

**A SPONSORED STUDENTS' STORY**

In her own words, Beatrice tells the story of her parents' death and how she came to Mtaala. P2

**CONNECTIONS ACROSS CONTINENTS**

A U.S. student shares her story and how her relationship with the students of Awegys has changed her life. P3

**BATHROOMS: A HEALTHY DIFFERENCE**

Check out photographs of the bathroom from start to finish. P4 & 5

**OUR STUDENTS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

See what some of our graduates are up to and read a student's inspiring poem P6

**THIS YEAR AND BEYOND**

Check out our goals and dreams for this year and beyond P8

## BATHROOMS: A HEALTHY DIFFERENCE

Think about how many times a day you use the toilet. Now imagine that you can't. 2.5 billion people do not have to imagine this scenario because they live without access to "improved" sanitation facilities. 1 billion of these people must practice open defecation due to the lack of any sanitation facilities. It is humiliating. And it results in lifelong health and environmental issues for entire communities. Children are the most vulnerable.

According to Unicef, approximately 1,800 children die everyday due to diarrheal diseases caused by poor drinking water, lack of sanitation, or poor hygiene. Others are continuously infected and re-infected with worms for the rest of their lives, often as a result of poor sanitation.

References:

Unicef

World Health Organization

For pictures and more about how the toilets work, see pg. 4



An Awegys student demonstrates how she is able to wash her hands in the new bathroom using water manually pumped from the well Mtaala installed in 2009. The new bathrooms are a healthy improvement over the old waterless pit latrine.

## School Breakfasts!

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but many children around the world start the day on an empty stomach. Vulnerable children in Uganda are no different--fortunate to have a cup of hot water or tea before setting off for their chores or studies. Mtaala provides lunch and dinner to our boarding students, but breakfast is made possible through a special fund.

Fortunately we have had a very special donor watching out for our students this year. Mr. James Keene of Colorado Springs, Colorado has created a breakfast fund. Now, Awegys students start each day off with a bowl of hot porridge with sugar, tea, and a biscuit. The breakfast fund also supplies fruit two mornings per week, and purchases firewood for the cooking of porridge. The students of Awegys thank you, Mr. Keene--every morning!

## Visit Our Website

See more photos of our work and enjoy videos from Awegys School in Uganda.



Awegys students serve themselves breakfast each morning in a classroom while their classmates in the background enjoy the meal.

# IN HER OWN WORDS

## BEATRICE'S STORY



Beatrice poses for a photograph at home in the IDP camp right after she found out she had a sponsor.

My name is Amyera Beatrice Cathy, a Ugandan by nationality, and by tribe, an Acholi. I am seventeen years old and I live in Gulu district found in Northern Uganda.

Life lost meaning to me when my parents passed on, leaving me lost in a vast world. The Kony war in Northern Uganda robbed many families of parents, brothers, sisters, and children. My dear parents did not escape it.

My mother was killed in 1997 together with her friends when they went to collect firewood in a nearby forest. It was a very painful experience for me. The world became very uncomfortable for me. My mother was murdered brutally, but first she was tortured. Her mouth was sliced off, then her arm was cut off from her body. She cried for help, but no one could help her.

Some of her friends were killed too, and some were taken by the soldiers to be their wives. My mother died a painful death. This account was narrated to me by my grandmother, because when it happened I was very young.

Life went on after this. The war did not end. It was a nightmare. We spent sleepless nights in the forests. I lived with my grandmother. She became my mother. We fled from the rebels almost everyday and took shelter under trees when it rained.

I wanted the war to end but it didn't. My father was an army man who was helping the government fight the Lord's Resistance Army. In one of the exchanges with Kony's soldiers, he was unfortunately shot dead. All my parents were now gone. I was left with my grandmother to live a life of sorrow and pain.

Having no where else to go, we went to stay in an Internally Displaced People camp, but the war still did not end. My grandmother registered for help from the World Food Program so as to get food and other forms of assistance from the government of Uganda.

"Live in the world but never allow the world to live in you." This saying resounded in my mind. I had lost all. I was eight years old when I began going to school and despite all the difficulties, I excelled in school. However, when I reached primary seven, my grandmother could't afford the amount of money needed at school. I sold pancakes when I was not at school to top up the money my grandmother paid and was able to pay the fees. I did my primary leaving exam and left for break.

