

New life & New Hope

In spring - flowers bloom, leaves bud, birds build nests and young animals are born. It is a season of new life and renewed hope.

Here in the UK this springtime we are blessed to be experiencing a new freedom and return to a more normal life as coronavirus restrictions are slowly lifted.

Medcare's aim for 2021 is to bring more hope and joy, healing and purpose, into the lives of many thousands of young Ugandan children in desperate need, living in the communities served by the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre. We need the help of all our supporters to assist us with this aim – together bringing springtime into the lives of many children.



Baby Joash

Baby Joash was born to Allen (Wellspring social worker) and Yusuf (Wellspring laboratory technician) during the pandemic, in November 2020. His birth is a symbol of life and hope in a world struggling with the coronavirus pandemic. We pray that God will greatly bless this little boy and his family and keep them safe.



God bless you, Grace

Grace Emery is Medcare's oldest, and one of our most generous, supporters. On April 4th Grace celebrated her 101st birthday at the Redwalls Nursing Home in Cheshire.

We want to send Grace our grateful thanks, congratulations and very best wishes. Grace has always been guided by her very strong Christian faith and has been a wonderful example to friends and family over the years. God bless you, Grace, as you have blessed the children.

Mary Nakate

A chronically ill young woman inspired to work with children with disabilities – or as she calls them – ‘specially abled’ children.

This is the story of a remarkable young teenager, born into poverty, abused and shunned because of being born with HIV.

Mary was one of the first chronically ill children to be enrolled on the COIN Child Sponsorship Scheme in 2010 – now re-named the Wellspring Child Sponsorship Scheme. At that time Mary and her siblings were living with her stepmother and father. The family lived in extreme poverty. When her stepmother separated from her father, the Wellspring sponsorship manager became concerned for her safety and well-being. To ensure her safety she was transferred to the care of the charity Just Care and entered into the Evelyn's Home orphanage.

Mary has thrived during her Just Care sponsorship and is now a healthy, 17 year old. She has grown into a lovely, intelligent, caring young lady. Last year she was unable to go to attend school due to COVID-19 Ugandan restrictions but, early in 2021, she managed to complete her S4 final exams and is now considering her options for future employment. It is her earnest desire to work with disabled children. Here she explains the reasons behind this decision...

"Many years ago, I joined the Wellspring (Medcare) COIN sponsorship programme. It was there that I first met children who were disabled. I had never met a disabled child before. When I saw them and met with them I felt drawn to finding out more about them and wanted to get closer to them. However, once I was transferred to Just Care, I had no further opportunities to meet disabled children. Instead, when I attended the Wellspring clinics to obtain my medicines, I always went into the physiotherapy department to watch the physiotherapists in their care of the many disabled children they treat every day. I wanted to become a part of these children's lives, to work with them and know more about them.

I have always wondered how and why these children were created to be so special and I ask myself many questions about them. These include:

- Disabilities differ but how do the disabled cope with life? Do they have the same life as any other person?*
- Is there anything that makes these children happy? If there is, what is it?*
- How do they think about how they were created and what plans do they have for their future?*
- Do they know that they are equally important in this world?*
- How do they feel if they see someone created differently from the way they have been?*
- Do they have talents and how can these talents be developed?*



- How do they solve life challenges?*
- Do they have likes and dislikes?*
- What kind of friends do they need in their lives?*
- Can I be one of their friends?*
- Is there any way how I can help solve their problems and help them work on their challenges?*

All In all, I feel these children have a special life and need a special person to always work with them, teach them and help them to know they are important. I pray that God helps me with enough money and qualifications so that I can develop skills which will help disabled children in their life challenges. This is my ambition because these disabled children are very special to me."

Mary is presently working with Noeline Nakaggwa at the Wellspring Home for Disabled Children. She is to spend 3 months at the home learning about the challenges of caring for children with varying disabilities. She then hopes to pursue vocational training, which will enable her to work with disabled children once she has the appropriate qualifications. Medcare is raising funds to help Mary achieve her ambition.



