Bushikori CHRISTIAN CENTRE

Stories of Faith, Hope & Service



Stories from Bushikori, Uganda

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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

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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 100** (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)



"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs."

Yes Lord,

We will worship you with gladness as we come before you with deep gratitude for all that you have done and continue to do for all involved with the Bushikori Christian Centre.

You are the provider of all things and we are humbled by your generosity, this we receive with joy through your servants who serve both you and this Mission.



"Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture."

Yes Lord,

We do honour you as our Lord and Saviour. Without you we can do nothing, but in your Grace and Mercy we can achieve so much as we heed your calling to love our neighbours as ourselves and care for the poor and needy who come to Bushikori for help.



"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His Name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."

Yes Lord,

You shower us with richest blessings, may we honour you with our witness to those around us, that you are God who through your Holy Spirit changes lives and brings love, hope and peace to all who seek you.

Amen.

The Bushikori Story

The Beginning: Part One

The partnership between Bushikori Christian Centre (BCC) in Mbale, Uganda, and the Australian Support Committee (ASC) is now 32 years old.

To honour our founders, and especially our Lord who brings all things into being, we would like to share two stories: that of Sam Wandendeya, founder of BCC Uganda, and Margery Hobbs, founder of the ASC. Margery's story will feature in our next newsletter.

Kerry Peacock (Chair of the ASC since 2002) writes:

"For me, Bushikori is, and will always be, the story of people brought together by God. It is the story of Sam and Margery."



SAM WANDENDEYA'S STORY

Sam's story begins in the 1970s, when Idi Amin ruled Uganda as a tyrant, shocking the world with a murderous regime that killed tens of thousands of his own people.

In 1979, during the final days of Amin's reign of terror, Sam Wandendeya, a young Christian businessman who owned a bus company, offered to drive a small group of men, including the Bishop of Mbale, to Kampala. They were seeking help because, although the civil war was supposedly over in the east, Amin's troops were still fighting.

At a roadblock just before Jinja, the men were taken prisoner and transported to Gadhafi Garrison, where they were placed in a cell with other prisoners. At the barracks, soldiers were massacring hundreds of people who had been arrested earlier that day.

That night, Sam spoke to his fellow prisoners, saying, "It seems like there is no way out of here. The only way is to commit our life to Christ, to confess our sins and if we are killed we shall go to the Father."

The soldiers had been taking prisoners out one at a time and shooting them. Then Sam heard them arguing that this was taking too long. He prayed, "God please take my soul."

As fighting broke out among the prisoners, Sam cried out, "God why can't you save my life?"

He heard a Voice saying, "Stand behind the door."

Sam obeyed. At that very moment, the cell door was flung open and soldiers began shooting into the room. All the other prisoners were killed. As the soldiers moved to the next cell, Sam, still hiding behind the door, heard the Voice say, "Run!"

He ran into the darkness as soldiers fired at him. Dropping to the ground, he removed his clothing so he could not be seen in the dark. When things quietened, he managed to escape. He was the only survivor.

Sam knocked on many doors seeking help until one woman finally gave him clothing. He then walked the long journey east to his brother's home, where he remained until the country was fully liberated. His family, who had believed him dead, were overjoyed to see him.

A CALLING TO SERVE

Yet Sam had no peace, even after returning home. His eight companions, including the Bishop, had been killed. Every day he asked God, "Why did you spare my life?"

The answer he received was to go and tell people about Jesus.

Sam wondered how he could do this without being a trained pastor. God gave him the words of 1 Corinthians 1:26–29:

"Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were influential, not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."

This reminds us that God's ways are not our human ways. He often chooses the lowly so that all may know it is through His power alone that His will is done.

Sam held firmly to this message: God calls the humble and provides the wisdom, resources and strength they need.

He asked his family for time away to pray and spent three days fasting and praying at his brother's house. During this time, Sam said God gave him many visions, which eventually led him to train as a pastor, spend time in America and England, and return to Mbale, Uganda.

A LASTING LEGACY

Sam also welcomed orphans into his own home. Together, he and his wife Anne cared for 400 orphans. He also planted 15 churches, which continue today, each independently run by its local Ugandan community.



Sam Wandendeya during a visit to Australia in 1994, with Margery Hobbs (front left), founder of the Australian Support Committee.

FAITH IN ACTION

Sam wrote: "Since the Lord had blessed me with all that I needed, I went to market places, on streets, to prisons preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Lord was confirming what was said to me. While I was preaching I came across orphans, widows, street children who had nothing to eat. I formed a team of six people to work with me. We started helping these poor people by providing food, clothing and medical care using the money God had blessed me with."

