

Happy New Year

to all Medcare supporters, sponsors and volunteers!

Praise be to God that 2018 was a year of great successes and continued development of Medcare's services to the children in Uganda:

- The eventual **arrival of a shipping container** packed with goods for Wellspring and the new home for disabled children.
- The opening of the **new Wellspring Home for Disabled Children** in June.
- **Wellspring recognised as an AIDS unit**, with weekly AIDS clinics now led by Patrick and others.
- **The building of 2 new village homes** for very needy children and their families.
- An increase in child sponsorship, with a total of **161 children now receiving assistance through our sponsorship programmes**. (Many more children are waiting for life transforming sponsorship in 2019).
- **4 teenagers have graduated from the sponsorship scheme**, having successfully completed vocational training, enabling them to progress into adult life with a means of support, a knowledge of their self-worth and hope for the future.
- **20,000 children** accessing Wellspring's services throughout the year.
- **3 separate visits to Wellspring by Medcare volunteers** – a useful administrative trip in February; a trip in June, including volunteers from the company Bevie, assisting in the opening of the new Wellspring Home for Disabled Children; and a trip by 6 UK GPs and others in November, providing teaching and assistance in clinics by the doctors and some essential building work by others.
- And much more!



Many thanks to all Wellspring staff and Medcare volunteers for your invaluable efforts in 2018.

Congratulations Dr Pauline MBE!

We are very proud that our founder and chair Dr Pauline Hutchinson has been awarded the title of MBE in the 2019 New Years Honours List for Services to Children in Uganda!

Pauline first visited Uganda 14 years ago. Since that day she has not stopped working to change the lives of these children and living up to her saying of "no task is too great or price too high to save the life of a child".

Thank you to Pauline for your years of dedication and service to Medcare. We all feel this award is so well deserved and the thousands of lives touched by Medcare's work in the past, present and future are testament to all of your hard work.



A lady to remember

Many people are blessed with a lot of money but very few can use it to help others.

Many people in the world die prematurely not because it's their time to die but because they lack life's basics, especially medical treatment. Many families lose their children, not through neglect but because medical services are scarce and expensive.



Dr. Pauline has helped the people in Kamutuza village and the surrounding villages by giving them a high standard medical centre for their children - the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre. For ten years now, many children's lives have been saved and transformed. Many families have been fed and famine eliminated. In addition, these families have been encouraged to use the land they have to grow their own feed for sustainability.

Families such as Florence's family were saved from both famine and disease. They were at a very high risk of contracting HIV from their own grand daughter, who

was slowly dying, but none of the family members knew what was killing her. They were only able to treat her on local herbs. They could not afford medical bills and the government hospitals were very far from their home. When they learnt about Wellspring the entire family problem was solved, completely. The dying Florence has developed into a cherished and lovely young lady. This famine stricken family was blessed with food that made everybody at home very happy. Free medication was provided and transport to the medical centre for treatment was made available to them. More blessings came to this family when they were given a better house and were able to move out of their leaking, collapsing old home. All this was because Dr. Pauline made it possible and availed such sponsorship to poor families. The so called 'Blue eyed' family was made of only deaf children and their deaf mother. Everyone in their community believed they were cursed and many called them ghosts because of their unique clear blue eyes. The father of this family abandoned them completely. They never had a home of their own until Dr. Pauline came across them. She relocated them from a stigmatising community to a community that understands them better. She gave them land for farming and built them a very good house. Now these children have grown to young men and women and have started caring for themselves.

I remember the life the "jigger family" was living! It may sound an abusive name but it's the name we adopted so that we could differentiate them from others. All children in this

family were covered in jiggers, were very dirty and living in a transparent, leaking, one roomed house. After transforming their lives and giving them a good house, life changed totally. These children are now very happy because well wishers came into this family and transformed it completely. All the children attend school and look well nourished with no further signs of jiggers.



One by one, many families have been given new homes and this has changed their lives also. These include Rosemary's family, Maria's family, Denis' family, Dorothy's family, Steven's family, Elizabeth's family, Bathromew's family and now also a big Wellspring home for the disabled. These new homes have transformed the lives of these families and all this work is spear headed by Dr. Pauline. Funds from the UK, through Medcare, with Dr. Pauline as the chairman, have given a Ugandan child a smile on her/his face.