Two months went by when my former teacher sent my uncle to our place to inform my grandmother about Mtaala Foundation and to prepare because the following day they were to come to interview us. I wasn't at home when this news came and when I came back, my grandmother told me about it.

I was dumfounded. I thank God for the miracle he performed. The following day officials from Mtaala Foundation came and interviewed my grandmother and I. My grandmother was overjoyed. She spoke to the director Mr. Wegoye in Kiswahili. They became close friends. He took photographs of us and told us I would be part of their Sponsorship Program. He encouraged me and promised me an education.

I was very grateful and even anxious when I heard the school was near Kampala. I was speechless and all I could do was thank him and give glory to God for such a wonderful opportunity.



Now at Awegys Secondary School, Beatrice reads to local village children every Saturday at Community Reading Day.

Beatrice wrote this story on her own. The editor of this newsletter made a few changes, including: adding commas, dividing paragraphs, and clarifying.



To meet more of our students, visit our gallery page at [www.mtaala.org](http://www.mtaala.org).

## SPOTLIGHT ON A STUDENT



**NAME:** Doris Akao **AGE:** 17 **GRADE:** Senior One

**ABOUT:** Doris's parents are impoverished peasants and unable to afford to care for her, so her uncle—who has four other children—has taken her in. Although he and his family share their one room home with Doris and provide her with meals, he cannot afford to pay school fees. Doris is a very hardworking girl and dedicated student. In her free time she loves to sing, and she appreciates being able to share her problems with her elders. With the support from Mtaala's Sponsorship Program, Doris hopes to finish secondary school.

**FAVORITE SUBJECT:** Math

**DREAMS OF:** Becoming a nurse

To become a sponsor, visit us online at [www.mtaala.org](http://www.mtaala.org).

## A U.S. STUDENT TALKS ABOUT HER INVOLVEMENT WITH AWEGYS SCHOOL

### MAKING CONNECTIONS ACROSS CONTINENTS

BY CATIE CONNOR

Growing up in Cherry Hill, an affluent suburb in New Jersey, I had everything I needed, usually before I even realized I needed it. I always had food and water, clothes and books, and two worldly and educated parents there to guide and support me. But as I began to mature and come into my own, I quickly became aware of the less fortunate.

When I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I was watching Oprah, something I rarely did. She was doing a program about the devastation that children, the same age as myself, were living in, 7,000 miles away. I decided to start a service-learning project. I had an idea, a name, and a general idea of who I wanted to help, but no means of making my idea a reality. That was when I sought out a teacher at my school. For the rest of the year I spent a great deal of time in her English classroom after school as she taught me about a group of students at a Ugandan school named Awegys, and I looked at pictures of the school to learn about conditions in the surrounding village.

As my 7<sup>th</sup> grade year came to a close, my mobility was limited due to chronic asthma, and I was too sick to attend school. I felt disappointed that I was unable to start my project that year, yet I was determined to make my newfound dream a reality in the upcoming year. It would be called Stars Over Africa. It would be a variety show and it would raise money to help these kids and this school.

And sure enough, with the help of teachers and students, we were able to hold the first annual Stars Over Africa variety show in May of 2009, in the gym of Rosa International Middle School, with hand painted banners that a student committee made at an after-school club, up on the walls. A group of brave and talented students performed, and through the sale of lemonade and very generous donations we raised exactly \$1,000. Now, after five years, the variety show has raised money for MTAALA going towards the water well, library, beds, desks, science supplies and most recently supplies for the health clinic.

As I stood on stage this past May, a senior in high school going on to pursue a degree in International Business from The College of Charleston, many thoughts ran through my mind. My schools, my teachers, and my parents had taught me a great many things, and together had provided the foundation for this accomplishment. But the students of Awegys were the inspiration for Stars Over Africa. When it came to lessons about determination, enthusiasm for learning, and how positive thinking can be the difference between success and failure, the students of Awegys taught me more than any textbook ever could. I am honored to call them my peers, even though they have and continue to be some of my greatest teachers.

## Bathrooms: A HEALTHY DIFFERENCE continued from pg. 1

Worm infections impact a large proportion of the world's population and carriers usually do not know they are infected. However, they suffer chronic symptoms that affect their entire development. Children who do not develop to their full potential affect the health and well being of families and entire communities. Improving sanitation can improve the health and futures of millions of children as well as the development and prosperity of entire countries.