This money came from Sam's bus business. He used land he owned in the village of Bushikori to build a church and clinic, which remain on the site of Bushikori Christian Centre today.



Sam Wandendeya receiving a microscope donated from Geelong during Pamela Ferrar's visit to Bushikori in 1997.

"Sam Wandendeya's remarkable testimony of being saved from death in 1979, his response to God's calling and his life of service to others remain a lasting legacy, both in Uganda and here in Australia. Thanks be to God!"

July Thanksgiving Month

Each July at Bushikori Christian Centre in Uganda, staff set aside time during their busy year for intentional prayer and outreach to families in need within their community.

Staff involve their families and friends, inviting them to contribute gifts. This year, everyone was encouraged to pause and pray each day from 12.45–1pm.

Throughout the school year, staff gather for a daily service called Morning Glory, a time of devotion and prayer before work begins. During July, various Bushikori Board members were invited to lead the Friday Morning Glory services and share their testimonies.



GIVING TO THOSE IN NEED

Staff and Board members donated clothing, household items and food to support 30 families in need, many of whom do not receive sponsorship assistance.

SHARING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Gifts were distributed through home visits and small gatherings, where families shared a simple lunch and received practical support. With so much need in the community, the team continues to pray for wisdom and discernment in helping others.



Families and Bushikori staff gather during July Thanksgiving Month



"If we are not careful, 30 becomes 300 in an instant!"

A reminder of the great need in the community and the importance of prayer and discernment.

Scan to watch a video from July Thanksgiving 2026.

Bushikori Staff Profile

MEET BESSIE WABUKYE

My name is Bessie Wabukye. I am 35 years old, married with three children (two boys and a girl), and expecting our fourth child soon.

I joined Bushikori Christian Centre in March 2016, celebrating 10 years of service this year.

MY ROLE AT BUSHIKORI

As Sponsor Relations Officer in the Childcare Department, I support sponsored children in many areas of their lives. My responsibilities include processing school fees, organising school and home visits, children's gatherings and conferences, coordinating letters, counselling and monitoring children's wellbeing.

My journey to Bushikori was unexpected. I graduated as an accountant and originally applied for an accounting position. Although unsuccessful, the organisation recognised that my previous experience working with women's savings groups and local communities would be valuable in Sponsor Relations.

I accepted the opportunity and have come to appreciate how this role allows me to use my communication and relationship-building skills while contributing to Bushikori's mission.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Supporting sponsored children and their families is incredibly fulfilling. It gives me a sense of purpose, knowing my work makes a difference in their lives. I particularly value building relationships with families, listening to their needs and seeing their progress. Even small contributions to a child's education, wellbeing and future can be deeply meaningful.

There are challenges, particularly when families misunderstand sponsorship. Some parents believe money is being withheld from their children, while others neglect their parental responsibilities. Some children also take sponsorship for granted.



However, as a Christian, I see these challenges as opportunities to serve others and reflect God's love. This work is about treating each child and family with dignity, compassion and respect.

SHOWING GOD'S LOVE

I believe blessing others doesn't always require something big. It can be as simple as sharing a meal, spending time with someone, listening or reminding them that they are not forgotten.

Providing food to those in need is one practical way of demonstrating God's love. It reflects Bushikori's mission:

"To fulfil the great commission of Jesus Christ in word and deed by empowering orphans, vulnerable children, widows and needy persons in different communities."

For me, it is not just about giving food or practical support. It is about showing people they are valued, cared for and remembered, and most importantly, sharing the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE

Like many people, I once imagined myself working in the banking sector. But life unfolded differently, and God had another plan.

> *"Sometimes what you are called to do is greater than what you imagined for yourself."*

Sponsorship, Partnership & Relationship

Sponsorship is more than financial support – it is a partnership built on prayer, encouragement and long-term commitment. Through these relationships, we see lives transformed, families strengthened and communities given hope for the future.

SPONSOR

Recently, I received a letter from my sponsored student, Wyclef, who is now at university studying nursing. His choice of a career in healthcare is such a blessing after 14 years of sponsoring his education and praying for him and his family.

Wyclef's story, like many others at Bushikori, is one of transformation – from despair to confidence in the future, made possible through education.

I encourage fellow sponsors to continue their faithful support, as the journey through education can be long. Not every sponsorship journey is smooth, and I have experienced sadness when students have been unable to continue their education due to changing personal circumstances.

Yet we so often hear how sponsorship gives children hope, confidence and determination to succeed, even when challenges seem overwhelming.

A LASTING MEMORY

In 2012, I had the privilege of visiting Bushikori and meeting Wyclef and his mother. Their living conditions left a lasting impression. The family faced extreme poverty, an unsafe dwelling and a daily struggle to obtain enough food. It was an overwhelming reminder of the importance of our sponsorship programme.

