

Our Own Home

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



Greetings from Uganda!

www.AfricaOurOwnHome.org

September, 2009

Phew! So much has happened since William and I returned from America that it will be hard to fit it into one letter! Thanks again to all of you for your prayers, support and love!



Lydia dressed for school

Lydia is a sweet girl around 14 years old. She possesses a maturity and strength of character far beyond her years due to a difficult past. Lydia is a blessing at OOH and loves to help with the care of the babies and cooking the food. Her prayers and insight in Bible study time have challenged and blessed us from the day she arrived in February 2008. On Saturday (Sept. 8th) Lydia was diagnosed with appendicitis! We traveled to Kampala, where she underwent surgery. Praise the Lord that the problem was discovered in time, the surgery went well, and Lydia is already up and around! In addition, we were blessed with a Christian and caring staff at a new hospital in Kampala. Doctors and nurses are often over worked and over stressed in Uganda (it is common to find one nurse responsible for a hundred patients at a time). This makes good care hard to find, but we found it at Nakasero Hospital.

During the final days of the school holiday, we took the children swimming at a resort in Jinja -- an activity they always enjoy! While at the resort, we received a compliment on how well-behaved and respectful the children were. Glory be to God! He has truly transformed a group of kids who had no one to lovingly teach them into a group of kids secure in Him and eager to glorify Him in all they do!

Even more exciting than the swimming was a trip to Didi's World, Kampala's one amusement park! The kids rode a mini roller-coaster, a merry-go-round, an "octopus" (that ride that spins around and moves up and down at the same time), a pirate ship that swung really high in the air, and a few other rides for the 3-6 year old set. Boy, they had a blast! An additional ride was the spinning teacups, a very small version of the one at Disneyland! I couldn't help laughing when we saw that the motor was "lacking" and the man in charge of the ride was pushing the teacups around! It was a great field trip and a day that will live in the kids' memories and ours for years to come!



Little Zawed

Shortly after returning from America we were at the clinic. **One of the nurses brought us one of the most malnourished infants I have ever seen.** When his mother died of AIDS and his father became bedridden from the disease, Zawed's grandmother decided it would be better for Zawed (and for her) if he died too. She was starving her own grandson to death. Zawed suffered from pneumonia, tuberculosis, candidiasis (thrush that affected his entire digestive system), and severe dehydration and malnourishment. He weighed 10lbs at the age of 2, and had never learned to walk or sit up on his own -- he was too weak. He was hospitalized for a week, where he was treated for the pneumonia, thrush, and dehydration. He began treatment for TB. For a while he vomited

everything he ate and drank, but as the TB and thrush responded to treatment the vomiting stopped.

Tragically, months of starvation and neglect had taken too large a toll on his little body. Little Zawed knew more suffering in his brief two years on earth than some of us will ever know. We take comfort in knowing that for Zawed's last month on earth, he experienced the love of a family at Our Own Home, and we take even more comfort in the knowledge that he is now more free and whole than he ever would have been on earth. He knows a purer love and joy than any of us know in this temporary state, and he has finally found a home.

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Every day at Our Own Home we are forced to ponder the worth of a human life. Each of our 42 children is living with a terminal illness. They don't know how much time they have, but really, none of us do. We may not have a choice about how long we live, but we do have a choice of how we live. Will we live a life that glorifies God and impacts the world around us for good? Will we love? Serve? Give? If we knew that this was our last day on planet earth, and tomorrow we would be with God and our loved ones would be left with our memory, how would we choose to live? What will they remember? What will God say? Our children at OOH love every day. They love God, each other, and us. I get many hugs every day! They sing songs, dance, play instruments, and play football. They work hard in school. They work hard at home, helping with the babies, the cooking, and the cleaning for their family at OOH. They smile and laugh daily. They are alive, and determined to make it count, no matter how long it lasts.

William and I saw the ultrasound pictures of our first child two weeks ago. An unborn baby of only ten weeks has fully formed arms, legs, fingers, and toes, a beating heart, a head. Our baby's eyes were closed, but he/she has eyes! And the baby was moving, kicking its arms and legs just like we see so many babies do outside the womb. Around three inches long, like a baby doll, a living child is growing inside me. What a miracle is each and every life!

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father" (John 10:10-11,18) There is only One with authority to give a life, and He desires it to be lived to the full! Our children at OOH have the passion and desire to live every day to the full!

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions -- it is by grace you have been saved...For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:4-5,10) In advance, before we were born, God prepared good works for us to do. We are His workmanship, lovingly crafted for life! What will we do with it?

Thanks for reading this month! We appreciate every one of you who love and care for our children from across the ocean, and lift them up in prayer! Know that the children also pray for you, and are very thankful.

Keep living to the full! Mommy Holly

Thank you for your donations toward a second van! Your continued prayers for provision are appreciated.

Our present needs are for deodorant for our teens, bathing suits (4T-14/16, no bikinis, 2-pieces or European style please,) Purel, personal size Vaseline, multivitamins, children's Tylenol and Advil tablets. Of course, generics are fine for any of these items.

Please share this work with your church or others you know who may be interested. Let us know if you would like to arrange a presentation for your group or church.

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 also accept credit card and Paypal donations online at www.AfricaOurOwnHome.org. Donations are tax deductible as permitted by law. If you have any questions at all, please call Joe at 307-267-2712 or write joe@africaourownhome.org.

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

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