

# Sylvia's Children

## 2023 Annual Review

Changing children's lives, one child at a time

### 20 years in review

This year marks a humbling milestone – 20 years. Who knew, in June 2003, when Sylvia was ‘adopted’ by the Mbiriizi Advanced Primary & DayCare School as their grandmother, how far they would come in two decades. No one could have predicted the successes – the new buildings and resources across the campus or the lives of orphans brought from near hopelessness to security and promise.

The 20th Anniversary of Sylvia’s Children is an accomplishment of many – our partners in Uganda, our wonderful students, and of course, you. Nothing comes from nothing, as they say, and without the consistent support of our donors all of this would have remained an idea (instead it’s an incredibly true reality).

With over 1000 students in the Primary school, 80 orphans in high school, 170 orphans with college and/or technical degrees and another 100 orphans poised to graduate in 2024 and 2025 it was a celebration of joy, of success and of a wonderful partnership. In this review we highlight some of the major accomplishment of 2023 in greater detail, and hope to offer you a glimpse into the incredible work happening at Mbiriizi Advanced. We hope you join us again this year as we begin the next 20 years with even greater vision than before.

### 20th Anniversary Celebration!

Starting at 9 am on June 2 there were church services for all the churches represented in the school which took until noon! Lunch was then served to the **3,000** people in attendance in preparation for an afternoon of entertainment, presentations, and recognition. The school choir entertained and the 50 piece brass band played the Ugandan national anthem and the Star Spangled Banner. Students from every background performed and, of course, there was a recognition given by Rev. Geoffrey Walter Kawuma, Director of the School of “Grand Sylvia’s” efforts and activities for the school.



### Connecting Our Students to the World!



Very few Ugandan primary schools can boast a computer lab. The North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale Rotary in Minnesota District 5960 spearheaded the drive to raise money for the computer lab. The space is now finished and accommodates 20 computers, keyboards, printers, and a large screen TV for Zoom calls and other programs. The children return to school on February 5th, and it’s ready for them to use!



### The Hynes Family Clinic



Progress is being made to make the Hynes Family Clinic a complete facility offering medical services not only to our orphans and all the students of Mbiriizi Advanced, but to the whole village as well. This includes full physician services, dental, optometry, ultrasound, lab testing capabilities, and a dispensary. Watch for the completion of these plans and the grand opening!

### FEATURED GRADUATES



After 20 years, one of the most rewarding results of our work is beginning to bear fruit. Many former students are now return to the school, as adults & professionals. Most started with us in Primary school and now **four** of them are teachers and one of them (Moses Leswata, featured below) is our school nurse! Here are our four awesome teachers:

- **Claire Nabatanzi**, teaches Primary one
- **Omega Ttendo**, teaches Baby Class
- **Joyce Kasozi**, teaches Baby Class
- **Nashira Nanyonga**, teaches Primary two



Moses attends to a student

#### Moses Luswata, Nurse

Moses started at Mbiriizi Advanced when he was in Primary 2 and was a diligent student from the start. He worked his way to Primary 7, graduated, and went on to St. Bernard's Secondary School. When he completed secondary he went to the Rakai School of Nursing, and when he graduated we hired him as our school nurse. The percentages of students “surviving” these transitions from grade-to-grade and school-to-school are remarkably low in Uganda. Moses’s persistence speaks to the importance of a consistent support system like Mbiriizi Advanced throughout his childhood.

Moses is an excellent asset and it's such a joy to have a former student now be one of our major employees. He has a wonderful sense of humor, he loves the children and he's willing to learn... What more could we ask for?

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SPONSORS

Stories like Moses’s are not common enough. A child (regardless of where they’re born) requires almost two decades of daily support and education to enter the world, and it’s an unfortunate reality that many places around the world cannot afford to provide every child this crucial support. We’d like to highlight a letter from one of our current sponsors, whose ~\$1.50 / day provides one orphan with food, school supplies, clean water, and a safe home day in and day out.

*“The picture you enclosed of little Rebekah was so sweet. As it is said, “There but for the grace of God go I.” I was lucky enough to be born in the United States. I had two loving and supportive parents. I’ve had many wonderful opportunities in life. I am very lucky that I need nothing and want nothing. If I can play a small part in giving Rebekah hope and a chance to have a better life, I consider it an honor to support her.”*

- RE, Sylvia’s Children Sponsor

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