



Love and cheer to our Friends, Family, and Supporters of the Rubanda Solidarity Nursery and Primary School of SW Uganda!

“A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and along these fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes and are returned to us as effects.” This statement, written in the nineteenth-century by the preacher Henry Melville, was intended to promote a righteous life but couldn’t be more relevant when looking at how our lives have changed over the past two years of living through a global pandemic. As part of a community, the sympathetic threads of social connection can be found in our daily interactions with others. These manifest as hugs, food sharing, holding hands, opening the door for strangers, happy hours, birthdays, graduations, concerts, cheering for the same teams, or sponsoring a child at a school half a world away. Our associations and interactions with friends and strangers give us a collective strength and offers us both security and resiliency. There is a warmth in connecting with others and it drives us to assist those who are in need.

As we close 2021 and turn our eyes upon a new year and new opportunities, we want to highlight all the growth and adaptation that has occurred at our school thanks to the tireless efforts of the staff, teachers, and administration, the adaptability of the students, and the support from our sponsors. We have all endeavored to respond quickly to immediate needs and pivot to face challenges as they occurred.

As in-person courses were not possible, our focus on making education accessible for remote learners in a rural and remote region was a primary focus for the school in 2021. The distribution of and recovery of education packets throughout the year enabled our teachers to connect with and educate our students even though the classrooms were closed. Our final distribution of packets this year saw 290 packets transported by hand to 19 different community centers across the region for students to pick up and work on at home. While we miss having the students at school, we have used the opportunity to upgrade the

school's buildings and infrastructure in preparation for their return. We would not have been as successful if not for the computer lab located on the top floor of our multi-purpose center that you helped us build in 2018!

Our new computer lab is functional and running! Select students, staff, and teachers have participated in training courses and found it to be miraculous. While phone use is ubiquitous throughout much of Uganda, this is the first time that some of our friends have used or been introduced to a desktop computer for writing, research, and data preservation. They have enthusiastically absorbed the information in class and continue to make progress on familiarizing themselves with everything a computer can do. Additional supplies such as web cameras, a printer, and a faster internet router as well as upgrading the computer lab with a new floor are currently in the works and are excited to watch our friends increase their technological literacy and knowledge. The school lab was instrumental for us this year as our teachers designed the content of the education packets being sent out to the students. This is a first for the school and we are very proud of our achievement!

It was only 2016 when Uganda suffered a national drought that heavily impacted food access across the country and reminded us how interrupting an empty stomach can be to an education. Through the purchase of additional farmland, the digging of a well, the expansion of water collection and retention systems on the school grounds, and the introduction of soil recycling, additional agricultural techniques and new crops, our school has invested in food and water security and that has allowed us to prosper. The school's Keep Gardens Green initiative this year allowed our school's land to continue to be used for farming both staple and new produce during the shutdown. This has kept the staff engaged while also allowing them to raise money and store surplus food in our pantry for the upcoming new school year.

Together our generosity remains strong, and we offer our heartfelt thanks to all of you who steadfastly ensure that our children remain educated throughout these unusual times. Your continued sponsorships and additional donations not only kept the school functioning as a remote education hub this year and allowed to be ready to hit the ground running when the school reopens in January, but your donations also provide faith to everyone who needed it. Faith

that the school will reopen. Faith that the students can afford tuition and books when they return. Faith that the fibers that connect us remain strong and untangled. Knowing that the community is supported and that the school doors are opening back up means more than can be expressed in a holiday letter, but you are the reason that our school was able to maintain itself this year.

The holiday season emphasizes the importance of family, friends, community, and the needs of others. Reflecting on the ups and downs of past year allows us to look to the future with a sense of purpose of what can be done to keep the brains, bellies, and hearts full. Let us start 2022 with a renewed sense of purpose for continuing our students' educations and easing the burdens of those who carry such heavy weights. We sincerely hope that you will keep Yamba Abaana in your thoughts and in your plans for donations.

May you and your families have a joyous end of the year! The Board of Yamva Abaana appreciates your kindness and compassion for the Rubanda Solidarity School and the community affiliated with them. Your support of these deserving children means the world to all of us.