The medical care, counseling and love given to chronically ill children through the sponsorship schemes, has restored hope in their lives and now they have a reason to live. Previously bed ridden, stigmatised and abandoned children are living a normal life. Some have graduated to maturity and have started living their independent lives despite their chronic illnesses. Children such as Frank Miiro. He was trained in tailoring and given capital. He joined Mildmay where he was offered further training in shoe making and now he is working with a local shoe making company. Josephine who once was going blind due to uveitis and HIV, is now a hair dresser. A further group of adolescents have trained in tailoring and hair dressing and are about to graduate. Mahad completed his college training as a laboratory assistant. All these children faced a rough time of stigma because of HIV and were never expected to live into adult life. Dr. Pauline and her team have given hope and made it possible for these children to have medication when they are sick and food on their table. Now they have grown to be useful, educated and skillful citizens.

The work of caring for these sick, needy and deprived children has not stopped, but continues to grow bigger and bigger. All these are fruits of Dr. Pauline's hard and dedicated work. Now there are over 160 sponsored children, provided with medical treatment of all kinds, monthly food and, above all, love.

Among these many children, is Patricia who was dying of AIDS, PTB, malnutrition and sustained a fracture of the femur as she



was being taken to hospital. Another is Angel who was dying of malnutrition and neglect. Kennedy has sincerely struggled with life; reporting several drug resistances, very low CD4 of 8 cell/ μ l, a very high viral load of more than 240,000 copies, several PTB episodes and hepatitis. The good news is after visiting many different hospitals he is still alive. His CD4 has increased and viral load decreased to as low as 860 copies. These children see Wellspring as their home and often wish they could stay at Wellspring day and night, such is the love and care they receive.

These stories are just a few of the needy children and families presently sponsored. However, at Wellspring one can be overwhelmed by the big numbers of children's lives saved day by day. Over 1000 children attend the clinic monthly and their lives are transformed and often saved. In addition, there is a special project catering for the poor children suffering from curable diseases. Their sponsorship is short term and they are often provided with funds for hospital referrals and admissions.



In the struggle to save a life, there is sometimes death. Not all the children under our care survive. Over the past 10 years a few didn't make it to maturity and died. But, with the help they received during their lifetime, their short lives have been happy ones, not lacking in life's essentials. We trust God in His decisions.

In the whole world, very few people can do the work Dr. Pauline is doing. Saving a Ugandan child is the gift people in Uganda who know about Wellspring and its services will live to remember and this is attributed to Dr. Pauline's hard work and love for a Ugandan child. Thanks to the almighty God who has enabled you be among the people who have been awarded an MBE and thanks to Her Majesty the Queen for choosing you. Indeed you deserve the award and even more.

George William Lubyayi

**Wellspring Children's Medical Centre,
clinical officer and sponsorship manager**

Wellspring Centres Shine - We Thank You Lord

A message from Dr Stuart Musisi

The official opening of the newly constructed Wellspring Home for Disabled Children in June 2018 really highlighted the work of Medcare in Uganda. Many of those who were invited for the event appreciated (just like us) the generous hearts of all our sponsors and supporters of Medcare's work in Uganda.

This event was also used as a platform for stakeholders to celebrate the achievements of the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre (also founded and supported by Medcare through the West Buganda Diocese) as well as to share experiences and good practices. Looking back at the years and seeing where the centres are now, one couldn't help but thank God for His mighty providence towards Medcare to support the Wellspring centres.

Wellspring Home for Disabled Children is located at Kyannagolo, 2kms from Bukulula on the Masaka-Kampala highway. This home was built to support Noeline and the diocese to care for disabled and disadvantaged children in Uganda. On the other hand, Wellspring Children's Medical Centre is located at Kamutuuzza, 10kms from Masaka on the Masaka-Kampala highway. This medical centre was built to bridge that gap that was identified by Dr. Pauline Hutchinson in 2004. It was discovered that for village children, medical care was often inaccessible or unaffordable and hence the idea of starting a dedicated children's medical centre. From 2004 to date, funds have been raised to provide primary health care to the children through this medical centre. This centre now provides a range of services through the mainstream out patient department, the COIN/MDI/MSI sponsorship schemes, the physiotherapy and sensory therapy section, the laboratory section and the welfare/outreach section.

