

“Don’t be afraid! I bring you Good News that will bring great joy to all people.”

It is so easy during this ‘Coronavirus Christmas’ to feel depressed, low in spirits and even fearful for the future. But I would encourage all of us to look back at the good things of 2020 and then look forward in eager anticipation for even better things to come. Christmas is a time of ‘great joy’ and also a time of hope as we look into the New Year.

No nativity this year because:

- The three wise men face a travel ban.
- The shepherds have been furloughed.
- The inn keeper has shut under tier 3 regulations and had a slump in bookings.
- Santa won’t be working as he would break the rule of 6 with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner and Blitzen.
- As for Rudolph, with that red nose, he should be isolating and taking a test!



The Unique and the Special

A new appeal looking for funds for the 42 disabled and disadvantaged children living with Noeline in the Wellspring Home for Disabled Children.

We are looking for assistance in the care of these children – their food, clothing, education and medical care. For more information please contact Pauline on **01928 740538** or email: admin.medcare@icloud.com



Noeline's children

When Allen, Wellspring's social worker and warden for the Wellspring Home for Disabled and Disadvantaged Children, asked the children how the pandemic had treated them, this was their reply:

"God saw ahead of us and provided us with this spacious new home, with lots of space both indoors and outdoors. Previously we had lived in a very small home, with neighbours very close by and a small outdoor space. In this present situation, when social distancing is a must and hygiene is essential, our home is a safe place for us to live, even during the pandemic."

Here are stories of 4 children presently living with Noeline:



Jane Nalumasi

"My family saw me as an outcast after my mother's death. I have to take drugs for my AIDS and so no one wanted me. I cried day and night, not because I had lost my mother but because I was totally alone. Even my sisters didn't want me.

But God has now given me a happy family and a home where I feel loved and all my needs are met. I can even go to school. I don't see my siblings but I now have many brothers and sisters. My health is good and one day I know that my family will come looking for me, as I become accepted and respected in the community."



Joan Nabukenya

"By the time Mummy Noeline found me I had almost died. I was abused by my father, shared bedding with 5 siblings, including my brothers, and had so many sores on my body that I smelled badly and no one wanted to get near me. I was born with spina bifida and cannot walk. Now I have a bed of my own, have a special toilet, my sores have all healed and I know that I am loved."



Baby Elijah

This little boy was found abandoned at the age of 6 months on the pavement alongside a busy main road. Allen found him and took him to Noeline where he has lived ever since. No one has found out who his parents are. He needed surgery this year and sufficient funds were found to pay for this. He is now a healthy, happy little boy with a bright future ahead of him.



John Malimbo

John was brought to Noeline's Home severely malnourished. Wellspring paid for his admission to the Kitovu Hospital Malnutrition Unit where he gradually recovered. After discharge from hospital he returned to Noeline's Home for rehabilitation. He is currently undergoing physiotherapy at Wellspring and will be resettled with his siblings once he is fit enough and the family are ready to care for him.

Allen Businje

Wellspring social worker and Wellspring Home warden



"The work undertaken by Noeline is remarkable. Police and social workers often ask her to take in children who are in a serious condition due to neglect or abuse. Her reputation is widespread in the villages and she is greatly respected. Noeline has such a big heart for children and will never turn a needy child away, even though it might add to the burden of feeding and housing all the children. She trusts God implicitly for every day and is always so thankful when given gifts of food or clothing from 'well wishers'. She never asks for any reward herself for all the care she gives to these needy children. All she wants is to see her children happy, healthy, well fed and safe. Many of the children she has cared for over the years have been rehabilitated back into the families and communities who previously saw such children as cursed. Having been educated by Noeline to see these children as unique and special, they now welcome them as valued members of their communities."

Love is a four-letter word!

Love is a four-letter word. But although it is such a small word it is big and strong in its own way. It is love that makes people donate generously to save the life of a child who has never been loved.

It is love that restores hope in the hopeless and gives them courage to live on. Love converts tears of despair into tears of joy and laughter. All of these results of love have been witnessed and continue to be seen through the work of Medcare.

Anitah is one of the children recently found in tears but, 3 months later, her tears have been converted into laughter. She had lived with hydrocephalus for 5 years with no medical care. She developed all the effects of this condition and God helped her live with them. She was unable to walk or crawl and had involuntary movements of her head when she talked or tried to concentrate. Despite this she was cognitively very bright. As she became older she became increasingly aware that she was not like other children. This made her very sad and she spent many days and nights crying about her condition. All she wanted was to be able to stand up on her own two legs and walk. She was ridiculed and emotionally abused by her family and other children.



However, her needs were revealed to the Wellspring team and relayed to Medcare. A sponsor was found for her and, at last, she began to feel loved. In July 2020 funds were also provided for neurosurgery in an attempt to correct her condition and then she immediately began physiotherapy, under the care of the compassionate Wellspring physiotherapists. Every day Anitah is progressing. She can crawl and is now beginning to weight bare. Anitah willingly undergoes all the exercises given to her because she knows they will eventually help her to walk. Anitah is now a happy, delightful child, and a shining example of courage and determination in the face of trouble. Love has transformed her life and we all look forward to watching her obtain her greatest desire – to walk and run like other children.

Lubyayi George William

Wellspring sponsorship manager

Vocational training

Vocational training is seen as a vital part of any child's education and is especially important to the children sponsored through the Wellspring Child Sponsorship Scheme.



