

Share the
Blessings,
Inc.

Summer 2009

share



Photo by Mary Jo Clancy

in this issue

Even the Youngest Can Share

Primary school students in Wake Forest raise \$1,000 for clean water



2

Meet Father Joe

A closer look at STB's student sponsorship program and our in-country coordinator



4-5

Once a Pilgrim, Always a Pilgrim

Visits to and from our friends in Uganda

6

An Evening for Education

Find out how to participate in our fall education fundraiser

7

A Lesson Learned at School: Even the youngest can share

Through Lenten disciplines, students share the gift of water

The students at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School understand that a bit of hard work can go a long way. Throughout the Lenten season, the group of K-5 students in Wake Forest completed chores around their homes, pooling the money they earned for a cause: clean water. With their efforts, they made two \$500 contributions to Share the Blessings that will help fund the construction of a well in central Uganda.

At the end of April, STB board members Kevin and Lauren Green visited St. Catherine's to talk with students about life in Uganda and the impact that their donation will have on hundreds—and eventually thousands—of people for years to come. Students learned just how important it is for villages to have access to clean water. The construction of a well will greatly reduce the risk of illness from common waterborne diseases such as typhoid fever and hepatitis A. In addition, the presence of a well at the center of a village often means that villagers no longer have to make the long, arduous trek to what had been their only water source.



Above: Children gather water from from a muddy watering hole, their village's only water source. Students at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School learned that children are often the ones responsible for fetching water for their families.

Right: With the help of generous donors, Share the Blessings was able to construct a well in the above village, providing hundreds with access to clean water.

For more information on how to share the gift of clean water, or to schedule a presentation for your organization, contact info@share-the-blessings.org.



A sign hangs at a primary school in Uganda reminding students of the importance of water.

The students also discovered that in most families throughout Uganda, collecting water is part of a child's daily chores. Several volunteers had the opportunity to carry a jerry can full of water, experiencing for a few minutes what many children have to carry three to four times a day.

A well is a source of life. It improves the health of all the children and adults in a village and can save valuable time—time that kids can spend studying, playing, or at home with their families. By giving a little of their time, the students at Saint Catherine's School will share life with others living across the world.



Back to School: Return to the classroom brings financial challenges

As children in the United States prepare to return to school in the upcoming weeks, so will students in Uganda. The third term of Uganda's academic year begins in early September, and students are studying diligently for year-end examinations. During the 2009 academic year, Share the Blessings has committed to fund tuition and board for 50 students at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. This amounts to a financial commitment of approximately \$5800 each school term. As we approach the final term of Uganda's academic year, we still find ourselves falling short of this goal.

We are aware that this has been a tough financial year, and many of us have experienced its challenges. Yet as you prepare to send your children, grandchildren and neighbors back to school, please consider a contribution to our education fund. Education is one of the most important steps we can take to fight poverty and a gift whose fruits cannot be measured. It is our hope that all the children in our care, both here and abroad, are able to return to school next month.

Third Term Examinations

All grades complete end-of-year examinations, but three grades of students sit for exams that will have a big impact on their future.

Primary 7: PLE (Primary Leaving Exam). Scores determine the quality of secondary school a child is eligible to attend.

Senior 4: UCE (Uganda Certificate of Education). Determines a student's eligibility for A-level (college prep) courses.

Senior 6: UACE (Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education). Scores determine a student's eligibility for university or another tertiary institution.



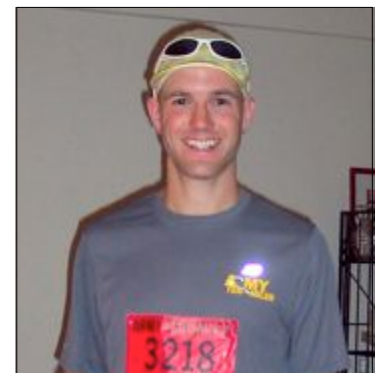
Attention Teachers and Youth Leaders!

This year Share the Blessings introduced Sponsor My A's and B's, a fundraiser that allows students in the United States to share the gift of education and experience their connectedness to other members of God's family. For one semester, students commit to study hard on behalf of students in Uganda. They ask family, friends and neighbors to sponsor each A and B they will earn on their next report card and do their best in school. Every time they work diligently on homework or study for a test, they'll be reminded that their daily actions can change the life of someone halfway around the world.

We are currently looking for classes and groups to adopt this fundraiser for one semester in the 2009-2010 academic year. To find out how to participate in Sponsor My A's and B's or to receive a sample packet, email info@share-the-blessings.org.

