

# medcare newsletter

A lifeline for Ugandan children

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"Grandmothers hold our tiny hands for just a little while, but our hearts forever."

In Uganda the grandmothers of so many orphaned children are the worlds un-sung heroes!

Thousands of grandmothers care for and bury their own children and with amazing strength and courage become parents all over again. They do so at very old ages, with little support, few resources, and in poverty. Medcare wants to acknowledge these un-sung heroes and join with them in the care of the thousands of Ugandan children left orphaned due to disease and poverty.

**medcare**

A lifeline for Ugandan children.

A help and encouragement for all the grandmothers desiring hope and a secure future for the grandchildren they love.



## Suzan's Story...

"My name is Suzan Namirimu. My mother died when I was 7 years. At that time I was a healthy girl. Shortly after my mother's death my aunt took me to her home. A few months later I started falling sick. I developed sores all over my body. I couldn't walk or sleep because of the pain. My aunt gave me herbs but these failed to heal me. She called my father for help but my father never responded. In the end my aunt gave up on me and took me to my grandmother.

Another aunt, called Cissy, came and convinced my grandmother to take me to her hospital, from where she was getting her drugs for her HIV. It was then that I discovered I was also HIV positive. When my father was told about my sickness, he hid and stopped calling on my grandmother. Due to lack of support, grandmother insisted on taking me to my father. We found him drunk, which happened every day.

By this time I was again very sick with a terrible cough, and fever and pus was always coming out of my ears. I think I was stinking because nobody wanted to come close to me, even my real father. My fellow children never wanted me to be with them, so I spent all days and nights alone and in tears. My father never took me to hospital as initially done by Aunt Cissy. The drugs I had been given were finished and the sickness worsened. When I was almost dying, my father called my maternal aunt and told her that, "Suzan, your sister's daughter, is about to die." Aunt Cissy ran to my rescue and started caring for me and nursing me. At that time, God sent me well wishers and my 'saviour', Dr William. I call him my father and he introduced me to white doctors. They started caring for me, provided me with all I need to live and now I am OK. I always take my drugs well.

I thank my sponsor, Ms Valerie, for caring for my life and giving me new life and hope for my future. Thank you so much Medcare. I love you so much. Dr. Pauline, we all love you and God bless you."

**medcare - Together we can make a difference**

# Noeline Nakaagwa

A unique woman with a heart of compassion. A woman after God's own heart.

**Noeline Nakaagwa is a disabled Ugandan woman with a generous, compassionate heart, who has dedicated her life to caring for disabled and abandoned children in rural Uganda.**

She is a wonderful advocate for the rights of the disabled. She believes that being disabled is a form of uniqueness, that all people are equal, and disabled and able-bodied people must have equal rights in every society. She has proved that love is the greatest healer of all. She is a natural mother of two girls and an adopted mother of over 47 disabled children.

**Here is her story...** "I am Noeline Nakaggwa. I was born as normal as any other child. My mother tells me that when I was 6 years old I developed an illness, which caused me to lose power in my legs. I was taken to the nearby hospital where I was diagnosed with Polio. Treatment was given to me and I was referred to a physiotherapist, but I never met him. In the end my parents found a traditional bone setter and every morning and evening I was carried to him for treatment, with no effect. My father decided to send me to school and my older sisters used to carry me to school and back. When I grew bigger, my uncle bought me a wheel barrow to help my sisters as they carried me. However, when I reached senior one, my parents ran short of money and I had to drop out of school.

My parents loved me very much but my sisters and brothers started resenting and hating me. I began to feel I was becoming a burden to them. I planned on how I could leave my home in search of my independence and freedom from hatred. I went to Bukulula where my older sister lived and she entrusted me to her friend who then referred me to the priests. Sister Ursula, the founder of Ursula Foundation, enrolled me in her training school for tailoring. I was happy to obtain a skill. During the training, I was so much loved by our trainer that she asked me to live with her.

A few months later, Sister Ursula encouraged me to find my own apartment to rent because I was then grown up; but I had no job and no funds to afford a rent. However, someone gave me a sewing machine and another friend gave me some money for rent and to help me to buy some second hand clothes and resell them. When I started my life in rented accommodation I was identified as disabled by the local authorities, who introduced me to different communities for the disabled. What I found in these communities was unbelievable. All the disabled persons I met, whether old or young, had issues of neglect and stigma. Through those visits, I met a girl, called Kamiyat, who was being treated like a dog in her parents' home. She was always kept in a kennel and never saw any other people.. She was considered a curse by her parents, who believed that her presence in the home would prevent other normal children from marrying. One day as I went to visit her, her father told me that I was free to



take her away . He saw Kamiyat and myself as problems he wanted to be rid of. Caring for this girl was the beginning of my love and passion in caring for disabled children. After 9 months, another child came to live with me and then 5 children. The rented room we lived in became too small for us and the landlord had increased the rent. Nearby there was an old mud made house, but bigger in size. Myself and the children moved and rented this bigger house.