Despite living with serious illness, Wyclef's mother worked in a quarry, spending her days sitting on the ground and breaking rocks by hand. Today, the family relies on subsistence farming, growing food for themselves and selling any surplus to purchase essential household items.



Wyclef's mother in 2018

A FAMILY STRENGTHENED

We are thankful that Bushikori identified this family in need, enabling Wyclef to begin his schooling through sponsorship in 2012.

His mother was also encouraged to attend the Bushikori Health Clinic, where regular treatment has improved her quality of life.

On one occasion, she arrived carrying a large container of sweet bananas on her head as a gift for us. During my last visit, she even presented me with a live chicken to take home for a meal!

We so often experience extraordinary generosity from those who have so little to share. Yet they give with thanksgiving and trust in a God who provides.

Receiving these gifts is deeply humbling, and my heart is touched by such kindness.



Wyclef, now 21 years old, recently wrote about his determination to study hard and pursue a career in nursing.

STUDENT

My mother is living with several chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS, hypertension and diabetes. She is frequently sick and requires ongoing medical care and support.

Her health condition greatly influences my life and is one of the strongest motivations behind my desire to pursue a career in healthcare.
Seeing my mother live with these challenges gives me a strong desire to understand illnesses, care for patients and improve the lives of people facing similar difficulties.

I am determined to succeed so that, in the future, I can better care for my mother and support my family and the wider community.

I am particularly proud to be the first person in my family to reach university. This achievement represents not only my personal determination but also a significant milestone for my family.

Being the first in my family to attend university motivates me to work even harder and become a good example to my siblings and other young people in my community.

I am determined to successfully complete my Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and become a highly competent, compassionate and dedicated medical professional.



Wyclef (centre) with Mary Wanendeya (left) and Bessie Wabukye (right) in 2018.

A Very Welcome Donation

Artery forceps no longer used at one of our local hospitals were generously offered to a member of our support committee.

We often say God's timing is perfect, and it was! One of our Bushikori supporters was travelling to Uganda the following week and happened to have extra luggage allowance. Space was quickly made for this last-minute gift.

The artery forceps were safely delivered to the operating theatre team at the Anne Leah Surgical Wing at Bushikori Christian Centre. We are so thankful for this equipment and for God's wonderful provision!



Esther Namirembe, a clinical officer and former sponsored student.

Annual General Meeting

The Australian Support Committee held it's AGM on Tuesday 20th October at 7.30pm.

Grateful thanks to St John's Highton for allowing us to meet in their room, and for generously photocopying our annual report.

The Australian Support Committee considers it a privilege to partner with Bushikori Christian Centre through providing prayer support, organising child sponsorship in Australia and administering donated funds to help resource BCC.



Partnering together to see lives transformed for the glory of God.

ELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kerry Peacock	President
Esther Cohen	Vice President
Cecilia Bell	Secretary
Rick Peacock	Hon Treasurer
Pamela Ferrar	Sponsorship Coordinator

GENERAL COMMITTEE

Lucy Stone, Glenda Salmon, Althea Abraham and Dennis Grinter.

FRIENDS OF BUSHIKORI

The Friends of Bushikori are the support group of the Australian Support Committee. They help in providing creative ideas for fundraising and fellowship, and for staging events. Events are vital to provide operating funds and to spread the word of Bushikori.

Our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation to Helen McLean, Bill and Sue Jennings, Lucy Stone, Fiona Alchin, Marg Ryan and Julie Eldridge for your amazing support.

Please email sponsorship@bushikori.org.au if you are interested in joining.

Supporting Bushikori Together

FRIENDS OF BUSHIKORI

The Friends of Bushikori held their annual garage sale on Saturday 17 October at St John's Highton, and what a wonderful day it was!

Blessed with beautiful weather and a fantastic turnout, the day was filled with generosity, fellowship and a real spirit of community.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated goods, baked for the stall, helped with sorting and selling, supported the day in prayer or came along to find a bargain. Your generosity and hard work made the event such a success.



PAUSE FOR A CAUSE

In 2020, during the COVID lockdowns, Belmont Uniting Church began Pause for a Cause as a way to combine daily prayer with practical support for Bushikori.

Each day, people were encouraged to pause, pray for Bushikori and place a small donation in a jar while enjoying their first cuppa of the day.

This simple initiative has continued each September or October since, apart from 2021, and remains a wonderful example of how prayer and generosity can go hand in hand. We are so grateful to Belmont Uniting Church and everyone who continues to support Bushikori through Pause for a Cause.

Spreading the News

We had several opportunities to share the mission of Bushikori with the wider community this past year.

