Rotary Kardinia and making the best of funds as allocated to have the tank project completed and maintained.

Kind regards,
Mary Wanendeya, Executive Director



PROJECT APPROVAL & COMPLETION



AUGUST 2025

The ASC received notification of the grant approval with the scope of the project to install **6 x 10,000 litre** water tanks at the Bushikori Centre in Uganda.



OCTOBER 2025

Work began.



16TH JANUARY 2026

The project was successfully completed.



Joshua Primary School

students living on site at Bushikori in the Hostels are so thankful for the water they use for their washing.

We believe the Water Tank project will make a **long term difference** to the Bushikori Centre. It will relieve an area of financial burden, releasing funds to use on health care.

It will also provide a reliable source of **clean drinking water** for hundreds of people of the Bushikori community all year round.



**THANK YOU,
ROTARY KARDINIA**

We are grateful for the collaboration with Rotary Kardinia in achieving the Water Tank project.

Pink Umbrella Foundation Support

The Bushikori Health Centre (BCC) in partnership with Pink Umbrella Foundation (PUF) offers services in Maternal Child Health, HIV/AIDS comprehensive care and Adolescence Sexual Reproductive Health through community activities and participation.



“ BCC provides excellent healthcare services to thousands of patients. Its main goal is to grow and deliver continuous essential health services across its catchment area. ”

There are 19 Inpatient Beds at Bushikori and daily outpatient clinical services. The centre has continued to offer specialised services in HIV/AIDS, the Expanded Immunisation Programme (EPI), Adolescent and Sexual Reproductive Health (ASH), and Community Health Initiatives.



25 mothers required a caesarean birth during the past year.

Thanks to the Anne Leah surgical unit and competent doctors onsite, only a small number of these women needed to be referred to the main hospital in Mbale.



BCC provides a comprehensive maternal health care service for all mothers who attend the centre.

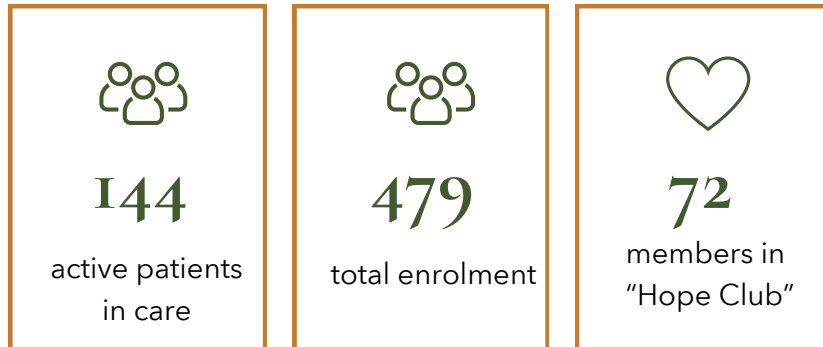


THE POWER OF DOULAS

In the community, women initially depend on Doulas (formerly Traditional Birth Attendants) to support them through pregnancy and childbirth.

BCC with the help of Charlotte O'Neill and the Pink Umbrella Foundation have provided Doulas with curriculum training. They continue to receive refresher training to help them perform their duties effectively.

The HIV/AIDS clinic now has 144 patients out of a total enrolment of 479. These clinics face several challenges, including dropout rates, high costs for opportunistic infection treatment, and the inability to lower viral load. These challenges have been compounded by funding cuts that once supported key components of the Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) program.



BCC has established a family support group ("Hope Club") that has 72 members. Assistance is provided to help them cultivate food on their farms, along with health education sessions, mosquito nets, Christmas food parcels and World AIDS Day events.

ELIMINATING MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION

The Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS (EMTCT) initiative is one of the ways that the 90% decrease in HIV transmission is being accomplished. The EMTCT program runs the mother-infant care clinic.

EQUIPMENT DONATIONS & USAGE

The Rotary Club of Brisbane Water (NSW), in conjunction with the Pink Umbrella Foundation, has also provided support by giving equipment to the Bushikori Medical Centre.



During a recent visit from these donors in early December, they donated microscopes and other laboratory equipment for the pathology services at the centre.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AFTER USAID CUTS

Service delivery has been greatly hindered by the USA ceasing USAID to Uganda and other developing nations early 2025. Previously USAID funding contributed to healthcare programmes such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis treatment and control. Many of the Maternal Child Health clinic activities were sustained by this past funding.

THANK YOU!

PUF deserves thanks for maintaining their support towards BCC.

This has enabled the expansion and sustainability of different aspects of healthcare.

The centre has received grants and equipment from PUF that are all essential for the day to day operations.



Joshua Primary School News

GROWING IN FAITH, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY

As a faith-based school, Joshua Primary School emphasises the spiritual growth of students. The CET programme runs every Thursday and Sunday, focusing on teaching Christian principles and Bible stories of hope.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Easter and Christmas productions at the school featured student participation in music, dance, and drama, fostering confidence and creativity.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Students demonstrated compassion by visiting Gangama Children's Home in Mbale District, taking gifts of Irish potatoes, sugar, soap and eggs.

NEW BLACKBOARD

We give thanks for a timely donation for Joshua Primary School that was recently given by a sponsor in Geelong. There was much joy when the funds arrived in Uganda. It enabled the teachers to purchase a new blackboard to equip a recently built classroom for the upper primary students.



KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE PAST YEAR

- Improved moral development and behaviour
- Increased compassion and empathy among students
- Active participation in community outreach

Graduation and Course Completion

We are grateful to our Lord for our sponsors who faithfully support students for many years. At the end of their vocational or tertiary course we expect a final letter from the student to their sponsor.

Each sponsored student, now a young adult has journeyed from difficult circumstances and poverty to hope for a future with employment and the means to support themselves and their families.

