



Blessed to be  
a blessing!

# mountain children's ministry

End of Year Summary:  
December 2017

## DEAR FRIENDS,

I captured this image at the children's birthday party in September when Uncle Ivan surprised all the children with a popper after singing Happy Birthday. Suddenly and unexpectedly there was a loud "BANG!" and the air was filled with bits of colorful paper confetti. The children screamed with delight reaching to hold a piece of the magic floating down.

Be blessed with Joy!  
For the Joy set before Him,  
Jesus came to give us life to the full!

I hope that you spend time looking at this picture and experience that good warm feeling that comes from giving others joy. If you are receiving this newsletter you have participated in some way in making this

precious moment happen. From committed, loving sponsors, to crazy generous donors, to church endowment committees, to those who freely give paper and envelopes or backpacks and socks, to those who act as pen pals to the unsponsored. Those who listen for hours encouraging and counseling me, to those who have garage sales or climb mountains or design websites or do graphic art or get their school involved or suggest matching gifts at work. Those who ask how it is going, give wisdom at board meetings, send us cards, letters, texts, emails and encourage and sincerely thank us for doing MCM. To all of you who pray, or send sweet thoughts or challenge me to "put my big girl panties on" or simply tell me you care. This is a group effort, a group Love and I hope that this picture (and newsletter) in some small way surrounds you with the Joy that comes from knowing you helped bring joy to the other side of the world!

From Ivan, Mark and I and our staff and volunteers and the villagers of Mparo and all my Ugandan babies to all of you...Thank you! Thank our wonderful God! May it all come back to you many times over!

A most joyful and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

michele :)

## UPDATES FROM IVAN IN UGANDA:

Mpeirwe Ivan, MCM Executive Director



Once again I send you warm greetings from Kabale. It is always wonderful to be sharing the news coming from this side of the world. I hope the good Lord has kept each one of you well. As we come to the close of this year God continues to still do more to bless us!

Since March 2016 northern Uganda has been suffering a drought and it reached us in Kabale at the end of last year. Many people lost their crops and as a result there was a sense of desperation about the future. In March 2017 we sent out a prayer request for rain to our US partners. God made yet another unexpected miracle for us when one of our dear sponsors offered to buy MCM and the surrounding villages three irrigation systems!

Unfortunately when the heavy rains finally did start this September, they came with such force that they were destructive.

Mid September the floods washed the entire structure of our village Water Source away. Two weeks later, more heavy rains and hail destroyed many homes in the valley neighboring our community. Then late October, again in the valley, the MCM potato farmland was flooded. Some mountain areas were even cut off by overflowing water blocking roads. We thank God we had already harvested our potatoes otherwise all those crops would have been lost.

All in all, God is still good and we can't start crying to Him to take the rain away now because we needed it so much. No matter how bad it comes, we are still thankful. It's not all gloom as the farmland located on the hilly areas is now thriving and people will get high yields because of it.

Regarding income generation, farming has, for the past two years, been affected by drought so unfortunately again we did not harvest what we expected. After getting the irrigation systems we were able to save some of the summer harvest but it was reduced. Thankfully what sold covered our planting costs twice over. We thank God for the timely intervention with these systems!

**Regarding other income** generating projects, I am happy to report the future looks wonderful! In August, our chickens starting laying! We get about 7-8 trays/day (each tray has 30 eggs = 210 to 240 eggs daily!). The vet says our hens are at 70% capacity so that number should grow. We thank God too that we have ample market for the eggs and sometimes the market finds us. We have many people coming up our driveway to buy eggs at our home. Those not sold at home we transport to a supermarket in town that always buys them no matter the number.

The pig project is also moving on though not as well as we hoped. Competition is high because other people have pigs now but we still are operating in the profit region.



It is said God answers our requests in different ways and this was a wonderful response because it solved the drought problems of the future too not just for us but this entire community. When we received the irrigation systems in July, we started irrigating immediately and this led some of our sorghum and potato crops to survive the drought at the point they were about to wither. We are looking forward now to planting as much as possible without fear of drought. The harvest from the past couple of years has been low and we were beginning to lose hope in planting for profit but now we can step ahead without fear.