Running for School Fees: Jay completes half marathon for education in Uganda

In the Lenten edition of the newsletter, we reported that former STB board member Jay Carney was preparing to run a half marathon to raise school fees for students in Uganda. On April 5, Jay completed the Hogeye Half Marathon in Fayetteville, AK, finishing in 1:45:43.08. With the support he garnered from friends and family, he was able to raise \$2700 for student sponsorship! This is the third race Jay has run for Share the Blessings since 2006. We are grateful for his continued commitment to education in Uganda and for his faithful advocacy on behalf of the students.



Jay has contacted STB about another way to support his passion for child education in Uganda. He hopes to organize the sponsorship program so that individuals can make a commitment to support an unnamed child in the St. Francis Group. Watch our website www.share-the-blessings.org for more information on how to run with Jay in this new program.

STB's Education Program: A closer look

Since 2003, Share the Blessings has been committed to providing education for orphans and vulnerable children in central Uganda. With the help of many generous donors, Share the Blessings currently sponsors tuition, board and supplies for 50 children in Uganda's Nakasongola and Luweero districts. Most of these children, known collectively as the Saint Francis Group, have lost one or both of their parents to AIDS, malaria, accidents or war. Students whose parents are still living but exceptionally poor are also eligible to participate in the Saint Francis Group when it is found that their parents cannot support them in school. At present, forty-one of the fifty children are orphans; the remaining nine are living in extreme poverty.

"My name is Walakira Francis. I am in primary six. Thank you for helping me to study because my grandmother is very poor. Now I get pens, books, and I get to eat porridge every day. Thank you very much."

At the recommendation of a village or community leader, Father Joseph Kakooza—parish priest at St. Joseph Catholic Parish in Katikamu and the primary coordinator of Share the Blessings' education sponsorship program in Uganda—invites the child and his or her guardian to the parish for an interview. Once

preliminary eligibility is determined, the child is registered and assigned to the care of the parish sponsorship committee, which confirms the child's need and enrolls him or her in school. Additional committees have been established in the schools that receive sponsored children in order to monitor the students' academic performance and to report back to the parish sponsorship committee.

"I am Namugambe Mary Gorreth, your daughter. I am now in senior two. I would not be what I am without you. I was [ranked] 2nd out of 126 students. Thank you for loving me and all the help you give me. I will study hard to make you happy."

Even with this formal process, Father Joe explains that a number of the students in the sponsorship program are children he encountered on pastoral visits to the Parish's remote missions. "Many of them I found at their guardians' homes just doing nothing," he says, even they should have been at school. Others had hired themselves out in order to raise school fees. "I met them [...] making bricks and babysitting because they had nobody to pay for their school requirements."

During the 2009 school year, 13 children in the Saint Francis Group are in primary school, 20 are in secondary school, and 17 are attending tertiary institutions. One of the primary goals of Share the Blessings' education sponsorship program is to promote self-reliance by equipping

students with the knowledge and skills necessary for work. Graduation from secondary school and enrollment in a tertiary institution—be it a vocational school, teachers, business or technical college—is critical for success in Uganda, where the primary school completion rate is estimated at 56 percent (UNESCO, 2005). Secondary school enrollment falls to 18 percent, and only 3.5 percent of students go on to receive a diploma from a tertiary institution (World Bank, 2008). Since Share the Blessings began its sponsorship program, seven students have graduated from tertiary schools and are completely self-reliant. They are employed as tailors, administrative assistants, shopkeepers and carpenters.

In addition to receiving education, the children in the sponsorship program learn that they have a loving God who cares for them, and they begin to understand the connection they share with others around the world.