A story of struggle and heartbreak in the face of HIV

HIV and AIDS have claimed thousands and thousands of lives here in Uganda. When one thinks of such a miserable and painful death, abstinence becomes the best solution.

Here is the story of a grandmother of many children, who separated with her husband after learning that he had contracted HIV. One of her grandchildren, Christopher, was born HIV +ve and seeing how much he suffered in his early childhood caused her to greatly fear this disease. Here is her story, in her own words.

"My name is Florence. I was born on the 5th October 1965. In 1981, I got married and I have 8 children. Married life was moving on well till 2015 when my husband violated our marriage and carelessly gave his life to HIV after being with HIV+ve women. I told him not to touch me again but he became abusive and I felt both myself and my 7 grandchildren were at risk. After 36 years of marriage I made my decision to leave him and begin a new life.

Things are not easy! It is true that in my marriage, we were living a poor life, but at least we had a roof over our heads. At 50 years of age, I started a new life with no roof over our heads and no support. Since one of my grandchildren is HIV+ve I knew I had to try to find suitable accommodation for us all. I started by asking the neighbours to give us somewhere to sleep. However, at all the houses given to me, my husband threatened the owners and warned them to chase us away. Due to fear of reprisals, some do as he tells them. The burden is too big! So far we have lived in four houses in a period of 5 years. Many of these 'houses'/rooms are not fit to live in but at least provide shelter at night. Sometimes I think I am cursed. All my children are also poor and have many problems of their own.



Christopher

My grandson, Christopher, was born with HIV. His mother tested HIV positive during pregnancy. She disclosed her HIV status to me but not to her husband. When she gave birth, she was attended at home by a traditional birth attendant, instead of at hospital. Shortly after birth, Christopher became sickly. I requested his parents to allow me take care of the boy since they were a young couple. They accepted my request and I knew it was my chance to take him for HIV screening. Results came back positive and that is how I started his care. His life was very bad and many times he

Harriet, with Florence, learning to walk



JustGiving™

Medcare has set up an appeal to help Florence and her grandchildren. It is planned to raise £3,000 to enable a new home to be built for them. In this home they can live in safety, in hygienic surroundings, where the children can grow up without fear and with hope for the future.

Please click here to donate:

justgiving.com/campaign/ahomeforflorence

nearly died. Because God loved us, I went to Wellspring where a sponsor was found for Christopher. This changed his life completely. He is now doing very well despite our family problems.

When Christopher's father discovered he was HIV+ve he left my daughter who then came to live with me. She was again pregnant but this time we were very careful and she gave birth to a healthy girl, Harriet. At the age of 4 years, Harriet fell sick with malaria and started convulsing. I was trained as a (VHT) Village Health worker and had drugs for children in our community who suffered from malaria. I was able to give her Rectal artesunate and immediately ran with her to Wellspring which was about to close. We were taken to a nearby health centre, where we stayed for 7 days. During that time Harriet did not respond to treatment and we were then referred to Masaka Hospital. They in turn wished to send us to Mulago Hospital in Kampala but we did not have the money to take Harriet there so I took her home and waited for her to die.

On reaching home, we learnt that Dr. Pauline had come to Uganda, so we took Harriet to her seeking for help. Immediately Harriet was taken to Kitovu hospital. After a few weeks we were once again referred to Kampala for further advice. This time all our expenses were provided by Wellspring. We were advised to take her for physiotherapy so we took her back to Wellspring, where physiotherapy was begun. At that time, Harriet could not see, talk, or sit. She could only feed through a tube. Harriet spent 1 year attending the physiotherapy department at Wellspring 5 days a week. All her senses were restored after one year. She started with talking and then her sight followed. Now she can walk and run although she still has a weakness on one side. Her understanding is rather poor but otherwise she now leads a normal life.

I greatly thank Dr. Pauline and the entire Wellspring staff for being there for me and my family. You have showed me love and you are the reason as to why my grandchildren are still alive."