As we handed the villagers their system, one could tell that it was a game changer for them based on their reaction. They were so overjoyed to have gotten an answer to their prior unsolvable problem. Our heartfelt gratitude goes especially to Stella so much for this generous donation.

**For the academic aspect** of this ministry, based on progress reports and communication with teachers, the children are trying their best. In some cases we have collaborated with their teachers to offer extra tutoring to the children who struggle so they can pull up. We will not receive their final progress reports for 2017 until December. In November we had one young lady take university entrance exams, eight children take PL exams (to graduate from primary level to secondary) and four take the UC exam to advance to A-level (upper secondary school) for the 2018 school year.

December we will have MCM's first three young people graduate vocational school. Two will complete their training in Motor Vehicle Technology and Repair. The third in Building and Concrete Practice. After their graduation, we will find apprenticeships for them to solidify their skills. We, along with all these children, send our very heartfelt thanks to the sponsors who started with them from a young age until now that they're close to finishing. May God bless you bountifully.

We thank God for keeping our children healthy compared to what we see in this village. Everyone is fine other than one teen who fractured his arm playing football. He thought it was normal pain so he never told me about it and the bone reattached in the wrong manner. When I visited him at boarding school I noticed that his arm looked unusually bent. An x'ray revealed the disfigured bone but there was no one qualified to surgically correct it in Kabale. I found CoRSU Rehabilitation Hospital, a non profit organization in Kampala aimed at expanding rehabilitation services for children. They are performing the expensive surgery at a 98% reduced fee because of his young age and station. By the time you read this he should be home recovering. We praise God for CoRSU Rehab Hospital surgeons who intentionally help vulnerable children in Uganda for free.

**Our final update** is that in July we decided to undertake the task of constructing another building behind our home. We are calling it, "God's Refuge." This second structure is needed primarily for those children in our village who need temporary refuge and to accommodate MCM guests (the nearest guest lodging is 45 minutes away). Lately we are getting more little ones coming to our home who are unexpectedly homeless. We have had cases where children are running away from abusive caregivers, have lost their guardians, or have been abandoned. Such children need a home as we figure out how to resettle and place them.



Our current dwelling has three bedrooms housing two adults and four children. The children increase to nine during school holidays and last winter break we had 13. What we have done in the past is partition the living room into a bedroom using curtains. However, when we have Bible study, we need the living room for over 200 children and we have to move the beds and clothes out.

Also, our kitchen cannot accommodate cooking for these large numbers of children, so our helpers always end up making temporary shelters outside under which to cook. In the rain it is a mess. So this refuge home will also include a larger permanent kitchen.

When I brought this Refuge House idea to the MCM-US Board they wholeheartedly endorsed it as Ma Michele and Pa Mark have slept here when we have had 14 around the dinner table. They are well acquainted with our limited space and have witnessed children coming to our house for shelter. I am excited to welcome all of you who God may invite to visit us in Uganda! God willing we will soon have a place for you to stay near us. That day God brings you to our doorstep will be great indeed for ALL of us here! What an honor and a joy to host you...please come!

(Note from Michele - The funding for this project is not being taken from donations for children on the MCM program but from gifts specifically designated for this refugee/guest house.)

Once again it has been a gift from God to be able to write this update and recognize all the ways God is blessing MCM and carrying us. He is so faithful and so are you in your prayers for us, your support, your gifts and your love for our village. I thank God everyday for you and pray you all have a blessed Christmas and joyful New Year!



**Ivan**  
MCM Executive Director

# INTRODUCING RIHANNAH SSALI



Rihannah is more than a House Mom, she is a gift of "Potential" to MCM. She came to work for us from the Kampala area in 2015 after we had already gone through 2 other house moms. What we noticed immediately was that this tiny young lady spoke excellent English and was an energetic, fearless dynamo. Although a stranger to Kabale, speaking no Lukiga, she quickly made friends and learned the local language. She arrives at the house early and stays late working tirelessly cleaning, washing and plus she is an excellent cook! Rihannah is bright and quick and even helps Ivan in areas beyond her job description, including our Bible studies.