Kitovu Mobile, is an organization that has a program that distributes food to needy families in the villages. We were provided with food on this programme until it closed down. However, Kitovu mobile was also working with GOAL, providing houses for needy families and we were given a house of our own with no rent required. This gave me courage to help more needy disabled children. Kitovu Mobile was very helpful to us and this led to very many people coming to us offering help. Later it was discovered that some of these 'well wishers' were only using us to satisfy their own desires and emotional needs and very little practical assistance was given.

When Medcare first visited us, we wondered if they too would eventually abandon us. However, one day they provided food for one of my adopted daughters, Aidah. From that moment, we started to obtain many different forms of assistance through Medcare: food, medical services, electricity, carpentry machinery, physiotherapy and provision of school fees. Truthfully, Medcare is different from other organizations. Many of my children have been treated and cured of the disabilities they were born with. The loving care Medcare has towards the children has greatly changed many of my children's attitudes towards life. Initially they had me as their loving mother and when Medcare came, the children gained a loving father also, in the person of Dr William. The children all confide in Dr William and love him as a father, and he loves them too.

Thank you Medcare for such wonderful services. Based on the help and care you give to us, the number of the children under our care (myself, Noeline, and you, Medcare) has increased to 47 children. I am happy to inform you that Medcare has now secured a large piece of land for us on which a big and modern home is going to be built, providing a permanent change of life for myself and my disabled and abandoned children, from being very poor to being well provided for. My very big problems and challenges in life have been narrowed to nothing by Medcare. Thank you so much for loving us and I request that you continue helping a Ugandan child, because there are many others who need such services. God bless you all."

## Esther's Twins!



Medcare would like to thank Esther for all her hard work and dedication shown in her administration of the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre. We wish her well over the next few months as she awaits the birth of twins in October. We pray for an uneventful and healthy pregnancy and a safe delivery for Esther and her babies. God bless you Esther.

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## Trip to Uganda

Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who came on team with Medcare in June. All 17 of you were a blessing to all you met, providing medical teaching, clinical work, games and crafts, Bible teaching, painting Steven's House and much, much more!

## Three men, one hamstring and a lot of mud!



On May 20th 2017 three men stepped out of their hotel rooms, and ventured into the grounds of Belvoir castle. After months of 'training' we approached the start line of the Tough Mudder course with one goal, to claim the coveted finisher's orange headband. But before the gun went off we made one solemn pact - whatever horrors we would face that day, however many shoes would be lost forever in those muddy lagoons, no one would be left behind.

Steven

At first it seemed our team had the upper hand, gliding over the first few obstacles with ease and panache. This seemed too easy. Suddenly, at mile 5, we approached the aptly named "Everest", a 15' curved greasy wall. Many had tried to conquer it and ended up in a heap at its slippery bottom, but now it was our turn. With a swift kick and a jump Jamie reached for the top, but then, disaster, a searing pain in his right thigh - his hamstring was torn! Many at this point would throw in the towel, but this team did not know when to quit. With some improvised taping, and all the available painkillers they continued on.

2 obstacles later and the course was to claim its next team member, Chris, who was paralysed with cramp whilst stuck in a vertical tube filled with fast flowing water. Granted this was an inconvenient place for such an injury, but this course has no respect for time or place. After some prolonged stretching, our team, now pretty battered and bruised continued on. Then the rain started, horizontal in direction, freezing in temperature. It was my turn to suffer. As the hypothermia set in and I slowly turned blue Chris and Jamie hurried me along - we were not going to be beaten.

Finally the finish line was in sight. Unfortunately it could only be seen through a forest of electrical cables, dangling down over the final few meters of the course - the dreaded "electroshock therapy". Emboldened by our previous victories we charged forwards. Moments later we were found convulsing uncontrollably on the floor secondary to the multiple shocks we were receiving. We wriggled onwards.

As we crawled, hopped and shivered over that finish line, and were crowned with our bands of orange, we knew that, like Jamie's hopes of being a professional athlete, our ordeal was over. And most importantly of all we had raised £3,000 to help build a new home for Steven, a seven year old disabled Ugandan boy and his elderly grandmother. Thanks team - looking forward to doing it again next year!"

*Rick Hutchinson* ([Read Jamie's story on the Medcare website](#))

# Steven's House

Steven is a little Ugandan boy born with cerebral palsy and epilepsy...

**His father has died and he has been abandoned by his mother. As a result he is looked after by his very elderly grandmother, who struggles to find enough money to feed them both each day.**

Epilepsy and cerebral palsy is looked upon as a curse in some Ugandan communities and children with such disabilities often lead lives of neglect, shut away from the rest of the world. When Steven was first brought to the attention of Wellspring he was found in a small, dark, dirty house made of mud and sticks. He often sat all day on his own just waiting for his grandmother to come back with something for him to eat. A video of Steven was put on Medcare's Facebook and immediately Taryn and Rees Lowe offered to sponsor him through the MDI (Medcare Disability Initiative) sponsorship scheme. This sponsorship provides Steven with medical care, physiotherapy and monthly food supplements, regular reviews and social care.