This story was narrated to William Lubyayi (Wellspring Sponsorship Manager).



Community spirit at Red Pike!

At the end of April, Bill Thomas, a Medcare supporter and sponsor, together with a number of his neighbors, demonstrated true community spirit by joining together to sponsor a needy child on the Wellspring Child Sponsorship waiting list.

They have called this – the Red Pike Project – after the name of the road they live on. Many thanks to you all for saving a child's life through child sponsorship.

Four children needing sponsorship

Together we can save the lives of many more children



Viola

My name is Viola. I am 8 years old. I was born with Sickle Cell Disease. My father died in an accident and I now live with my grandmother and 6 other children. We are very poor.

Sponsorship would transform my life.



Edward

My name is Edward. I am 4 years old. I was born with cerebral palsy. I live with my mother in a rented house, which is falling down.

Sponsorship will help my mother feed me and take me to physiotherapy. It could transform my life.



Musitafah

I am Musitafah. I am 11 years old. I was born with HIV and often fall sick. I live with my mother, who is a peasant farmer, and 3 other children. We are very poor.

Sponsorship will give me hope for the future.



Madina

My name is Madina. I am 10 years old. I was born with HIV. I live with my parents and 3 siblings. My home is very poor and there is a lot of violence.

Sponsorship will save my life.

Please spread the word of the needs of such children. Working together we can save many more lives.



Rest in Peace Bashira

Bashira was born in December 2009. Following an episode of cerebral malaria she developed hydrocephalus and cerebral palsy and went blind. She lived with her mother and 7 siblings.

In 2016 sponsors were found for Bashira. This sponsorship greatly assisted her mother in her care of Bashira. She attended physiotherapy regularly and received food monthly and transport costs and medical costs when needed. Over the past 2 years Bashira's health deteriorated and she was admitted to hospital a number of times with hypostatic pneumonia. Sadly Bashira died in hospital on 10th April 2021. We send our sincere condolences to Bashira's mother. She admits that caring for a disabled child was not easy but she was so thankful to Bashira's sponsors for enabling her to love and care for her daughter for many more years than was expected. Bashira died at the age of 10 years.

Malaria vaccine breakthrough

MALARIA IS THE BIGGEST KILLER OF UGANDAN CHILDREN

In an article about the serious consequences of malaria worldwide, UNICEF states the following facts:

- Malaria is the silent emergency that kills one child every 30 seconds, about 3000 children every day
- Over one million people die from malaria each year, mostly children under five years of age, with 90 per cent of malaria cases occurring in Africa, south of the Sahara.
- Malaria hampers children's schooling and social development many children who survive a serious attack of malaria develop physical and mental impairment.
- Pregnant women and their unborn children are also particularly vulnerable to malaria, as a result of low birth weight and maternal anaemia.
- Infants born to mothers with malaria are more likely to have low birth weight, the single greatest risk factor for death during the first months of life.

Malaria, seen as a consequence of poverty, is also a major cause of poverty and its prevention is an important part of poverty alleviation.



In an article in the Lancet, it is reported that a team of researchers at the University of Oxford have developed a malaria vaccine which has proved to be 77% effective in early trials and could be a major breakthrough against the disease, says the University of Oxford team behind it. Despite many vaccines being trialled over the years, this is the first to meet the required target. The researchers say this vaccine could have a major public health impact.

Larger trials in nearly 5,000 children between the ages of five months and three years will now be carried out across

four African countries to confirm the findings.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through mosquito bites. Although preventable and curable, the World Health Organization estimates there were 229 million cases worldwide in 2019 and 409,000 deaths. The illness starts with symptoms such as fever, headaches and chills and, without treatment, can progress quickly to severe illness and often death.

Professor Hill from Oxford University says, "The trials of this malaria vaccine started in 2019, long before coronavirus appeared - and the Oxford team developed its COVID vaccine (with AstraZeneca) on the strength of its research into malaria. A malaria vaccine has taken much longer to come to fruition because there are thousands of genes in malaria compared to around a dozen in coronavirus, and a very high immune response is needed to fight off the disease."