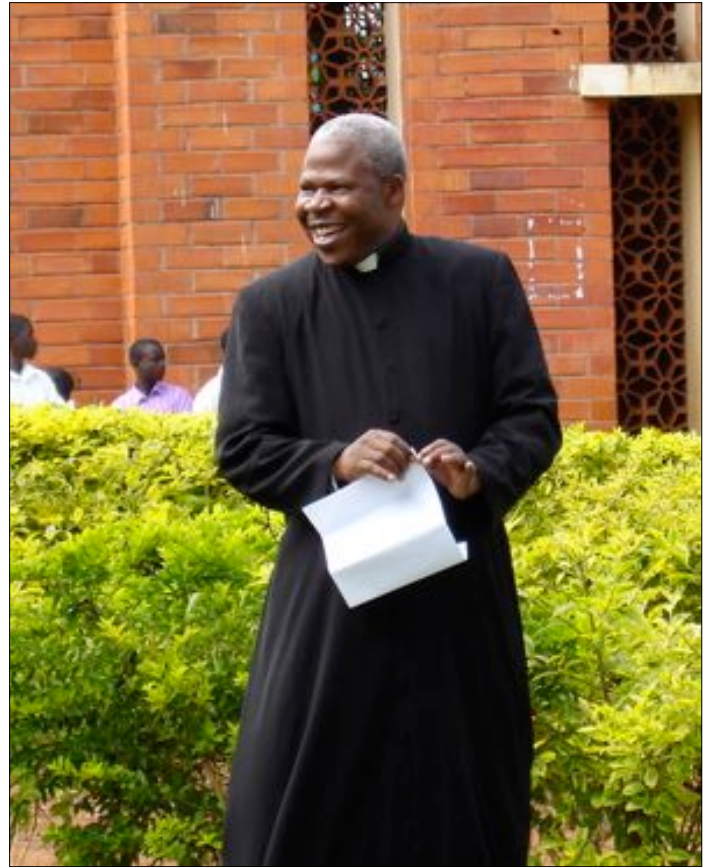


The Saint Francis Group at St. Kizito Senior Secondary School

Meet Father Joe...

"An African priest is expected to know and do almost everything. You find him in the missions saying mass, praying for the sick, catechizing the children, burying the dead. You find him in schools teaching religion, tending to administrative issues—but you also find him everywhere to help solve issues: in the fields to settle land issues, in the villages helping people have clean water, teaching people hygiene, taking the sick to the hospitals, and providing school fees for the needy children."

- Fr. Joseph Kakooza on life as an African priest



Fr. Joe coordinates STB's education sponsorship program in Uganda.

Father Joseph Kakooza Nyanzi was ordained a diocesan priest in July 1985. For almost five years, he has served as the parish priest at St. Joseph Parish in Katikamu. In addition to the main church in Katikamu, the Parish also includes sixteen missions, one high school and eleven primary schools. The farthest mission is seventeen miles from the rectory. In a brief online interview, Father Joe reflected upon his work as a parish priest:

What are your favorite parts about your work as a parish priest?

1. Saying mass
2. Working with my parishioners
3. Helping people overcome their challenges

What are some of the challenges that you face in your ministry?

1. There is too much work to be done.
2. Most of my helpers, the catechists, are untrained.
3. Poverty among my parishioners: there are limited resources to help run the activities of the Parish.
4. Living a celibate life.
5. The many people who come to me for financial support.
6. Lack of time to be alone with the Lord.

What drives or motivates you to keep going in the face of day to day challenges?

1. The happiness and love of my parishioners
2. The many friends and people of good will who are Jesus to us in the midst of our challenges

How have you seen God at work in your Parish and schools?

1. Seeing many projects and programs coming to fruition through the support of our friends
2. Seeing my parishioners loving one another, happily working together and coming in big numbers on Sunday to praise the Lord



Fr. Joe embraces Mary Jo Clancy and student Nalugo Florence on the 2008 pilgrimage to Uganda.

Once a Pilgrim, Always a Pilgrim...

In May and June, Father Sebastian Bukenya paid a visit to the United States and was reunited with good friends in North Carolina. Father Sebastian serves as a priest in the Archdiocese of Kampala and has assisted many of the Share the Blessings pilgrims during their visits to his country. As a seminarian, he assisted the first group of pilgrims in 2002 and recently joined the 2008 pilgrimage through Uganda. The pilgrims were blessed by his stories, his hospitality, and his

friendship. When it was discovered that he would be traveling to the States for in-depth training in peace and reconciliation, a reunion was in order! On May 30, a group of pilgrims from 2008 and 2002 gathered at the home of Kevin and Lauren Green to welcome Father Sebastian and to pray for his ministry. In addition to renewing the friendships formed in Uganda, he attended the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University and the Duke Summer Institute "Shaping the Beloved Community in a Divided World."



Pilgrims enjoy a game of Phase 10 with Father Sebastian (back center) during a reunion on May 30.