We learned that in her past Rihannah was forced to leave primary school after P.7 (7th grade) because her father died and they were poor. At age 15 she got her first job outside the home. Now, at 23, Rihannah pays the school fees for her three half brothers and one half sister. She has a son, Wycliff who is 4 years old. She is saving money for her Mum to start a small business and her goal is -

**"to be a wonderful woman, a hard working woman, a good mummy to my children and an important person in this world. To help those who need me, those who are poor and those in bad conditions."**

In January 2017 Rihannah wondered how she could be of more help to MCM. Ivan and I decided to ask her if she would like to go for computer training to potentially help him with MCM administration in the future. She agreed and went in February. Rihannah loved it! In May she received her certificate with top grades in her class. By September Rihannah was interviewing MCM guardians and children; updating and adding information to the MCM computer. Plus she still remains a wonderful House Mom, loving our children, her "boss Uncle Ivan", and her job!

Certainly Rihannah has already achieved her goal of "helping those in need and the poor," MCM is so blessed and grateful to have her!



## SPORTS DAY 2017

At the urging of the children Ivan hosted a second annual "Sports Day" in September and it was a big hit again. There were long distance races, sprints, tug of war, wrestling, and eating contests for boys and girls of all ages. At the end of our time we held a football match (American soccer) of MCM boys against a

local team. The MCM boys won! All in all it was a wonderful day complete with lots of laughing and cheering - the important things that make MCM a strong loving family.



Pictured from L to R proudly wearing their MCM uniforms:  
BACK - Pledge, Ivan, Enos, Noeline, Isaac, Muhumuza, Mukiga, Moris, Amon and Josh | MIDDLE - Antony, Owen M, Innocent and Elias | FRONT - Guma and Owen G

# OUR GIFTS

Our area of Uganda is famous for unusual names and "Gift" is a popular one for girls. How wonderful that as hard as life is, impoverished parents consider their children precious gifts. Please consider sponsoring one of our children and give the precious gift of your support and love this Christmas.



**GIFT  
AKANTORANA**

Gift (15) is a very bright, lovely young lady in Senior Three at Trinity Christian boarding. She is ranked 14th out of 168 students in her class. Her favorite subject is biology and she is hoping to be a doctor one day. Gift's father is paralyzed and her Mum Enid is a cook but does not earn enough to pay school fees. Gift has been on Ivan's waiting list since March 2014.



**GIFT  
AYEBAZIBWE**

Gift (12) is in Primary 7 and as I write this she is sitting for her National Exams to determine her future secondary school options for 2018. She is one of five children and both parents are peasant farmers who dig for a living and cannot afford tuition. Gift would like to be a midwife some day.



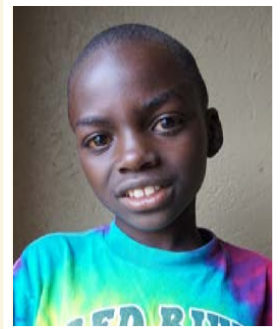
**GIFT  
KATUSHABE**

Gift (14) is in Primary 6 and loves science. Her parents are both alive but her father is ill and only her Mum is able to work as a farm hand digging other people's land. Gift hopes to be a lawyer one day. She has been on Ivan's waiting list since March 2014.



**JOEL  
MWEBEMBEZI**

Joel (14) and Jordan (10) are brothers and have been on Ivan's waiting list since March 2014. Both boys have been featured in previous newsletters and remain smiling and hopeful for sponsors one day. Their parents are manual farm laborers and cannot earn the income needed for school tuition. These brothers are extremely thoughtful often lugging jerry cans of water up the mountain to our home as gifts. Joel wants to be a lawyer and Jordan wants to be a "driver".