As chairman of the Wellspring centres, I would like to thank all our supporters, sponsors and the entire Medcare team for



their generous input and support towards the growth of these centres. I would like to particularly thank teams from Airbus and Bevie that mobilised the resources for the construction of the new home for disabled children. I would also like to thank the Manchester Airport Group for the donation of funds that were used to extend and re-furnish the WCMC in 2014.

The Wellspring centres have grown to where they are now because we all came together, have stayed together and progressed together because we believe that working together leads to success. We all are partners in these valuable ventures and continually need renewed commitment towards care and service provision

**Long live Medcare - a lifeline for Ugandan children.
Long live Wellspring centres.**

Yours in service,

Dr Stuart Musisi

Wellspring Children's Medical Centres Chairman



Congratulations Mahad!

Having received sponsorship through Wellspring since 2012 he has successfully completed his diploma in Laboratory Sciences.

It has been agreed that he is to be employed in 2019 by Wellspring as a laboratory assistant, joining Yusuf, Wellspring's laboratory technician, in providing essential laboratory services to the children. A wonderful achievement and a great role model for all the sponsored children.

A story of one child: Eclas

Ignorance is a serious disease seen in an ignorant person and the people around him/her. This truth is known to many people but few have ever had proof of this. Here is Eclas, whose father was against his neurosurgery claiming that the surgery could cause him to go blind.

Eclas was born to Annet Nassanga. He was born normally, weighing 2.4kg on the 8th March 2018. Annet narrates her son's illness as below:

"At one week, Eclas developed an irritating cry all the time. We thought he was demanding to have a name (a Lugandan superstition). However, the name Eclas was given to him but the crying never stopped. This was followed by excessive sweating all the time. Veins on his head became more visible and this was followed by his head bulging. Older people told us that it was "Kireego" (Lugandan - meaning a condition that leads to the bulging of a baby's head, abdominal distension, with thin legs). Herbs were provided but my son's condition continued worsening. When I told my husband to provide some money so that we could save our child's life, nothing was provided. He didn't care whether Eclas was treated or not. Being a mother with HIV, I didn't want my son to have any strange illness. When I went to my ART centre, I decided to consult the doctors about my son's condition. The doctor told me that Eclas had water accumulating in his head and that is why he was behaving that way. He told me that treatment exists but it is very expensive and I couldn't get it from the

hospital where I receive my drugs. During this conversation, one of the medical workers directed me to the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre, saying that here they treat children with such diseases. By then Eclas was two months old.

Wellspring was so welcoming and my request was granted the day I went there. On that day, I was asked to decide when I needed my son to be taken to the hospital for treatment. I felt that I wanted my son to meet the doctors on that same day. Medics at Wellspring told me that we were to be taken to CURE neurosurgical hospital on the day I chose. I decided to choose that very day and I told them that I didn't need to go back home. I wanted to inform my husband about our journey as we were on the way to CURE. I didn't want my husband to disorganise our plans or refuse the treatment. He is very well known for not supporting us and he doesn't even want to see us being helped.

We started our journey to CURE on that very day. When I told my husband about the chance we had got to treat our son, he became bitter and ordered me to take back his son. I ignored him and we reached Mbale at night time. I had to wait to see the neuro-surgeons the following morning. I never had any sleep that night. My husband was calling me time and again, telling me to stop the doctor operating on his son. I told Dr William about this and asked him to talk to my husband and explain to him what was going to be done."

"At this time, I (William) talked to Eclas' father explaining to him about the child's condition. I let him know that at that moment, Eclas was at a high risk of totally losing his sight. The more I told him all these facts, the more he denied us a chance of saving his own son's life from the effects of hydrocephalus and certain death. We had to advise the mother to make her own decision since she is Eclas' mother. She wisely decided to let Eclas receive his treatment. After a few days in CURE Eclas underwent surgery and then started a new life. His sight was restored and now he can sit on his own. He is now 10 months old. He has regular physiotherapy and continues to improve."

Thank you Medicare for providing funds to treat such children and save their lives. It wouldn't be possible for us at Wellspring to save all these lives without funds. Dr Pauline - thank you for dreaming and working towards saving a Ugandan child's life.

George William Lubyayi

Wellspring Children's Medical Centre,
clinical officer and sponsorship manager



“It’s time to involve the whole world”

The views of a Ugandan adolescent girl living with HIV...

