

Our Own Home

A refuge for orphans living with HIV/AIDS in Jinja, Uganda



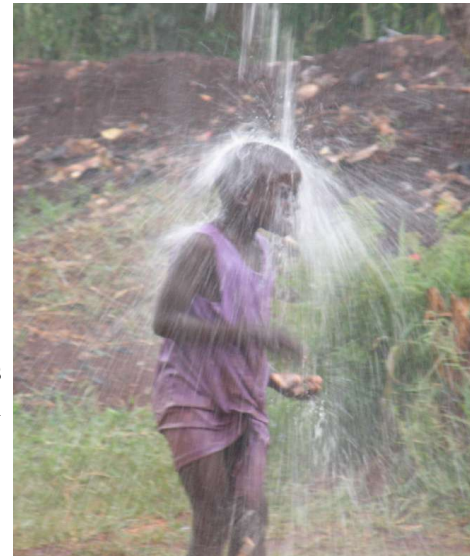
Happy Spring!

www.africaourownhome.org

May, 2008

Here in Uganda this is the rainy season, and a school holiday! One especially wet day, the children took it upon themselves to bathe in the downpour (and the ensuing mud!). Let me tell you, it doesn't get much better than watching 40 of my favorite people splashing and sliding all over the lawn from the safety of the front porch...until Uncle William snuck around the corner with a watering pail to make sure I also enjoyed a spring shower! He just missed me, much to the disappointment of the young audience!

Speaking of Uncle William... I want to tell you a little bit about this Uncle who is such an important part of our home as a father figure to our children, a spiritual mentor who leads our morning devotions, and an administrator. He is the son of a minister who nearly lost his life by converting to Christianity from Islam. Following his father's footsteps, William is passionately in love with Jesus, and manifests that love every day in his humble service to both children and staff. I have known William since January of 2007, and **I am proud and happy to report that he recently asked for my hand in marriage, and I said yes!** We will be wedding on August 30th here at our home church in Jinja, with eight flower girls, twelve bridesmaids, and seventeen groomsmen whom we look forward to parenting together for many years to come (our 37 children, of course!). Please pray for God's hand and God's will to continue directing our path as we prepare to set out on our journey with Him together!



I have a special prayer request for our Pious. You may recall he was very sick when he came to live with us, but God was gracious and he has continued to gain strength and energy and now flies around the house and yard with a giggle like no other. At age eleven he started school for the first time, and did very well in first grade (called P1 here) during the term they just completed. But something happened this month that has caused Pious and all of us a sad shock. He woke one morning with his left eye completely white. After seeing four eye specialists, the fourth of whom is a professor of laser surgery at Kampala's teaching hospital, we received a diagnosis. Apparently, an infection had found its way in that literally destroyed Pious' cornea overnight, probably due to his body's lack of defense against illness. That eye is now blind, and being totally white, is unsightly and attracts unwanted attention



from passers by. We were told that our best option was to replace it with a prosthesis that could at least appear normal. Now it seems we may have a much better option than that! Pious may be able to have a cornea transplant, restoring both his sight and the right appearance of his eye! We are still looking into this possibility, so please pray that God opens doors and allows Pious to be accepted as a suitable candidate for the surgery!

Thank you for your interest, prayers and support of Our Own Home! Just think; 37 children have a new home, hope, and future because of your love! Children like Gordon...

Gordon, at seven, has experienced more trauma than most adults I know – even in Uganda. Only eight months ago he watched helplessly from a dugout fishing boat as his father drowned in Lake Victoria. His grieved mother beat him without mercy, turning a blind eye to his failing health. Known as an infected child, the stigma in his village contributed to feelings of being unwanted and left out. Coming to Our Own Home was a huge change in his world. His first reaction was to cry for hours at a time, make himself vomit, and hit and kick the other children for any small infraction. Naturally – what would my behaviors look like if I, as an adult, had been through what

Our Own Home

A refuge for orphans living with HIV/AIDS in Jinja, Uganda



Gordon has? We set up a “star chart”, a system of merits for good behavior. At the end of every good week, each child received two stars, and once they have worked up to five, they get a soda. After earning five more, another prize, and so it goes. Gordon loves soda, so this gave him initiative to stop hitting. After he earned his first soda, it was as if a wall came down. Every day, multiple times a day, he started hugging me and saying, “My mommy! My mommy!” His playful spirit has earned him the nickname Curious George. Oh, there are moments and days; his battle is far from over; but knowing he is loved and having the freedom to be a child have had an effect on Gordon. Instead of being beaten all the time, he is being rewarded for good behavior. Instead of being outcast, he is being hugged.

Every day as I look around at the assortment of smiles around me, **I'm reminded afresh of the power of God's love to transform lives.** Gordon's life would not be the same without that love, and neither would yours or mine.

May the Lord bless
and keep you,

Mommy Holly



William and Holly

Please visit our website at www.africaourownhome.org ! Here you'll find more pictures, our newsletter archive, volunteer and contact information. Please share and e-mail this link to anyone who might be interested in learning more about Our Own Home!

Many thanks to the members of Highland Park Community Church and Bar Nunn Baptist Church in Casper who donated medical supplies, books, toys, and undies/socks! It was like Christmas when we received the packages, and all of the items were much needed and appreciated! We should soon have the van you so generously provided through your gifts!

Please pray with us as we prayerfully contemplate what God would have us do next. Because we are now full, we are considering whether to lease a larger place or explore the acquisition of land to build "our own" facility. It is your prayers and faithfulness that have made all of this possible!

If you would like to make a donation, please make checks payable to **Our Own Home** and send to: 1075 Beaumont Dr. Casper, WY 82601. We are now able to accept credit card and Paypal donations at www.africaourownhome.org. Donations are tax deductible as permitted by law.

Please write to me at let_them_come@yahoo.com. I'd LOVE to hear from you!
Our Own Home Ministries International is a 501(c)3 religious charitable organization.