

Our Own Home

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



Dear friends,

www.AfricaOurOwnHome.org

October, 2009

God has been faithful to us in every way, as I pray you will see as you read on....



Joshua

Joshua, a boy of about 2 years, came to live with us about a week ago. Joshua has clearly not had enough to eat in the past, but he can sit and crawl. He surely enjoys eating now! He also has Tuberculosis, but weighs enough to hopefully fight it well. He smiled a few days ago for the first time since he arrived, and we knew he was home.

While we are on the subject of having a home, I want to remind you all that our goal at OOH is to provide children with a home who need one desperately. Many of our children are completely orphaned by AIDS. Some have been abandoned or abused, or all of the above. Most were denied the opportunity to attend school, to touch other members of the households where they lived, or to receive the medicine that can prolong and improve their quality of life. Imagine a child who was never hugged.

This abuse is often the result of ignorance regarding HIV/AIDS and how it is transmitted. The staff of OOH strives to educate the people around us about HIV/AIDS and how it is transmitted. Unfortunately, the educational system of Uganda is working against us every day. Our children are being taught in school that AIDS is a "killer disease," and when you have it, even a common cold can kill you. Of course this is not true. Our children live through common colds, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and even malaria on a regular basis. With the ARV drugs that are currently available, many of these children can expect to live many years with HIV/AIDS. One of our little girls had been absent from school so she could go to the clinic to receive her month's supply of ARV drugs. She was required to hand in a note in school the following day explaining her absence, in order not to be punished for skipping class. When the teacher read the note, she announced to the class that the girl was "infected" with AIDS, and they should "be careful" around her. The poor child was horribly hurt and embarrassed, and there is no evidence of AIDS being transmitted by casual contact -- the teacher was wrong.

These stories and many others like them are the reason we have decided to open a school at Our Own Home. It would be what Uganda refers to as a private school -- only for the children who live at Our Own Home. Our largest class size would be nine students, allowing the teachers more time to give individual attention to the children who are struggling, as many of ours are, for never having attended school before they came to OOH. Most of all, it would be a school where our children can be taught about God in an atmosphere that honors Him, and taught about life in an atmosphere that accepts them for who they are. I rejoice to inform you that the costs of setting up and running a school are covered by child sponsors who help provide for our children through an organization called Horizon Intl. Inc. The children sincerely enjoy writing letters to their sponsors, and wait eagerly for replies to their mail. Having a sponsor gives a child a great sense of worth and self-esteem, and really makes them feel loved by someone outside OOH who cares enough to help a child they have never met. They pray for their sponsors, knowing their sponsors are also praying for them. It gives me great joy to report that all but 10 of the school-aged children at OOH now have sponsors. God has really provided! We eagerly anticipate the opening of "our own school" in February, the beginning of the next school term in Uganda.

Many of you already know that we have been looking for land for some time. Our hope is that if we purchase land this year, within the next few years we will have raised enough to build on the land. Our (distant) future vision for Our Own Home is to have a house each for boys, girls, and babies, a school building, and a clinic all on one piece of land. There would be a soccer field, also. The clinic, operated by a registered nurse, would allow us the ability to put children on I.V. or oxygen if needed, right at OOH. (Most hospitals in Uganda are far from clean or comfortable.) We know it will probably take several years to complete such a large project, but land is the first place

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to start. Since the price of land in Uganda rises steadily year by year, it would behoove us to purchase a piece of land now, if possible. We have found pieces of land in the right size (around 5 acres) and locations that sell for around 25,000 dollars. We are hopeful to have raised enough by 2011 to purchase one of these locations as a future permanent home for OOH.



Since August 2007, Our Own Home has grown from 12 children residing in a 4-bedroom house to 42 children, 2 houses, and now a school. We have seen children enter through our doors broken -- physically, emotionally -- and watched as they became whole. We have seen our every need provided in miraculous ways. Friends, all this did not happen just because of a 23-year-old girl with who happened to like kids. This happened because of a God who cares about the needs of every orphan and every needy child on earth. Because He reached down His hand and said, "I am providing a home for my children," Our Own Home is here today. And He was merciful enough to let someone like me have a part in it. And hundreds of people all over the world have had part in it -- from sponsors to churches to volunteers to doctors and nurses and teachers and cooks and cleaning ladies and children who fold newsletters. All so that abandoned children could have a real family. All so they could know God's love. So the hungry could eat and be satisfied. So the sick could become well. So the unloved could learn that they are lovely. Friends, if there was ever proof that God exists and He is love, Our Own Home is that proof. "A Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families..." (Psalm 68:5-6a) *God* is a father to the fatherless. *God* sets the lonely in families. Make no mistake about it -- Our Own Home exists because of *God alone*.

And that same God loves and cares for each one of you just as passionately as He loves these children. It is my hope and prayer that all who are reading this newsletter feel His love today.

Blessings to you all, Mommy Holly

Thank you for your donations toward a second van! Please consider the possibility of a foundational contribution for land. Your continued prayers for provision are appreciated.

Our present needs are for boys undies sizes 6-12, hydrogen peroxide, toothpaste, Listerine (orange or mild-flavored), medical gloves size medium to large, personal size Vaseline, multivitamins, children's Tylenol and Advil tablets and liquid. 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!

Our Own Home Ministries International is a 501(c)(3) religious charitable organization.