My name is Nakiryowa Lillian. I am 14 years of age and I am HIV positive. This was first noticed when I was still very young. As other children, I was not told the truth immediately, but now I know.

Many adolescents around the world are born suffering from different diseases; for example HIV, diabetes, heart diseases, sickle cell disease and many others and for which they have to take daily tablets. Many times in Uganda these adolescents are neglected by others who are not like them and this creates stigma. What I can say about stigma is that it can even deny someone from taking their drugs because of that fear you feel in the heart, not wanting anyone to know. You can even start to fear your fellow adolescents, but this is not right because it leads to increased stress.

Another problem I think is the bad peer group influence. Some adolescents, who are like me, can reach a time when they have lost hope and they feel that their world has come to an end. These adolescents may rely on their peers, who are often of no help to them. In this way the girls can end with pregnancy

which can lead to a teenage mother or early marriage; the boys may become drug addicts, rapists, street kids etc which is not good at all. This brings in a question, “**HOW CAN WE OVERCOME THIS**”? As an adolescent I think it’s time to involve the whole world it this. Speaking to our parents, guardians, government officials among others - don’t neglect us, don’t mistreat us, don’t make our lives hell because we want to live like those other adolescents who are loved, cherished and engaged in different productive activities. Don’t mistreat us, the infected, because we don’t like to be like this. It was God’s plan. It is not our fault.

We need to thank organisations like TASO (Ugandan AIDS agency) and Medcare for the work done in bringing us together, consoling us, caring for us and ensuring that we live a happy and healthy life. May the Lord reward you.

Lillian



Do you remember the story of Johnson?

Johnson was the baby who was born with Tetralogy of Fallots – a serious, life threatening congenital heart condition. Look up his story on our website www.medcare.org.uk

This is his latest photograph! What a miracle child he is. If you have a problem confronting you, which seems impossible to overcome, read this story and be encouraged.





UK Doctors and Ugandan Nurses working together For the good of the children

Since I joined Wellspring in 2013 I have learnt a lot from my fellow work mates and my fellow medical practitioners from the UK.

Wellspring is small in terms of buildings but what is done under its roof is amazing. Many white doctors from the UK are coming to the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre to look at the work done by the our Ugandan staff.

In November 2018 we received Doctors from the UK who helped us understand more about medical conditions like skin diseases, chest infections and reproductive health.

We conducted a family planning outreach 20km from the medical center. Surprisingly we had many clients and all methods were conducted.

Community members were very happy to receive the white doctors. We learnt new skills in inserting implants and removing implants, and the doctors also learned new skills - so it was interesting on both sides.

I pray that we continue receiving doctors to acquire new skills and they also learn more about medicine in Uganda. I pray that 2019 be a year of success for all the people who run Wellspring.

I remain,

Kenneth Mubiru (SEN)

Fundraising in 2018...

- **Tough mudder:** A team of 14 intrepid Medcare supporters completed the Tough Mudder course in September, raising over £1,800.
- **Ultra-Marathon:** Charles de Nobriga has raised £760.00 running a 100km Ultra marathon for Medcare – an epic achievement!
- **Christmas Fayre and An Evening with Mansell Morgan:** A well attended Christmas Fayre in November followed by an evening's entertainment provided by Mansell Morgan. Over £500 was raised at these events.

And many more individuals raising funds in various ways. Many thanks to all involved.

Over
£31,000
was raised
through fundraising
and donations
in 2018.



Our Tough Mudder Team!

A challenge solved is a step to achievement

Challenging words from a teenager living in Uganda with HIV...

In life, we all face challenges; economically, socially, morally and so on. It doesn't matter who you are, where you are from, whether you are poor or rich - as long as you are alive there will be challenges to face.

The youths in Uganda have many different life challenges. Someone might have diabetes, cancer, or is living with HIV. I am a youth and I have HIV. In the societies in which we live, we are made to think that having HIV is a crime and as a result life becomes more challenging and difficult. This is often the view of the people around us. People point fingers at youths with HIV, discriminating against them. As a result the youths live with guilt about the situation in which they live. They start to become hopeless because their spirit of self esteem is weakened. They start to have a feeling that they are standing alone and no one cares about them in this world. When this happens to those who contracted HIV from their mothers, they start blaming their mothers for bearing them with HIV. They forget that they were in their mothers' womb for nine months. A mother shouldn't be blamed, for they love their children a great deal. For those HIV+ve youths with no parents to care for them the situation is worse. They are mistreated, often facing a miserable life. In brief they are denied the right to live and when there is no one to help, only God keeps them alive.

