



SHINE CHILD PROGRAM

SPECIAL HEARTS TO NURTURE EVERY CHILD

Our conviction is that we can raise a community of compassionate people to support children from impoverished families who are facing challenging life situations to realize their full potential.

RESTORE HOPE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FACED WITH HEALTH-RELATED CHALLENGES

Originally designed to address treatment abandonment and malnutrition, the Special Hearts to Nurture Every Child – SHiNE Child Program has evolved. The Palliative Care Association of Uganda now recognizes that some of the families of the children who are being supported by the program have other pressing challenges.

In October 2023, Staff from the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) embarked on a trip of about 350-kilometer to Kitagata. Our mission was to reach out to families facing unimaginable hardships.

Guided by the nurses from Kitagata Hospital, we were able to visit two families;



A VISIT TO NYAKASHARU

“Our team on the way to the home
of one of the families”

RESTORE HOPE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FACED
WITH HEALTH-RELATED CHALLENGES

In Nyakasharu, a village just 10 miles to the beautiful Queen Elizabeth National Park, we also met a 14-year-old girl, whose life took a tragic turn in 2021. A seemingly innocuous swelling on her right leg marked the beginning of her journey. With time, the swelling grew, leading to pain and distress. In 2022, her family rushed her to Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital, where they received devastating news – she had cancer. The subsequent above-knee amputation saved her life but derailed her attendance of school.

Unable to return to school due to a lack of school fees and unable to walk there by herself, the young girl's dreams were put on hold. She now lives with her mother, who is a market vendor, striving to provide for their household. The young girl dreams of becoming a nurse, but her family's financial challenges and mobility issues create substantial barriers.

The nurses at Kitagata Hospital were instrumental in identifying this young girl's plight. A recent visit by the PCAU team allowed opportunity to provide her with elbow crutches, though the hilly terrain of Nyakasharu still makes mobility difficult. To enhance her independence, she needs an artificial limb (prosthetic), to enable her to navigate the rugged landscape more comfortably. This coupled with the rehabilitation requirements is what your compassionate contributions to PCAU will address in the short term. Once the girl is able to go back to school, she will send a strong testimony to the young and old suffering from cancer that there are positive possibilities. Going back to school will not only erase the huge stigma she faces now but will also build confidence for her mother and the people who have supported her to adhere to her cancer treatment. It is through such matters that PCAU impacts communities positively.



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In the hills of Rukondo, Sheema just near the famous hot springs in South Western Uganda, the team encountered an embattled family, whose story serves as a poignant reminder of the struggles faced by some of the most vulnerable members of our society. The family is headed by a 50-year-old widowed mother, living with HIV and with no source of income. She struggles to sustain her three children. The youngest (3 years) is living with HIV and is also a TB survivor, another (6 years) deals with speech impairment and a 9-year-old girl is being supported by the community Reverend with school fees.

The living conditions of this family mirror the weight of their circumstances. They sleep on the cold, hard floor, as they lack even the basic beddings. Their temporary mud house devoid of ventilators and fitted only with poor state windows, also doubles as their kitchen.

Upon this visit, PCAU resolved to offer a lifeline to this family through the SHiNE Child Program. Beddings were provided to this family and PCAU looks forward to addressing the family's nutrition, housing by renovating their house and constructing a proper kitchen, and other pressing needs.

These two stories give a summary of what the 32 families supported by the SHiNE Program look like. The program continues to utilize less available resources to do more. There is a lot that is still required and PCAU appreciates all generous and compassionate people who have and continue to be generous to these children and their families. The SHiNE Child Program has supported these families with transport to hospital, funds for meals and investigations when the children are admitted in the hospital.

We believe with your support, we can provide hope and resources necessary to families like these.