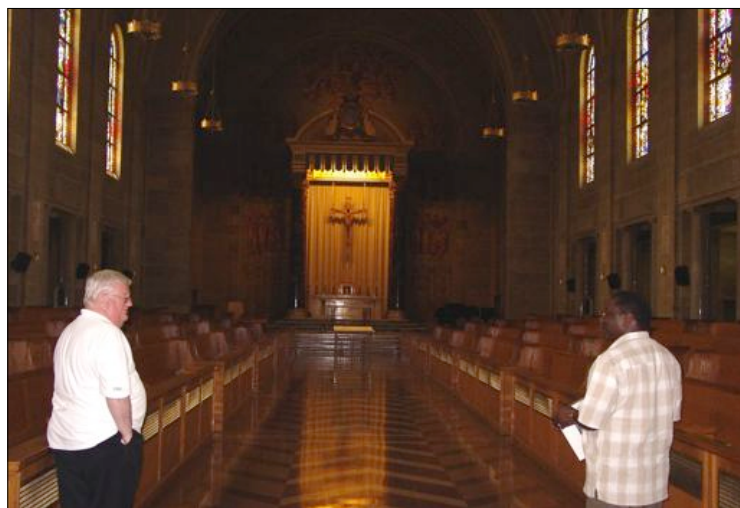
Fr. Charles Lugenda also assisted the first pilgrims to Uganda in 2002. In 2007, he had the opportunity to reunite with members of Share the Blessings and to meet others while serving as a visiting priest at St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church in Cary, NC. A native Ugandan, Father Charles is currently a priest in Uganda's Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese. In May he returned to North Carolina and caught up with old friends, sharing stories from his work at home and reflecting upon the diversity of his ministry experience. While in the States, Father Charles also had the opportunity to travel to Baltimore with STB Board Chair, Kevin Green. As a seminarian in Uganda, Father Charles studied the history of Catholicism in the United States and learned that its first Catholic seminary and basilica are located in Baltimore. He was able to visit both sites and enjoyed a day at Baltimore's Inner Harbor.



Carol and Gary Lenox with Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala during their 2008 pilgrimage to Uganda.



Father Sebastian teaches the 2008 Uganda pilgrims about gathering water.



Father Charles talks with Rev. Thomas Hurst, rector of Saint Mary's Seminary, inside the seminary chapel. Saint Mary's is the oldest Catholic seminary in the United States.

After spending time in Mozambique, Carol and Gary Lenox returned to the African continent in 2008 as pilgrims to Uganda. Following the pilgrimage, they gathered regularly with several of the other pilgrims to pray and study the Bible. Their group was blessed by the leadership of Father Achilles Kiwanuka, a priest from Uganda's Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese who was then serving as a visiting priest at St. Michael the Archangel. At the beginning of August, Carol and Gary returned to Uganda to visit Father Achilles and to experience his life and work there. They were sent off with prayers and warm greetings from members of Share the Blessings, knowing that these deep ties of friendship lie at the core of the call to live as Christ's Body.

Wanted: **Creative, energetic** and **passionate** individuals to assist with fall fundraiser

Share the Blessings is currently looking for volunteers living in the Triangle Area to help with a fall fundraising dinner and silent auction. We welcome persons of all ages, interests and abilities, whether you are available to help over a period of a few weeks or even just a few hours. It's said that it takes a whole village to raise a child; it also takes a whole village to host a fundraiser!

In 2007, Share the Blessings raised over \$8000 for education in an evening that included a dinner provided by Outback Steakhouse and a silent auction of artwork and African handicrafts. This was Share the Blessings' most successful fundraiser to date, and we hope to generate even more support for the students we sponsor in Uganda.

Patrick Pelkey, who traveled with the first group of pilgrims to Uganda in 2002, has stepped up to chair the event. Patrick lives in Cary with Lynn, his wife of 33 years. He works as a project manager for First Citizens Bank and will be ordained a deacon in the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh in June 2010.

To be part of our fundraising event or to find out more, please contact Patrick at pdplmp@nc.rr.com or Kevin at info@share-the-blessings.org.



Board member Ed Collupy shares about STB's work with education in Uganda at the 2007 fundraising dinner and auction sponsored by Outback Steakhouse.

how to share...

pray with us.

Pray for Nagujja Jane, Nakaggwa Teopista, Odongo Patrick, Ssanyu Milly Pavin and Waguma Stanley, who will sit for their A-level examinations during the next school term.

Pray for those who do not have access to clean water.

Pray for Fr. Joseph Kakooza, that he may find the grace and strength to minister in the face of challenges.

Pray for Father Sebastian Bukenya, Father Charles Lugenda and Father Achilles Kiwanuka, our friends and fellow pilgrims at work in Uganda.

Pray that Share the Blessings is able to uphold its commitment to the Saint Francis students in the midst of current financial strain.

Pray for the students at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School in Wake Forest, that they might continue to grow in their love and service to God and neighbor.

partner with us.

☐ I would like to share the gift of education.

I'll Help	Student Status	One Term	One Year
	Primary, day student	\$60	\$180
	Secondary, day student	\$80	\$240
	Primary, boarder	\$100	\$300
	Secondary, boarder	\$150	\$450
	Seminarian	\$160	\$480

☐ I would like to share the gift of clean water.

☐ I would like help with other projects (classrooms, computers, Center for Adult Education in Bolivia).

Amount _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please make checks payable to *Share the Blessings*, or donate online using PayPal at www.share-the-blessings.org.

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clean water & education for our family

tuli kimu mu kristu.



we are one in christ.

