



December 15, 2017

Dear Friends, Family, and Supporters of the Rubanda Solidarity Nursery and Primary School,

Father Dominic and the entire Board of Directors of Yamba Abaana, wish you and your loved ones the blessings of the season. We have so many reasons to celebrate the accomplishments of 2017 at the school.

It was indeed a very challenging year at times as we were faced with the severe drought from the spring of 2016 extending into August of this year. This resulted in food, as well as clean water, shortages. As crops failed, the prices of basic food stuffs, such as beans and corn flour (posho), sky rocketed. We sent out an urgent appeal to you all for additional funds to keep the school open and to restore the children's meal portion sizes to their usual amounts. Through your generosity, we quickly raised nearly \$10,000 which helped our school survive the crisis and left the Board with a surplus to prepare for the next food shortage. The well that we installed in 2015 (again through the generous support of our donors), continued to serve the schools and the community and never went dry, although the capacity was reduced temporarily. In short, Yamba Abaana literally saved the school and the children that it serves from one of the greatest natural disasters seen in very many years in SW Uganda.

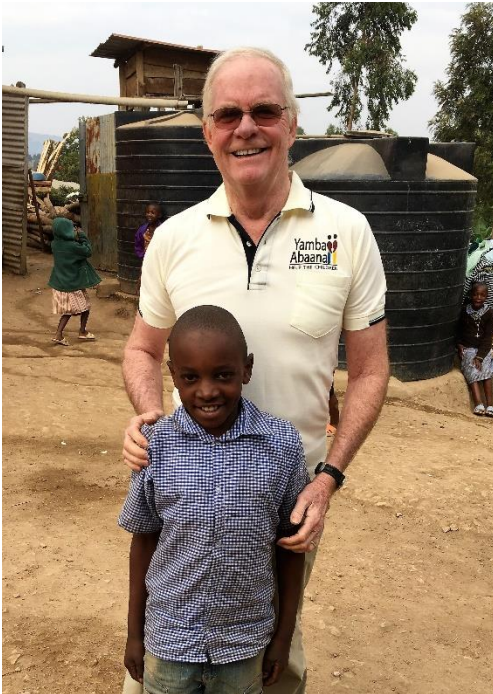
Unfortunately, the Rubanda area went from a severe drought to catastrophic flooding in September of this year. This resulted in entire villages including people, homes, and crops being washed away. More than 20 people in the immediate vicinity lost their lives. Fortunately, the school and all of the children survived. Fall crop planting was affected as a result, so food prices remain quite high now. We have promised the children and parents that we will not allow the kids to go hungry again. With our reserves we are now prepared to face the food security challenges that we may encounter in the coming winter months. Growing up in rural Uganda presents challenges for children that we can hardly imagine here in the comfort of our own lives.



**Nursery school children in their new school enjoying a full meal. They are so grateful to you for supporting the nutrition program!**

On another positive front, our **child sponsorship program** is growing gradually and we now have over 70 disadvantaged students being supported by our Yamba Abaana (YA) sponsors. They receive letters from their children at least twice a year and of course, the sponsors may communicate with their kids whenever they would like. YA has supplied Peace Uwimana, our wonderful liaison at the school, with a **computer, modem, and printer** to facilitate communication. She is happy to pass along messages, letters, and pictures to the children. We have many more kids deserving of help to complete their primary school (through 7<sup>th</sup> grade) education. For \$360 per year you can sponsor a child which covers the costs of tuition, fees, supplies, room and board. Any funds left over are used to support teacher salaries and to help support other students. The gratitude of our sponsored kids upon graduation from level 7 is, quite simply, overwhelming. Some sponsors have chosen to continue support on into secondary school (like our middle and senior high schools). We have been able to facilitate that continued support for several children in recent years. I have enclosed a donor/sponsorship form if you are interested in joining our sponsorship family.

**Dr Bruce with Joseph, one of his family's sponsored children (June, 2017)**



**Peace, Deborah (at 2 months old) and proud Papa, Bosco (June 2017)  
Deborah is much bigger now!**

Speaking of Peace, she certainly had an eventful year! She and her husband, Bosco, welcomed Deborah, their first child, into the world in April, 2017. Dr. David Sharp, with the visiting students from Kent State, and I got to enjoy her delightful company when we were in Uganda in June. Deborah is easily the most adored and photographed child in Uganda! Congratulations to the happy family!

**The Rubanda Solidarity Nursery School**, serving 50 children ages 4-6 and completed in 2016, is working out beautifully. This project was built by Yamba Abaana-USA in coordination and cooperation with the Rubanda Solidarity Development Association which serves the School and the Rubanda Community. The new classrooms, dormitory, dining hall/kitchen, security lights and fence are in place. The school boards many of these young children who have inadequate home situations or who live too far away. The school is a show piece for the community and they are very proud of it!



The Nursery School, completed in 2016



Construction of the new dormitory at the Primary School began in late November 2017

In addition, through the generosity of students at Kent State University, who visited the Rubanda school in June, new playground equipment, sports equipment, and uniforms were donated to the nursery school and have greatly improved the quality of life of these young students. The college students were part of a 2 week undergraduate study program sponsored by Kent State focusing on Uganda rural community nutrition and was led by YA Board member, David Sharp, PhD, a nutrition professor at the university. Dr. David hopes to include the Nursery and Primary Schools as a part of another academic trip to Uganda in May, 2018. Way to go, David!

We are finishing the year on a very positive note. We have broken ground and laid the foundation for our **new dormitory** to house 50 kids whose old residence (the "Obama Dormitory") was literally crumbling away. We have had a successful fund raising campaign that will approach \$30,000 by Christmas. The dorm will be ready for the children by the time they start the new school year in early February, 2018. Thanks to all of you who helped us reach our goal.

You may have noticed that this end of the year newsletter is a bit different than prior ones. That's right, there is no request for new donations at this time! Of course, donations and especially new sponsorships are ALWAYS welcomed! We wish to complete the new dormitory project by mid January, 2018 with the funds that will have raised by the end of December. Once we see how the food security and cost issue is going through this winter we will be able to assess the school's needs going forward. We do know that a new classroom building housing 4 new classrooms will absolutely be needed as the old building the kids are using now is literally falling down. We will keep you posted as we enter the new year. Once again, thank all of you so much for your kindness and generosity. We are proud of what has been accomplished in the past few years and the future looks bright. Our children now have the opportunity for a quality education and for better lives ahead. God Bless all of you for caring!

"Dr Bruce" Murray, MD

President, Yamba Abaana, Board of Directors