St. Paul's Christmas Tree Festival in December 2025 was well attended, and we were able to chat with many interested people and give out Newsletters and brochures. Pamela and Esther talked at Little River and Lara Anglican Church services, giving updates from Uganda and receiving generous donations.

Pamela also spoke at Anglesea Trinity Uniting Church, Belmont Uniting Church, and more recently to Year 11 and 12 students at Covenant College. Althea spoke at Rotary Kardinia and a mission update was given to St John's Highton in the form of a video prepared in Uganda by Mary Wanendeya. These occasions provide valuable connections and highlight the prayer and financial needs as well as the great work being done in Uganda to feed, clothe and educate children and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fundraising Spotlight

THE FIRST HYMN



On Saturday 27 June, 87 people gathered at St John's Anglican Church, Highton, for a special screening of the documentary The First Hymn.

After considering the possibility of showing the film earlier in the year, we were inspired by hearing the hymn sung at St Paul's Anglican Church in St Leonards and felt led by the Lord to organise this wonderful afternoon fundraiser. Those attending enjoyed the film, the opportunity to sing together and fellowship over afternoon tea.

The documentary tells the remarkable story of a discovery that has brought the blessing of ancient Christian worship to a new generation. In the ancient ruins of Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, archaeologists unearthed a papyrus fragment containing the earliest known Christian hymn, complete with lyrics and musical notation.

Hosted by Australian historian John Dickson, The First Hymn follows this ancient song from its origins to its rediscovery today. Composers Chris Tomlin and Ben Fielding reimagine the melody for modern worship, culminating in a live concert performance.

Find out more at www.thefirsthymnmovie.com

Christmas at Bushikori



Christmas is a joyous occasion as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Each year in early December, Bushikori Christian Centre holds its Annual Christmas Gathering. This special celebration brings children and their guardians together to worship and praise the Lord, share a delicious meal and enjoy a soft drink – a rare and welcome treat of Fanta, Sprite or Pepsi!

Each child also receives a parcel of essential food items and soap to take home to their family – a much-appreciated gift.

CHRISTMAS FUND

AUD $7000

This year, approximately $7,000 is needed to transport children to Bushikori, provide a special Christmas meal and prepare gifts for families.

We encourage our supporters to prayerfully consider making a donation to the Christmas Fund. Thank you for your generosity!

CHRISTMAS AT BUSHIKORI

Scan to watch two short videos from our 2025 Christmas celebrations.

Joshua Primary School News

SPELLING BEE SUCCESS!

Three of our JPS students, Claude, Enos and Kyle have achieved wonderful results in the Enjuba Spelling Bee competitions.

Earlier in the year, six students from Joshua Primary School (JPS) were selected to represent their school at the regional competition held at Nkokonjeru Primary School in Mbale. The event involved 150 students from 10 schools and was enthusiastically supported by an incredible 200 fellow JPS students who came along to cheer them on.

At the regional competition Enos progressed well to three out of five rounds. Claude and Kyle progressed through five rounds and were then selected to represent Mbale at the national finals in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda.

The national competition held on 24 October 2026 had reached more than 1,000 schools across Uganda, with just 253 pupils qualifying for the finals. Of these, only three students would advance to represent Uganda at the East African regional competition.

Claude and Kyle made it all the way to the quarter-finals, an outstanding achievement!

For Claude, it was also his first visit to Kampala and the prestigious Serena Hotel. Competing on a national stage, beneath the bright lights and cameras, was an unforgettable experience and a wonderful opportunity for both boys to develop their confidence and composure.

Although they didn't progress to the final rounds, the experience provided valuable learning opportunities and helped build their confidence.

We are so proud of these students and congratulate them on this fantastic achievement!



1,000+
SCHOOLS REACHED

253
NATIONAL QUALIFIERS

3
JPS ACHIEVEMENT

To learn more about the Uganda National Spelling Bee, visit www.enjuba.com/uganda-spelling-bee.



Sponsorship Opportunities



Assiah

10 YEARS OLD

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



Brian

11 YEARS OLD

Brian is eleven years old. Born in Sudan during wartime, his father has died and his mother is unemployed. Brian lives with an elderly grandmother.



Shafiq

9 YEARS OLD

Shafiq is nine years old. He is from a large family living in a humble mud and wattle home. There is no secure income for the family and only a small piece of land for subsistence farming.



Rania

4 YEARS OLD

Rania is four years old. She comes from a large family with no reliable source of income, making it difficult to meet basic needs and afford education.

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	$53	$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	*ALL SPECIFIED DONATIONS GO TO UGANDA*
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.

Bushikori
CHRISTIAN CENTRE

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