

BLESSINGS OF JOY NEWS



P.O. Box 701143 Tulsa, OK 74170

MWERUKA JUNIOR SCHOOL, UGANDA, AFRICA



DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Solomon Mutebi is the founder and director of Blessings of Joy-Uganda and Mweruka Junior School (MJS). He recently visited the staff at MJS and Blessings of Joy-Uganda. As a teacher, answering God's call in 2006, Solomon founded MJS in Mweruka region, an underserved remote area still without electricity. The school flourished and grew. In 2012 Solomon came to the United States to seek school funding. He is now a US citizen and works as a registered nurse at a local hospital. He, his Ugandan wife and family live in the Tulsa area. This newsletter reviews the school's growth and shares "Uncle" Solomon's observations during his recent visit.



SOLOMON NURSING SCHOOL GRADUATION.



SOLOMON WITH MJS CHILDREN

SPONSORED CHILDREN: Currently there are 43 sponsored children at MJS and 20 students sponsored in high schools. Some sponsors continue to help their children through high school, college or trade school. MJS sponsored children are selected by staff based on need. Many are orphaned, cared for by a guardian. Others live with a single parent or relative. Sponsoring a child (\$35/month) helps the child and the family. Sponsorship includes tuition, uniform, and monthly sack of maize, powdered milk, blocks of soap, toothpaste, Vaseline, and school supplies. Meet Edward, Immaculate and their families. Edward wants to be a nurse and Immaculate likes music and dance. Prayerfully consider sponsorship.



IMMACULATE (skirt) FAMILY 2017



EDWARD (orange shirt) FAMILY 2017



IMMACULATE & EDWARD 2018



IMMACULATE & EDWARD 2019

SCHOOL INSPECTION: During Solomon’s visit a government School Inspector complimented MJS on the cleanliness of the campus, its water well (only one in the village) and its safe drinking water. Purchased in 2016, the water purifiers continue to function, providing safe water for drinking. MJS was also complimented for their Ecosan latrines (installed 2015, Rotary International WASH grant). Some families who cannot afford tuition have begun planting, watering and taking care of flower beds adding to the schools “smartness.”



SCHOOL WELL



ECOSAN LATRINE AND STALL



WATER PURIFIERS

MJS IS GROWING: Mweruka Junior School enrollment has increased from 301 students in 2018 to 379 students in 2019. To meet the needs of increased enrollment and to strengthen the curriculum, four teachers have been added, two English teachers in 2018, a math and nursery teacher in 2019. Donors, thank you for your generous support of the teachers.



MALNUTRITION affects a large number of Ugandan children, particularly in remote areas like Mweruka. A medical outreach team, Power of a Nickel has visited and evaluated the health of the MJS children each of the last 7 years. A BOJ Board member visited Mweruka Junior School in 2016 with Power of a Nickel

heightening our awareness of the malnutrition and decreased vision due to a Vitamin A deficiency.



FAMILIES AND CHILDREN WAITING TO BE SEEN IN POWER OF A NICKEL CLINIC. 2018

Beginning 2017 a nutrition fortified porridge lunch is served to each child each school day. Beginning 2018 One day a week a “main” meal of beans, carrots, potatoes, sardines is served. Administered twice a year following WHO guidelines beginning 2018 a deworming and Vitamin A supplementation program began. At MJS malnutrition is now uncommon. Hair is its normal color (not red), the skin is healthy and the eyes are bright. Teachers report that the children are more attentive in class. Recently a government Health Inspector complimented the school for its Handwashing program and its Nutrition program (the only one in the region).



SCHOOL KITCHEN

SCHOOL COOK MAKING PORRIDGE



“MAIN” MEAL

NUTRITION FORTIFIED PORRIDGE



HEALTHY SKIN, BRIGHT EYES, BIG SMILE



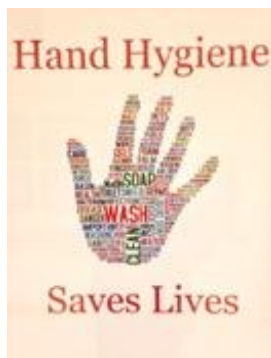
BLESSING THE "MAIN" MEAL

DESKS FOR TEACHERS: Until 2018, teachers did not have desks of their own. They shared the student's bench desk. Solomon was pleased to report that the desks which were funded by generous donations are being used and appreciated by the teachers as they continue to care for and love the children each day.



CLASSROOM BUILDING #2

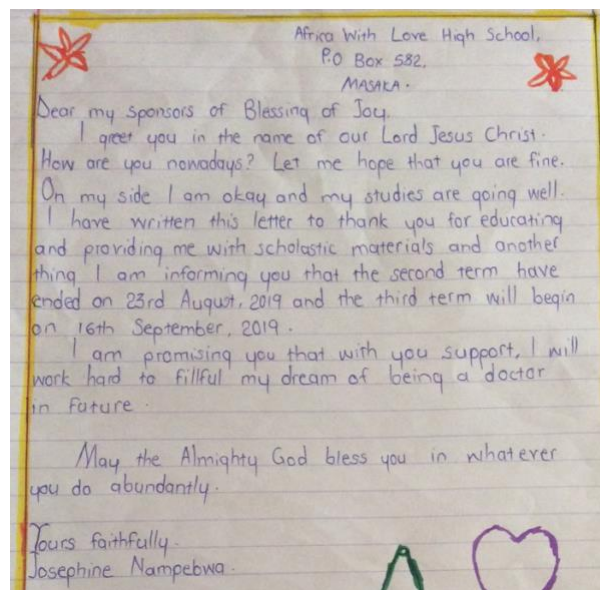
HANDWASHING: In general handwashing is not a part of the rural Ugandan culture. At MJS a handwashing program was begun in 2015-16. Two years later, most children are washing their hands after toilet use and before eating meals. Resulting in less illness among the children and improved school attendance. At school there is a weekly Health Parade emphasizing such topics as handwashing, teeth brushing, and the importance of wearing shoes.



HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS: Through a donor's generosity, Blessings of Joy-USA was able to begin a high school Scholarship Program for MJS graduates. The first two male scholarship recipients were selected in 2017 by the teachers. In 2018 and 2019 a girl and a boy were selected as recipients. The next school year begins in February 2020 and there will be six students receiving scholarships. The recipients are selected based on financial need and their performance in primary school as well as their motivation to learn and go on to trade school or university. The high school scholarship students are all academically within the top 20th percentile of their high school class and one is first in his class. Annually, \$600/student provides for tuition, room, board, books and other necessities. Blessings of Joy would welcome donations to support this ongoing Scholarship Program.



2017 & 2018 HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 1ST DAY SCHOOL YEAR



LETTER FROM JOSEPHINE 2018 RECIPIENT

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT: During 2019 school year, MJS added colorful, new playground equipment to the two existing pieces of equipment. Now so many beautiful smiles. Precious donors, thank you!!



MJS COLLEGE GRADUATE: Matthew Sserwadda is the first MJS graduate to complete college, a degree in Electrical Installation and Maintenance. As an orphan, he was sponsored from MJS through college by the African Watoto Charitable Foundation, Colorado. What a blessing, thank you Diana.

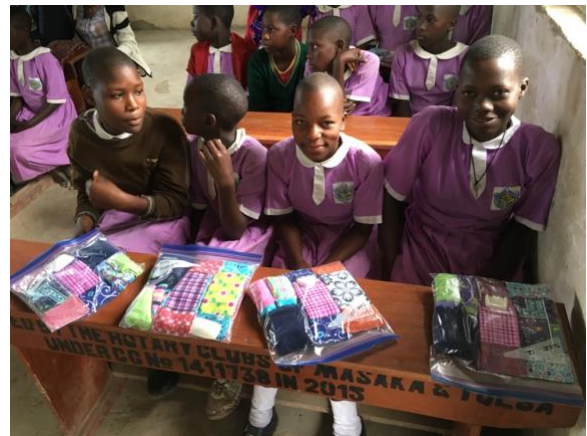


MATTHEW SSERWADDA AT GRADUATION 2018

FEMININE HYGIENE: Feminine hygiene products are not available nor affordable in rural Uganda. Without these feminine hygiene products when a girl is having a period she stays home from school. Days for Girls has designed and produced a feminine hygiene kit. Each pad can be reused for up to three years. The South Tulsa Days for Girls supported the training of two MJS staff to instruct the girls and distribute the feminine hygiene kits. Girls no longer have to miss school. Thank you South Tulsa DFGs.



HEALTH AND HYGIENE INSTRUCTION REQUIRED BEFORE RECEIVING KIT



GIRLS RECEIVING FEMININE HYGIENE KITS

JIGGERS AND SHOES: Close to 90 percent of the families of the students attending MJS are subsistence farmers. Their monthly income is less than one third the average Ugandan family's monthly income. Families live in dwellings with dirt floors. Without shoes, they are susceptible to "jiggers" or sand flea infections of the skin of their feet. To help protect their feet, Rotary (2016-2017) and Blessings of Joy (2017-2018) have provided shoes. In 2019 Blessing of Joy was able to provide shoes and socks for 200 school children in need. As with nutrition, this is an ongoing program. Shoes are outgrown and/or wear out. We welcome donations to support the Shoes for Children program.



SAND FLEAS IN SOIL LAYS EGG UNDER SKIN WHERE LARVA GROWS



"SHOES THAT GROW"



LEATHER SOLED SHOES MADE IN UGANDA

CHILDRENS' AWARD PROGRAM (CAP): At MJS the school year begins in February and ends the last week of November. The year is divided into trimesters with two breaks. Throughout the school year, students are receiving points for the following categories.

- "To promote pupils' hygiene (*handwashing, wearing shoes*)
- To promote ecosan usage (*latrine*)
- To improve on the pupils' spoken (*English usage*)
- To promote discipline with the library usage
- To promote the child's participation in the school's activity
- To promote pupils' smartness (*appearance*)
- To improve on the leadership role in school activity
- To improve on the child's daily attendance at school"

At Speech Day (November Graduation) the highest scoring two or three students in each grade are selected to receive awards based on the number of points earned during the year.



**P.O. Box 701143
Tulsa, OK 74170**

2019 awards include a mattress, a bicycle, basins, school bags, books, transport, and blankets.



MATRESSES TO REPLACE MAT ON DIRT FLOOR



TOP AWARD FOR HARD WORK WELL DONE

"UNCLE" SOLOMON'S VISIT: During his visit Solomon loves to spend time with the students.



PLAYING SOCCER WITH STUDENTS

Blessing of Joy, Inc. Board Members - USA

- Jon Calvert
 - Carrie Duran
 - Sherry Jones
 - Vicki Karney
 - Karen Long (at large)
 - Solomon Mutebi
 - Tony Rackley (at large)
 - Corky Rose
-

TO DONATE by CREDIT CARD via PAYPAL

go to: www.blessingsofjoy.com
OR

Mail Checks to: Blessings of Joy
(PO Box address)