Thanks to the generosity of several donors, Awegys students no longer have to worry about the health repercussions of poor sanitation facilities while at school. As of July 2013, the school's pit latrines were replaced with manual flush toilets and sinks for hand washing.

And the beauty is, the water that supplies the new bathrooms is manually pumped into a cistern from the well Mtaala installed over four years ago.



**January 2013:** Construction of the new bathrooms begins around Awegys school's original pit latrine that needed to remain accessible during construction. The original pit latrine consisted of a cemented hole in the ground that measured about 5 inches wide. There was one pit for girls and one for boys. Neither had access to water.



**February 2013:** Construction of the new bathrooms with separate stalls makes progress. Once the new bathrooms were accessible, the old pit latrine was pumped out, dug out, and dismantled.



**May 2013:** The finished stalls. On the left is a boys' bathroom with a sink and urinal. On the right is the boys' toilet.



**July 2013:** A student proudly stands in front of the new bathrooms Mtaala built. The bathrooms have flush toilets, urinals, and sinks. Students' chores include pumping water from the well into the bathroom's cistern.

## Bathrooms: A HEALTHY DIFFERENCE continued from pg. 5



Students pump water from the well Mtaala installed in 2009. The water travels from the well through a hose to the manual pump.



Students then manually pump the water up to the cistern.



The cistern sits higher than the bathrooms, so the force of gravity moves water from the cistern to the sinks and toilets when needed.



The boys' and girls' bathrooms have flush toilets, which improve the health and well being of all students.



The boys' bathrooms have urinals as well.



And both the girls' and boys' bathrooms have sinks for hand washing--dramatically reducing the risk of illness.

## SOME OF OUR STUDENTS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In Uganda, all students must pass comprehensive exams in order to graduate. In 2010, Awegys Secondary School (Mtaala's partner school) graduated its first students. Since less than 7% of Ugandans complete secondary school, this is quite an achievement. Holding a diploma and acquiring certain skills significantly increases chances for employment.

Uganda has the second youngest population in the world, making competition for jobs fierce among youth. In its 2008 report, the World Bank said Uganda had the highest youth unemployment rate and the youngest population in the world. It warned that unless Uganda can more create jobs, crime and armed conflicts. (Other youngest country in the world with 48 and 78 % of the population under the

**One of Awegys' graduates is teaching primary school in Mukono district!**

According to Uganda's New Vision are unemployed (Publish Date: Feb 01, unemployment rate even higher. New from the ministry of Gender around the job market to compete for about Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) puts the unemployment rate between 4-5%. Why the difference? The UBOS counts someone as employed if they work for one hour per week and do work that helps the family subsist. The majority of Ugandans are subsistence farmers, eking out just enough food from their land to feed their families. Hence, the discrepancy in numbers.

the youth would be more involved in sources indicate Uganda's the second % of the population under the age of 15 age of 30.)

newspaper; at least 62% of Uganda's youth 2013), while other sources put the Vision further says, "According to statistics 400,000 youth are annually released into 9,000 available jobs." But the Ugandan

The six students who recently graduated are engaged in the following as of August 2013: One is teaching primary school in Mukono district, one is working in a grocery shop, one in an industry that makes metallic pots, pans, and cups, and another is employed in a furniture shop. The fifth one is looking for funds to attend university. And the sixth one has opened her own business. The fact that these graduates are employed is indicative of the edge a secondary diploma gives youth given the dire rates of unemployment.

**1 Mtaala's program is unique.** We work with you to set goals based on our school's needs and your organization's interest.

**2 You get tangible results.** The members of your organization actually **SEE** the results of their and dedication generosity.

**4 Reasons to Become an Educational Partner**

**3 Receive a real thank you.** We will send photos and our Ugandan students will send thank you letters about what your donations accomplished.

**4 Build global awareness.** As an Educational Partner, you will help to build relationships between your organization and our students in Uganda.

### The Road to Success

By Silverlyn Oroma, an Awegys student

There is a curve called **failure**  
a loop called **confusion**  
speed bumps called **friends**  
a red light called **enemies**  
a yellow light called **family**.  
But

If you have a vehicle called **vision**  
and a spare tire called **determination**  
and an engine called **perseverance**  
with fuel called **faith**  
you will definitely make it  
to a place called **success**.

Silverlyn is from Northern Uganda. Her parents passed away from HIV/AIDS. Her uncle took her in, but was then killed during an attack by the Lord's Resistance Army.