**JORDAN  
NATUKWASA**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR OTHER UNSPONSORED CHILDREN AT [MOUNTAINCHILDRENSMINISTRY.COM](http://MOUNTAINCHILDRENSMINISTRY.COM)**



Floods destroyed this tap water so we are back to lugging jerry cans

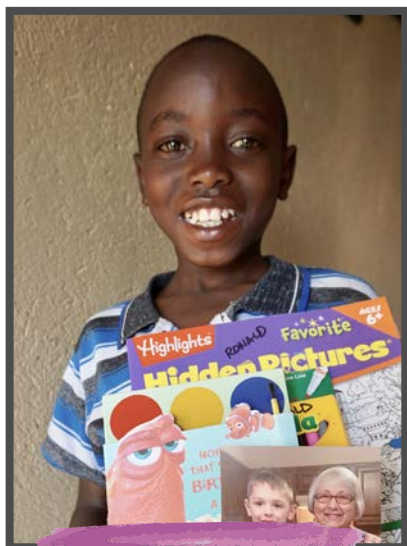
## WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- 1 If you are excited about bringing hope to an individual child's life**, please sponsor a child. The cost is \$1.35 per day; \$42 per month -- details above.
- 2 If you are interested in giving resources ...details below**
  - Construction of the MCM Refuge House that Ivan describes in his update. A temporary home for abused or abandoned children as well as guests of MCM.
  - Help to rebuild the Water Source structure destroyed by the September floods also described in Ivan's update.
  - Purchase farmland as the land MCM rents was recently reduced by the owner

## A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

An interview with Betsy Lund written by Michele Pageau

Betsy Lund is a 73 year old grandmother who realized **"what is most important is to love through giving"**. She has been intentionally sharing that truth with her grandchildren through sponsoring Ronald Katwesigwe since 2014. Betsy was attracted to MCM's smaller size that allowed more personal connection between the sponsor and child. She also felt more of her donation would be going directly to her child. Betsy chose Ronald at age 8 because he shared a birthday with her daughter and because of his "BIG light-up-a-room SMILE!"

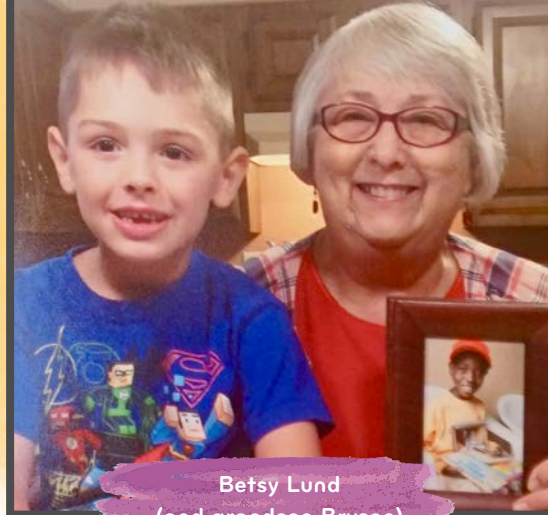


Ronald Katwesigwe

Over the past three years Betsy has thoroughly appreciated Ronald's drawings and his growing ability to speak English, his second language. She enjoys sharing his photos and his art work with her grandchildren especially. Her favorites are the Birthday and Christmas Parties that include ALL the

children, even the children not on the MCM program. She loves that the children learn about Jesus while having fun. Betsy also is grateful for the education received and the growing ability to attend better schools.

This thoughtful lady recently found herself wanting to add purpose to emptying her home of excess "stuff". She decided to have a garage sale and post a sign that all proceeds would be donated to Mountain Children's Ministry. Doing this motivated Betsy to joyfully purge even more of her things and her family ended up joining her efforts and gave from their excess as well. Because of her focus on meaningful giving Betsy was able to send MCM an unexpected, generous check! We are using that to help with the costs of supporting other children who do not have sponsors.



Betsy Lund  
(and grandson Bryson)

At the end of our interview Betsy confessed that she wished she had given more when she was younger knowing now what she does about the joy and meaning it has added to she and her family's lives. This reminded me of a quote from Mother Teresa of Calcutta... **"One thing I ask of you: Never be afraid of giving, there is deep joy in giving since what we receive is much more than what we give."**

## DID YOU KNOW?

As a government recognized 501c3, your gifts to MCM are tax deductible. Did you also know that it's possible your place of employment has a matching gift program and you can double the impact of your donation? Consider checking with your employer if a matching program is available and double your gift!



[MOUNTAINCHILDRENSMINISTRY.COM](http://MOUNTAINCHILDRENSMINISTRY.COM)

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