



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES NEWS & NEEDS

SHARING GOOD

FALL 2012

NEW SCHOOL A BRIDGE TO FUTURE FOR UGANDA WAR ORPHANS

by Zoe Christopulos

Decades of civil war and destruction by the rebel group “Lord’s Resistance Army” (LRA) devastated northern Uganda’s infrastructure, rendered millions of people homeless, and left an entire generation of children orphaned and uneducated. Okijob, 19, lost his father to the war and then fled from his home in the north to avoid being abducted into the LRA child army. Once his father was killed, Okijob, along with his mother and four younger siblings were left with no family provider.

Okijob found his fresh start at Archangel Michael Orthodox School just outside the northern Ugandan town of Gulu. With the cooperation of the Orthodox Church in Uganda and a generous grant from the St. Nektarios Fund, IOCC constructed a new secondary school to accommodate 450 students from the area including those living in an adjacent camp for families who were displaced



It’s exam time for Okijob (front left) and his classmates at Archangel Michael Orthodox School. The stability of school life has helped them to reclaim part of their childhood, and to dream of a brighter future. (photo by Zoe Christopulos/IOCC)

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by the violence. The school site was chosen because of a great need in an area where existing secondary schools are overcrowded. Along with classrooms and a science lab, the school also includes a free-standing kitchen and dormitories for boys and girls that can house up to 140 orphans and boarding students.

Okijob pays his tuition by working but doesn’t mind if it means

earning a diploma. Named head boy of the secondary school because of his caring demeanor, Okijob is grateful for the opportunity to go from a life of hardship to student life and the prospects it can create in helping to provide for his family. “Archangel Michael brought happiness to my life again,” he says. The soccer fan now gets excited about sports just like every other teenage boy.

HELPING PEOPLE REACH THEIR POTENTIAL



The gift of learning is like receiving a ball of light. It illuminates, and clears a path to a better place. Like a guiding star, that knowledge can lead us towards opportunities for a more prosperous and purposeful life. Ensuring access to learning is one of the many ways that IOCC is helping people reach their potential, from offering vocational training to the disabled

in Ethiopia and dairy farmers in Georgia, to building a school for war orphans in Uganda.

Helping people reach their potential in the midst of a crisis like the Syrian conflict is more challenging, but not impossible. With your compassionate support, IOCC can help ensure that Syrian refugee children continue their schooling in host countries and help provide their parents with access to housing where they can resume a peaceful life with their families.

As we enter into the coming holiday season and prepare to celebrate His Blessed Nativity, I hope that you will embrace this season of goodwill by joining with me to help those in need reach their potential for a life of peace, purpose, and prosperity.

In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
CEO and Executive Director

JOB TRAINING PROFITS ETHIOPIA'S DISABLED

He is known as the "Umbrella Man" for his deft skills at keeping ladies' parasols prepared for protection against Ethiopia's endless sun-drenched days and occasional downpours. Business is brisk for Habtamuwale, 38, but life hasn't always been so sunny for the umbrella repairman. Disabled at 18 from eating a toxic plant that caused permanent nerve damage in his legs, Habtamuwale spent 12 years living on the streets of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. He represents thousands of disabled Ethiopians who struggle to survive due to a lack of education and a dearth of support services for the physically challenged. Through a vocational training program for disabled people provided by IOCC in cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), Ethiopians with disabilities have been able to learn a job skill and make a fresh start. Habtamuwale traded concrete sidewalks for a classroom and learned how to repair umbrellas. Now the father of three has his small shop on a busy city intersection and makes enough money to pay his rent, living expenses and tuition for his children. Habtamuwale says his life changed for the better because "good people took notice of me and were caring enough to help. I can't say enough thanks to IOCC and blessings on them."



Jake Lyell/IOCC

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC) is the official humanitarian aid agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America and a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.

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actalliance

IOCC BOOKS SPARK LEARNING IN TANZANIA SCHOOLS

One of the biggest obstacles to education in Tanzania is the scarcity of textbooks and reading materials available to the schoolchildren and their teachers. This fall, more than 5,700 children from Kindergarten through 12th grade started their school year with new books in hand.

IOCC delivered a shipment of more than 27,000 English language textbooks and reading books to 27 rural schools in central Tanzania in partnership with KidCare International and The Orthodox Church in Tanzania.

Lucy Kamptoni, or “Mama Lucy” as she’s called by kids at the three Tanzanian schools she founded, says the books will benefit the children and their teachers for years to come. “The children were very happy to see the books,” said Mama Lucy. “Their little hearts were filled with true love and gratitude!”



All eyes are on the colorful new reading books in the second-grade class at Shepherd's Primary School. (photo by KidCare International)

BREEDING SELF-RELIANCE IN THE WEST BANK



Keeping a family of five children fed is a daily challenge for Fatmah, 48, and her husband. Their access to water is limited, making it difficult to produce adequate food from their vegetable garden in the West Bank village of Falamiya. To supplement her efforts, IOCC provided Fatmah with a ewe as part of a women's cooperative program to improve food security for at-risk families in the West Bank.

Fatmah is one of 24 women in the village who has received technical support in home gardening from IOCC, or been given chickens or sheep along with feed and animal husbandry training. Her newborn male lambs will be raised and sold at auction, with the proceeds used to buy more ewes to grow the flock. In the meantime, Fatmah says the sheep's milk is a welcome addition to her family's diet, producing enough to make cheese and yogurt.

(left) Fatmah, 48, is proud of her small but growing flock of sheep. The milk and meat that they produce will provide a steady source of nutrition for her family in this remote region of the West Bank. (photo by R. Tierney/IOCC)

KNOWING GOODNESS THROUGH GOD'S LOVE

Scan here
for more about
IOCC Sunday!



Archdiocese of Zimbabwe and Angola

I greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

True agape requires action. This is the love that the Lord requires of all His followers, and it is a self-sacrificing love that is not fulfilled apart from action (1 John 3:18).

In order to be pleasing to God, we must never lose sight of our

obligation to the powerless, downtrodden, helpless, and destitute of this world. In fact, where all of us will spend an eternity depends upon a proper understanding on our part of our obligation to the poor (Matthew 25:31-46). If we are touched by our Lord's compassion and

moved by His agape to serve others, we "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). We must "look out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). Ultimately, when we are touched by His compassion and moved by His love, we reach out to the weak, the hurting, and the downtrodden with compassion and love and God will be merciful unto us also.

Since God's love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12), we must all be "moved with compassion" by the many hardships and diverse difficulties we see our neighbors experiencing. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the compassion you demonstrate at IOCC.

With fraternal blessings and agape,

His Eminence Seraphim,
Archbishop of
Zimbabwe and Angola



IOCC Sunday

A DAY OF SHARING!

NOVEMBER 18, 2012
ioccc.org/dayofsharing

The compassion shown by St. Basil the Great for children, the sick and the oppressed is a model for the work of IOCC. The IOCC St. Basil Society honors the generosity of those who have chosen to leave a legacy of compassion to the world by designating IOCC as a beneficiary of their estate.

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