Many of the final letters are heartfelt and full of joy and gratitude to the Lord and their sponsors, it is encouraging to read them and think about lives transformed through Bushikori, this is why we do what we do.



“

Here is an extract from a student’s letter to her sponsor after her graduation, **she was supported through her education for 17 years:**

‘I am here to extend my gratitude to you for your loving and caring nature. You supported me for the last 17 years even though you did not know me, your kindness has enabled me to reach where I am today. I graduated from university with a Bachelor of Arts with Education. It was surely the best day of my life when my name was read out loud. I screamed and tears rolled down my cheeks because of too much happiness. I wished that you could have seen me at that moment. Thank you so much for the sacrifices you made for me and may God bless you abundantly.’

”



**IN 2025,
17 STUDENTS
SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THEIR COURSES**

We give glory to God for the provision of financial support, knowledge, and wisdom, and for the commitment and perseverance demonstrated by the children as they completed their educational journeys.

While some institutions held formal graduation ceremonies in 2025, others will conduct graduations this year.

COURSES COMPLETED IN 2025

- ✓ Skills in Brick Laying
- ✓ Skills in Tailoring
- ✓ Certificate in Welding
- ✓ Certificate in Laboratory Techniques
- ✓ Bachelor of Law
- ✓ Skills in Baking and Pastry
- ✓ Certificate in Electrical Installation
- ✓ Certificate in Fashion and Design
- ✓ Bachelor of Hotel and Institutional Catering
- ✓ Skills in Catering
- ✓ Certificate in Building and Concrete Practice
- ✓ Diploma in Information Technology
- ✓ Diploma in Business Administration
- ✓ Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery
- ✓ Bachelor of Forestry
- ✓ Bachelor of Education

Sponsorship Opportunities



Assiah

8 YEARS OLD

Assiah is eight years old. Her family lost their home in mudslides and her father makes chappatis to earn money for the family.



Elvis Geofrey

6 YEARS OLD

Elvis Geofrey is six years old. His father died recently so he is an orphan. Elvis is a twin and there are four children in the family, the oldest is ten years old.



Stella

6 YEARS OLD

Stella is six years old. Her father has left the family and her mother washes clothes and does farming for others to make a living. They live in a one room house with one meal a day.



Base

5 YEARS OLD

Base is five years old. She is from a large family with no secure income, they have one meal a day.



Why Sponsorship Matters

The construction of a home indicates the level of poverty of a family. A mud and wattle home is constructed using local soil and branches, with an iron roof that hopefully does not leak. A brick home is a more secure construction.

All of these children do not have food security and education is an absolute necessity to change the circumstances of the family and their future.

We thank God that with sponsorship lives are transformed, as testified by all the students who have completed their studies and are living well, with secure homes and food security assured. This is the hope we have for these children.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

STUDENT TYPE	MONTHLY [^]	YEARLY	BY TRANSFER TO UGANDA [^]
Primary Student	\$30	\$360	\$120 every April, August & December
Secondary Student	\$52.50	\$630	\$210 every April, August & December
Tertiary/Vocational	\$84	\$1000	\$500 every August & December

[^]if you wish to change to monthly, we may need an adjustment payment first

*please note you can pay in months earlier than this - these months are the final times to pay

INTERESTED IN SPONSORING A CHILD?

If you would like to learn more about sponsorship opportunities, we would love to hear from you.



Pamela Ferrar

Sponsorship Co-ordinator



sponsorship@bushikori.org.au



0407 576 441

Our Work in Uganda

Bushikori is a Child Sponsorship Program. The committed Ugandan staff at Bushikori provide a much-needed service to the impoverished farming community; particularly the vulnerable children (regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, tribe). From nursery to tertiary/vocational, sponsorship covers school fees, uniform, scholastic materials, medical care and welfare. **All of the sponsorship fees go directly to Uganda.**



JOSHUA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Joshua Primary School is providing quality education to students from Nursery to Primary Seven.

Classes are taught in English. Every student at JPS receives two meals a day, which for some is the only food that they eat each day.



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY LIBRARY

School and Community Library was established through a support group from the United States of America.

It provides much needed textbooks, recreational reading books and a space for training.



BUSHIKORI HEALTH CENTRE

Bushikori Health Centre provides comprehensive healthcare services to the surrounding communities, including general medicine, surgical services, immunisation, maternal and child health care, laboratory services, HIV testing and care, TB screening and treatment, ultrasound services and blood transfusions.

The Anne Leah Surgical Wing operates 24/7 providing specialised surgical care with caesarean sections the most common procedure.



DONATE TO A FUND

CENTRE FUND	Each month the Australian Support Committee must send funds to keep the Ugandan Centre running (i.e. power, fuel, Ugandan staff wages)
HEALTH CENTRE FUND	Support to employ Ugandan staff
ANNE LEAH SURGICAL FUND	Support for surgical services
RICHARD STONE MEMORIAL FUND	Support for students in tertiary/vocational education
IMPACT FUND	Support for special needs of children, used at the discretion of Ugandan staff (i.e. housing, bedding, food, clothing)
CHRISTMAS FUND	Support for the annual gathering and gifts of rice, cooking oil, flour, sugar for all the sponsored children and families.
JOSHUA PRIMARY SCHOOL FUND	Support for infrastructure and to employ Ugandan teachers.



HOW TO DONATE

All donations and sponsorship fees:
Payable to Bushikori Australian Support Committee bank account

BUSHIKORI AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT COMMITTEE

BSB 063 858 | **ACCOUNT NO** 1007 7253

Please email your contact details and donation allocation for receipt purposes.



If undeliverable, please return to:
Bushikori Christian Centre
Newsletter PO Box 42,
Geelong, Victoria 3220