Jamie Partridge, a Medcare volunteer, also wanted to help. He decided to raise funds for the construction of a brand new house for Steven and his grandmother. Jamie enrolled in the Tough Mudder Event in May. Tough Mudder is 10-12 miles of mud with over 20 obstacles and is one of the toughest events on the planet!! Jamie calls himself a dedicated 'couch potato', but through his courage and determination he and his friends raised an amazing £3,000 which covered all building costs.

Jamie also came to Uganda in June and during his stay he (and Lindsey Blain from Cocos Playbarn in Frodsham) painted the new house a beautiful bright green. The keys to the house were handed over to Steven's grandmother, together



with new bedding, mosquito nets, soap, food and other essential requirements for this little household. Steven's little grandmother seemed overwhelmed by all that has been provided for herself and her grandson, who she has looked after with great dedication for 7 years.

All at Wellspring, and Medcare, wish this little family well in the future and we pray that Steven will begin to develop some social skills and improved mobilisation as he continues with regular physiotherapy and general medical care.

Many thanks to Taryn, Rees and Jamie for your compassion shown to this needy child. Already his life is transformed and his future more secure.



## Knit & Natter at Widnes Baptist Church!

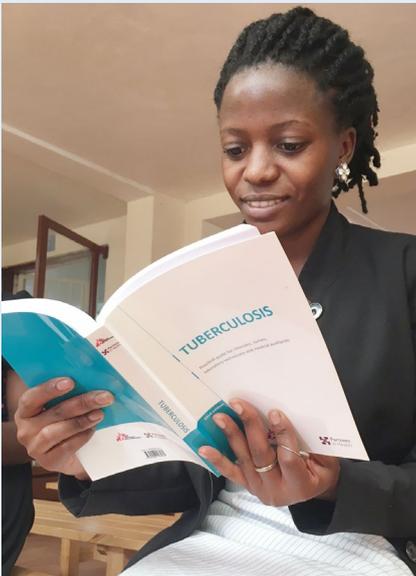
**The ladies who attend the Knit and Natter group at Widnes Baptist Church have provided the Ugandan children with beautiful hand knitted blankets, jumpers and toys for the past 3 years. There is so much love and care which goes into the knitting of each one of these items, and, I imagine, miles and miles of wool!**

Thank you ladies for your hard work and dedication. These knitted goods are received with great joy and gratitude by the families living in such extreme poverty in the Ugandan villages.

Here is little John Wasswa, aged 6 years. He suffers from cerebral palsy and is seen here with his new jumper and blanket.

Grandmothers of the very needy children cared for by Wellspring are particularly touched by the fact that someone living so many thousand miles away cares enough for them to provide these beautiful gifts. The jumpers and blankets keep the little ones warm at night and the toys keep them happy in the day. So thank you Knitters and Natters!! You are a tremendous blessing to many little children living in extreme poverty in the heart of Uganda. May God bless you as you have blessed the children.

## Medical Books for Wellspring



In June Wellspring received an assignment of medical books provided through the BMA Information Fund 2016. This was following a bid by Medicare to receive this grant. £2,000 of wonderful medical books, on many topics, all relevant to working at Wellspring, were shipped free of charge to Uganda. The staff are delighted with these books which will be added to our library at the medical centre and will assist the staff in their own professional development.

## Medcare May Success!

Over £6,000 has been raised through Medcare May this year. A great big thank you to all those who contributed to various events around the north west. These funds will be put towards the development of the new Wellspring Home for Disabled Children, to be built later this year.



## Chairman's Letter

Having observed so many tragedies in the news over the past few months it is important to remember the many miracles which are also occurring worldwide.

In Uganda, Wellspring has had its share of tragedies with 3 of our sponsored children dying within one month of each other earlier this year. However, we have also seen the amazing progress of 'Baby' Johnson, little Emmanuel and over 100 of our sponsored children. With a huge increase in children attending Wellspring, particularly during the malaria seasons, it is certain that many young lives have been saved through the dedicated work of our Wellspring staff, malaria being the biggest killer of Ugandan children.

Further encouraging news from Wellspring is the final purchase of land for the new Home for Disabled Children. Meetings were held in June with builders, planners and other local officials to discuss the proposals for the development of this home for 50 disabled children. All plans were met with great enthusiasm and it is hoped that building will begin later this year.

We look forward to the latter half of 2017 with great anticipation of many more miracles to come. Our aims, for the children and families under our care, are that they should also be able to look forward with a feeling of great excitement and hope for a healthy, successful and secure future.

Thank you for all your support in 2017.

*Pauline Hutchinson* Chairman of Medicare

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