In life we have to accept the challenges we are facing in order to overcome them. A challenge solved is a step to achievement. Oh Uganda! Let us take a step back in the years of the 80s; people with HIV suffered a great deal. They had no care, no shelter, no food, no education, no medicine and no one to help them until organisations such as TASO and Uganda Cares (AIDS agencies) came in to rescue us. Today there are other organisations such as Medcare that have also come to help the youths living with HIV. They have strategies to help us live a normal life despite being HIV positive. They want the youths to be the leading examples in stopping HIV in Uganda.

We, the youth, are the next generation of our country and our future lies in our hands. HIV is still a threat in this world but **"PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE"**. So let us join our hands in this fight until we have overcome. Our country needs us to participate in this battle. There is still hope that HIV will go but we need to reduce the spread. Let us fight discrimination, stigma; let us be confident and positive; let us fight fear, denial, stress and depression; let us develop self esteem and adhere to treatment because we have dreams and we have to make them come true.

"There is light at the end of the tunnel" and God is with us and will never let us down.

Shakira

Encouraging words

from our UK medical team



"It was a real honour to be part of the team visiting Wellspring in Uganda in November 2018."

"A very enjoyable, productive and thought-provoking trip."

"The staff at Wellspring are very welcoming and are very professional."

"I found the standard of care overall to be excellent."

"There is real evidence of holistic care."

"It was evident how caring William (sponsorship manager) is towards his patients and how his care goes beyond medical needs."

"I was impressed with how the day ward was run."

"The laboratory was run by very enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff."

"Ibrahim, the physiotherapist, is a huge asset, very enthusiastic, knowledgeable and excellent at finding hope in every situation."

"The clinical staff are dedicated and caring."

"Kenneth and the outreach team do an outreach clinic twice a month. It was fantastic - thorough and professional."

"I really enjoyed visiting the home and meeting Noeline and the children. It was a highlight of my week."

"The needs of the children are always put first and with the resources Wellspring has they are making big differences to their lives."

"I found Medicare/Wellspring to be functioning at a high professional and personal level."

Many thanks to Drs Cathy, Siobhan, Lindsey, Diane, Kylie and Chris for your encouragement, teaching skills and advice given to the Wellspring staff. Also thanks to Hannah (student), Richard and Charlie engaged in photography, building work and sharing computer skills during the November team visit.

Chairman's Letter

2018 was a year of great achievements and continued progress in Medcare's aims to provide essential, high standard health and social care to needy Ugandan children. But what of the year ahead?

The Medcare Board of Trustees have met on a regular basis in 2018 to discuss the continued development of services at the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre, supported by Medcare.

In Uganda...

It has been proposed that a **second laboratory assistant and physiotherapist will be appointed in 2019** to provide for the ever increasing numbers of children requiring these services.

Dr Chris Jordan is making plans for regular annual medical trips to Uganda, providing a teaching programme which will benefit all Wellspring clinical staff and their work with the children.

Plans are in place to **further develop the services of the Wellspring physiotherapy department**, enabling a greater access to physiotherapy equipment and rehabilitation services for disabled children living in extreme poverty in the villages.

A target of **200 children** are to be sponsored before the end of 2019.



Here at Medcare we are excitedly looking forward to the year ahead. A year when many more children's lives will be saved through the services of Wellspring, many more children's lives will be transformed through sponsorship, many more families will be re-housed and provided with support and hope for the future. There is much to do - more marathons to be run, more mountains to climb, more seemingly impossible tasks to be undertaken. But our God is the God of the impossible and together we will see the miraculous once more in Uganda.



In the UK...

The Medcare Board **aims to increase the profile of Medcare** within the UK, US and Canada.

Fundraising will be encouraged by the many supporters, volunteers, churches, schools and companies presently raising funds for the work of Medcare in Uganda.

A major fundraising initiative is to be set in place with the development of a fundraising committee, chaired by an experienced fundraising patron. This committee will be expected to arrange one or two major fundraising events for Medcare each year, so enabling the charity to maintain its sustainability.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kindest regards,

Pauline Hutchinson
Chairman of Medcare