### Donate Your Old Cell Phone

Rather than letting your old cell phone sit in your drawer, or--even worse--tossing it in trash that gets dumped in a landfill, mail your old cell phone to The Mtaala Foundation. Funds raised from donated cell phones will be used to help our students and partner school in Kigo, Uganda.

Find our mailing addresses on the last page.



**Changes at Awegys have a Positive Impact:**  
**In just five years, our student enrollment has grown from 25 to 125 students!**

### Awegys Secondary School: Something Special

By high school student, Drew Duboff

Ever since I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the lives of so many people I don't know have influenced me. I am referring to the community of people in Kigo, Uganda, especially the kids who attend the school there. From the moment I started volunteering at my own middle school in the U.S., I felt a part of something important, and so did my fellow students.

What I have learned from this whole experience is that you never really know what you have until you meet someone who does not have what you have. I am so fortunate to have a school with running water, electricity, supplies, and a roof that does not prohibit learning when there is rain. Although I have never visited the people whom I have helped, I have heard that they are so appreciative of everything that people halfway across the globe are doing for them. Helping people like this is something that everybody needs to experience because it truly has a profound effect on a person's life. Awegys Secondary School in Kigo, Uganda captured my life five years ago, and I'm still at it, so it truly has to be something special.

# THIS YEAR **AND** BEYOND

As an ambitious and ever-growing small organization, we love it when our supporters lend a helping hand towards Mtaala projects. The following are a few of our goals for this year...and beyond!

## THIS YEAR WE WILL...

**GENERATOR:** Acquire a generator to power the school's computers and clinic--and (someday a copier!)

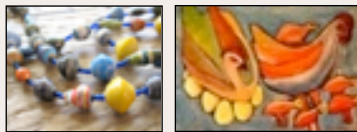
**NURSE:** Raise funds to hire a nurse for our newly constructed health clinic.

**SOLAR SYSTEM:** Raise funds for a solar system for the clinic to power basic equipment.

**COPIER:** Help the school acquire a photocopier and printer to reduce printing expenses of tests, end of term exams, booklets, etc.

### Shop Mtaala's Online Stores

[www.etsy.com/shop/](http://www.etsy.com/shop/)



Visit Mtaala's online stores to purchase our students' original paintings on Ugandan barkcloth and beautiful Ugandan necklaces made out of recycled paper. All proceeds go directly to our program in Uganda.

## ONGOING PROJECTS INCLUDE...

**SECURING STUDENT SPONSORS** Mtaala's greatest need is sponsors for students. For a small monthly fee, sponsors provide tuition and room and board for our students. Our sponsors are the heart of our program.

**STOCKING THE SCHOOL LIBRARY** "Community Hope Library" is the hub of Awegys school and Kigo village itself. Our library is always in need of books. If you are interested in sending a box of gently used books to Uganda, please contact us at [info@mtaala.org](mailto:info@mtaala.org).

**FUNDING SOLAR POWER** In the twenty-first century, electricity has become a necessity for quality growth to occur. Solar power would not only provide reliable electricity to improve classroom learning and general quality of life, it would also follow our dedication to environmental and financial sustainability.

## FUTURE DREAMS...

**RAISE FUNDS TO BUILD A SINGLE SCHOOL STRUCTURE SEVERAL STORIES HIGH** Originally built on a small piece of land donated by Awegys founder Alice Wegoye, Awegys School is in need of new land that will allow us to create the building and infrastructure that helps any school run smoothly. Until we are able to purchase new land, we plan to maximize use of the land we have by creating a new building several stories high that would house classrooms and a dormitory. This would require demolishing the current girls' dormitory--Alice's former humble home--but would result in Mtaala being able to help more students in an improved facility.

## HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN: TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THESE PROJECTS

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION, OR BECOME AN EDUCATIONAL PARTNER WITH THE MTAALA FOUNDATION, VISIT [WWW.MTAALA.ORG](http://WWW.MTAALA.ORG).

### E-mail

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## OUR MISSION

The Mtaala Foundation creates and supports education communities for vulnerable children and at-risk youth, including those affected by poverty, war, and HIV/AIDS. Empowering youth through learning and giving back to their community is a central tenet of our work.

The foundation partners with individuals and villages to create secondary schools where none exist, and connects the schools' students with international sponsors to fund their educations.

LEARN MORE AT  
**WWW.MTAALA.ORG** 8