It can have a positive impact on a young person's motivation, attitude, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Vocational training equips a young person with skills necessary for him or her to be self-reliant thus reducing unemployment and poverty.

5 children from the sponsorship scheme are presently undertaking vocational training, thanks to the generosity of their sponsors. Umaru, Jackson and Fred are training to be motorbike mechanics and Swale a car mechanic. Eva, whose twin sister is already married at the age of 17, was being harassed by her father to also find a husband. However, she has received funding from her sponsor and is presently training to be a hairdresser, which should ensure her independence and prevent her taking part in a teenage marriage. Only one sponsored child has 'graduated' from the sponsorship scheme this year, because of delays in obtaining vocational training due to COVID-19 lockdown.

Rehemah graduated early this year in tailoring. Having completed her training, Rehemah made masks for the poor guardians bringing their children into Wellspring for assistance; those who could not afford to purchase their own masks. She was given material, bought through funds transferred by Medcare, and used one of the treadle sewing machines stored in the Medical Centre seminar room. Rehemah has been given a treadle sewing machine of her own so that she can set up her own business and become independent.

We wish all these young people all the best for the future, as they step out of sponsorship into a future with an income which will gain them respect, as they contribute to the financial status of the very poor communities they were born into.

Congratulations Allen and Yusuf!

In August, Wellspring celebrated the marriage between Allen and Yusuf, both employed at the medical centre.

Allen is our social worker, as well as acting as 'warden' for Noeline's Home, and Yusuf is our laboratory technician. Despite lockdown they managed to celebrate their wedding with their families and friends. Many congratulations to you both.

Medcare Board of Trustees.



A child at the end of the rainbow

It has been encouraging in 2020 to have found sponsors for more of the children on the sponsorship waiting list. Presently 184 children are receiving the life saving sponsorship they so urgently require. However, 42 children are still waiting for assistance. The You Tube video named "A Child at the end of the Rainbow" has been created to try to encourage more sponsorship. Please take a look at it and send the link to your friends. The best Christmas present one of these children could be given is the news that someone thousands of miles away has generously and lovingly provided them with sponsorship.

Here are 4 children still waiting for a sponsor:



Josephine

Aged 6 years, suffering from Sickle Cell Disease

She lives with her mother and younger sister in rented accommodation. Her father has abandoned the family and her mother has no job. Often they spend days with no food. Sponsorship will transform and save this child's life.



Lawrence

Aged 4 years, suffering with HIV and AIDS

He lives with his grandmother, who is a peasant farmer, and his 2 older siblings. This family are in desperate need of help. His grandmother often cannot afford the transport costs to the AIDS clinic from which Lawrence obtains his drugs. Sponsorship will transform and may even save this lovely little boy's life.



Shadia

Aged 14 years, suffering from AIDS

She has lived with her aunt following the death of both her parents. Her aunt is a peasant farmer and very poor. She cares for Shadia and 7 other children. Her aunt is concerned that Shadia will not grow into maturity because she cannot afford the food and medicines she requires. Shadia desperately needs sponsorship to save her life.



Immaculate

Aged 6 years, suffering from malnutrition and delayed milestones

Immaculate has been abandoned to the care of her grandmother who is a peasant farmer. She has never walked because of her malnutrition and neglect. This family, and in particular Immaculate, are in desperate need of help. Sponsorship could transform this child's life.

Chairman's letter

I hope you have enjoyed reading about the encouraging news coming from Uganda.

Coronavirus has of course, created many problems in Uganda as in the rest of the world, but mostly due to the severe lockdown. However, coronavirus infections and deaths in Uganda are relatively few in relation to numbers in the UK. There have been no reported cases of coronavirus in the villages in which we work and no reported deaths due to coronavirus, for which we praise God.

The Wellspring staff have worked extremely hard to ensure that the very poor families have received support both with provision of necessary medicines, additional food distribution, physiotherapy and general health care. Patient numbers are beginning to rise in the clinics, as needy children are brought once again for assistance.

Bringing good news engenders a feeling of hope in whatever situation we may be facing. Hope is an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. With hope in our hearts we can look into the future with confidence instead of uncertainty.

In a passage in the Bible that is often read at Christian weddings (1 Corinthians 13) it tells us that "*three things will last for ever – faith, hope and love – and the greatest of these is love.*"

- Faith in our God who created us and cares for us.
- Hope in the future God has secured for us.



But it is love which encourages faith and it is love that engenders hope.

This year, at the end of conversations and letters or emails we have often heard or read the words 'Take care' or 'Stay safe', words showing our love and concern for others. We should be truly encouraged this Christmas as we consider all the love and care shown to those in need in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Love shown in the hard work of the nurses and doctors and other frontline workers; love shown by those giving out food parcels and helping to house the homeless; love shown by people such as Sir Captain Tom raising funds for the NHS and those in need. In Uganda, also, love, as shown by the generosity of our supporters, has brought sustenance and comfort to those starving in the villages; has restored hope to the hopeless; and has saved the lives of many needy children.

I want to express the thanks of myself and the Medcare Board of Trustees to all who have supported the work of Medcare in 2020. I pray that, this Christmas time, you will experience the love which came down on that first Christmas Day and be encouraged to look to the future with hope and joyful anticipation.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Pauline Hutchinson
Chairman of Medcare



In the lovely Christmas poem written by Christina Rossetti in 1885 we read:

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.*