In Africa, there have been more deaths from malaria than from coronavirus in the past year. An accurate and efficient vaccination against malaria will save millions of lives across the world and hundreds of thousands of children's lives will be saved in Uganda! Children such as Bashira will have the opportunity of growing up normally with a healthy future ahead of them.



Medcare Fundraising 2021

There are many other ways we can join together and raise funds for the children in Uganda...

Sponsored silence is often a good idea! Any one up for a parachute jump?!



Why fundraise?

- To raise essential finance for Medcare and the Wellspring services.
- To spread the word about the tremendous needs of Ugandan children.

What is Medcare fundraising for?

- **The ongoing work of the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre**, the centre of the work of Medcare, where lives are saved daily through the hard work of our loyal, hard working staff. Wellspring has a unique role in health care in the Masaka City District of Uganda and a good reputation amongst villagers and health professionals.
- **Promotion of the Wellspring Child Sponsorship Scheme**, which has transformed and saved many lives over the past 11 years, with provision of food, clothing, medical and educational needs. Sponsorship gives disabled and chronically sick children opportunities to learn, play and enjoy life.
- **Provision for the continued work at the Wellspring Home for Disabled and Disadvantaged Children**, where 42 children now live in safety, provided with food, clothing, medical care, education and a loving environment.

How can we fundraise in 2021?

- **Local/individual fundraising initiatives:** During the pandemic we have been unable to hold many of the usual events because of social distancing, closure of venues and limited numbers meeting. However, it is hoped that many of these restrictions will be removed very soon.

Examples of local fund raising events are:

- Cake sales
- Car wash
- Jumble sale
- Charity dinner
- Afternoon tea



- **Sponsored events:** It is hoped that many of these fund raising initiatives will be allowed later in 2021.

Examples:

- Marathons
- Parachute jumps
- Tough Mudder
- 3 peaks challenge
- Sponsored silence
- Sponsored swim



There are many other ways we can join together and raise funds for the children in Uganda. For any advice, materials and other support please contact the Medcare office on admin.medcare@icloud.com or phone **01928 740538**.

The Gift of Hope

Chairman's letter

One of the privileges of working with Medcare in Uganda, is meeting so many remarkable people - and - even more remarkable children. In the 17 years since I first visited Uganda, I have seen children suffering through no fault of their own, born into families who are so poor that there is not enough to eat, where adults and children sleep together in one room on an earth floor, where disease is common but medical help unaffordable.

Equally, I have seen the courage of a child learning to walk after serious illness; the smiles on the faces of elderly grandmothers as they are given assistance for their families; the overwhelming joy of the family whose child has been saved from a life of sickness and certain death.

One of Medcare's legacies has been the gift of hope to so many children and their families. Whatever the details, hope in general means a desire for things to change for the better, and to want that better situation very much. Hope teams

Grandmother receiving gifts of bedding



"Having hope will give you courage. You will be protected and will rest in safety."

Job 11:18



Johnson after successful major cardiac surgery - our miracle baby. Inset: Johnson before surgery

with faith and believes in the impossible. Hope motivates, encourages and raises self esteem. Hope is an essential part of all of our lives for our well-being and ability to face the ups and downs of life.

We have seen hope rising in the hearts of weary, desperate Ugandan families - through providing a homeless family with a house of their own; raising funds to enable life saving surgery for a child; taking new bedding to a destitute family; giving regular food for their starving, malnourished children. Medcare has been blessed with generous, faithful supporters, whose desire to make a difference in a small child's life, has also provided the gift of hope to thousands of children and their families.

On behalf of the Medcare trustees, I want to thank you all and pray that you too will be blessed as you have blessed the children; that you too will experience the gift of hope in whatever circumstance you have to face; and that you too can look into the future with joyful anticipation for good times ahead.

Pauline Hutchinson
Chairman of Medcare