

Partners' Progress-Uganda

The Newsletter of Real Partners Uganda, Inc.

April 2013

2012: Best Year Yet at TOLM

by Joe Griswold

Love and hard work addressing the endless needs of poor children in Lukaya, Uganda resulted in a remarkable year of ministry for RPU and the Ugandans who work for Tree of Life Ministries (TOLM). Made possible by a 40% jump in giving and a 35% increase in the number of donors, 394 children with few prospects for education and the basic necessities of life, thrived and achieved at Mustard Seed Academy.

Six health-related initiatives, led by long term volunteer Kristen Pettet & colleagues, changed the approach to health care at Mustard Seed from being simply responsive to sick children, to being proactive in prevention and education. For example, the incidence of malaria dropped when the new student Health Team promoted Artemisia tea and everyone began drinking 2 cups per week. And absenteeism among menstruating girls dropped dramatically when the AFRipads initiative took care of hygienic issues.

Rapha's House was completed, and the 24 orphans from the family in 2011 grew to over 40 in their new house. The Campus Life Centre with its 500-seat pavilion, emerged and hosted the wedding reception of TOLM's general manager in October along with several other events. During the same time, the Nursery School complex with classrooms, offices and the health clinic was being completed just across campus.

Mustard Seed Academy's first graduating class, took their national "leavers" exam, and the results were spectacular: 14 of 24 students in the class passed in the top category of "first grade" scores, 9 got "second grades", and no one failed. District-wide, among thousands of students, three MSA scholars were in the top five. All 24 are enrolled in the new Mustard Seed Secondary School.

We are so thankful for our RPU donors and the 21 volunteers, who together have blessed so many children, giving them and their families--even the community-- great hope for the future. The story of 2012 is of the Kingdom brought closer.



eMi (Engineering Ministries International) team spent a week working with TOLM leadership to develop a master plan for the new primary and secondary school campus. (More about their visit and plans in June.)

2013: Promises to be even better

With the first quarter of 2013 already gone, We can report--from Uganda--that there are great expectations for an exciting and challenging year. Already 21 volunteers from 4 countries have spent significant time in Lukaya contributing in various ways. From *Engineering Ministries International* a team of 11 architects and engineers spent a week with us working to design a master plan for a new 11-acre campus that will house both primary and secondary schools. Their final package, including building designs for Phase 1, will be ready in June. We look forward to some vigorous capital fund-raising so that our primary school can move to new quarters by January 2014. We are making plans for ten more volunteers who will be arriving over the next 3 months.

As we visited in February, MSA opened with 469 students, up from 394 last year. A big addition was the new secondary school where a class of 35 students entered the first level. We were greeted by over 40 full- and part-time staff--many of them new to the project.

And the "SAC Family" at Rapha's House is growing fast, from 43 last year to 54 as school started. Head of Education John Robert Inyalio explains that the longer we have these children in our care, the more families fall apart with parents dying of AIDS, or in some cases, exploiting older kids by overworking them at home. We need sponsors!

A biogas system for decomposing human wastes will shortly provide fuel for a new kitchen at the Nursery Campus.

RPU's big challenge is to provide resources for campus development while supporting strong academic and child-care programs. Won't you join us?

Left: The lovely appearance of these girls from MSA's P-7 class belies the hardships they've faced in their young lives.

Volunteers & Visitors Enrich the MSA Experience



Donna Paakkonen teaching "I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly" with help from Marsha Galespie and the Old Lady puppet--such a popular activity that she was requested to take it up to the primary school classes.



Primary-4 students entertaining their schoolmates and American visitors at a party honoring new students and staff at MSA.



Above: "Professor Joseph" shares photos from his iPad with MSA students.



Above right: Diane Falk enjoying a student's poem written during her poetry writing activity.

Right: Secondary school students visit "Ijajja Elaine" at the RPU apartment. They love M&M's...and their new sports uniforms! (Ijajja means grandmother in Luganda. Elaine is grandmother to hundreds of MSA students.)



'It is an act of faith to participate in something so difficult to accomplish yet see how a small group can make such a difference.'

RPU Board member on "Why are we a part of this organization?"



The Nursery School is nearly complete. In the foreground, a huge water tank for holding collected rainwater from the classroom roofs. Much of the finishing work is being guided by Sean Cashin.



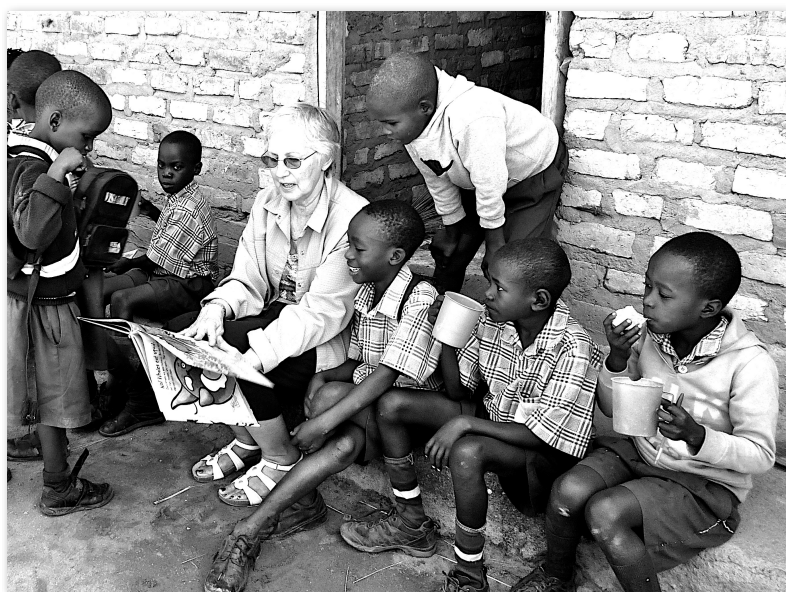
Above: Happy sponsored Secondary Students after shopping at the Friday market: Patti Ford, Aisha, Joe Griswold, Stuart, Sean Cashin and Oliver.



Volunteer Marsha Galespie accompanied by two nursery school students on her walk "home."



Left: Teacher Sylvia, head of the nursery section, & Lee Whitton enjoying a happy moment at the TOLM staff party hosted by RPU visitors.



Retired librarian Judy Sconyers shares a book at break time with eager primary school students.

Below: After pre-test counseling for students and parents, the whole school was tested for HIV/AIDS. Thankfully, very few tested positive. Those who did were counseled, and appropriate treatment started right away. Thanks to Uganda Cares, the newest NGO in Lukaya and to Kristen Pettet and Amelia Cave who made the plans in December.



The Door to Rapha's House

Rapha's House is a wonderful home, but most Americans wouldn't think so. Fifty of the neediest children--orphaned, deserted, abused---live there. Each one of them has a story, usually tragic but also inspiring wonder at their resilience. At RPU we find sponsors who pay just over a dollar a day (\$35/mo.) for everything--housing, food, bed, supervision, clothing.

At Rapha's House the children sleep in large bedrooms on double or triple decker bunks. For most, it's their first mattress and the first time they have regular meals and adults who parent them. And they have a family of 'brothers and sisters.'

Angela. Near the end of our recent trip, RPU's Elaine Griswold was visited by a group of Primary 4 kids. The 'ring-leader' is a little girl--we'll call her Angela. She is confident, upbeat and smily, and a good English speaker. But today there was no smile. Her eyes were downcast and she looked tired. As the group departed, Elaine pulled Angela aside, expressing concern. Giving a weak smile, the little girl related, without tears, how a couple of days ago her mother had left 5,000 Uganda Shillings (less than \$2) and told her she was going away for awhile. Angela had used up the money and didn't know how she would eat, and she was scared to stay alone.

Alarmed by Angela's story, Elaine contacted TOLM's social worker who had a staff member fetch Angela to take her to Rapha's House. The big smile returned as she received a warm welcome. Rescuing MSA students occurs too often--it's part of serving the area's neediest kids.

Student sponsorships range from \$180 for nursery and primary day students to \$790 for a secondary student living at Rapha's House (Secondary School + Boarding). The different types of sponsorships are summarized in the table below:

Sponsorship and code	Annual Donation	Monthly Donation
Nursery/Primary School--Day Student (SAC)	\$180	\$16*
Secondary School--Day Student (SAC-HS)	\$420	\$35*
Rapha's House--all ages, boarding only (SACF)	\$370	\$31*
Residential Primary School (SACF+PS)	\$180+\$370 = \$550	\$46*
Residential Secondary School (SACF+HS)	\$420+\$370 = \$790	\$66*

**We regret that we do not have the staff to handle monthly checks from all of our student sponsors. Sponsors who wish to pay on a monthly basis may do so through our website's "Donate" page by choosing "subscription" payments.*



RPU Director, Jackie Sarner enjoys a visit with the girls at Rapha's House.

RPU's Fiscal Year 2012 Overview

The RPU Board of Directors are especially grateful to the 415 donors whose generosity supported our work in Uganda in 2012. Special thanks to: partner **Ken Bennett** whose campaign literally "raised the roof" on the Campus Life Centre; **Kristen Pettet** who spent much of 2012 at TOLM, establishing a host of health programs; accountant **Ken Groome** whose volunteer help kept RPU financial records and reports on track again this year. Unpaid, but working full-time was RPU Executive Director Elaine Griswold. She led the team!

Opening balance Jan. 1 2012	\$59,354
Revenue	
Individual donations (includes churches)	\$234,854
Corporate & Business Grants	\$14,980
Foundations & trust funds (grants)	\$70,000
Special Events Income	\$6,080
Total Income	\$325,914
Expenses	
TOLM/MSA grants for operations	\$193,694
TOLM grants for capital development	\$117,030
Grants to cooperating NGOs	\$14,191
RPU Administrative Expense	\$5,586
Total Expenses	\$330,501
Balance as of Dec. 31, 2012	\$54,767

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Our heartfelt thanks to all of the donors and sponsors of 2012. You made it possible for over 450 Ugandans to experience health and hope! Bless you.

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