

The Link

A Call to Stretch My Faith

Those who venture outside their comfort zone discover God's presence and power afresh...



An African being fitted for reading glasses

When I was told about the opportunity to go to Africa, I did not know what to expect. I had never traveled more than a few hours from home nor stepped foot in an airplane. Yet, I was being called to GO. During preparation for the trip, I had an unusual sense of His comforting reassurance. God kept reminding me that if He called me to go to Uganda, He would be there with me. Once getting to the airport I experienced a true test of faith. After dealing with a couple of health issues, I had a choice to make: I could turn around and go home, or I could put all of my trust in God and take the leap. So I decided to silence the fears around me and go for it. And I am so thankful I did.

The trip was nothing like I expected. Immediately when arriving at Mission Link International Headquarters in Jinja, Uganda (as well as villages and shops), I was greeted with many hugs, handshakes and smiling faces. Even the non English speaking Africans made me feel just as welcomed as the English speaking ones. I have never

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felt so "at home" in my life. The joy overflowing from Ugandans was contagious. I could not help but sit back in awe at the joy of the Lord flowing through God's people in Uganda. What captured my eye the most was the love of God that poured out of each person in every area the team ventured. The people were so receptive and responsive! It felt so easy to share about God because they desired to hear about Him. Both adults and children alike opened their hearts so willingly to listen intently to what team members had to say. What I loved most was when they shared their experiences and testimonies just as freely back to us. Many accepted the Lord as their Savior. Amen! While in Africa I found a favorite sound—the smiles and laughter of the children. Their laughter, so pure and honest, filled the villages. When one laughed, they all laughed. It was something that filled my heart to overflowing.

The days flew by so quickly. Before I knew it, I was involved in something much greater than a mission trip. I was connected with a family, and that family extended further than I would have ever imagined. Not only did I find a family atmosphere in our American mission group, but also in many linked with MLI, and those we were visiting. Even the wonderful staff members at Chel and Vade Cottages where we stayed treated me as family. I remember the second or third night when I was headed off to bed one of the staff members said, "goodnight Mary." It sounds simple but I felt such love that she cared enough to notice me and to figure out my name. All the staff were just as friendly.

While in Africa it was hard for me to process everything that was going on. Since most was very new to me, I just lived in the moment and tried to take in everything. Once getting home and back into the comfort of my own home, I realized something was missing. I had left part of me back in Uganda. I will never forget the many experiences and special moments. As a result of this trip, many people now have a special place in my heart. I thought I was going to Africa to help others, but more than that, they helped me. I will forever cherish my time and memories in Africa. I remain very thankful of having been a part of what God is doing in Uganda through Mission Link International.

Ms. Mary Shupe is a member of Pearisburg Christ Fellowship of Virginia. Her Pastor is Rev. David Bracken.

Mary

EXERCISE FAITH AND GROW : **Mary Shupe** is a perfect example of the spiritual benefits and blessings when stepping out in faith. Seventeen years ago, **Dr. Jim Masloff**, MLI's Medical Director, went from retirement to directing USA medical teams in Africa. Doc testimony is that missions has blessed and enriched his life beyond measure. **Dr. John Cramer**, (like most **MLI team members**), has left his large family and practice to share the gospel through medicine and sharing the Word. Several have actually taken the step of faith to become a missionary in East Africa. **Bryan & Wendy Frady** are now missionaries in Uganda as a result of a 2011 mission trip with MLI. Also, **Ricky & Brenda Smith** and **Ashley Patterson** also became missionaries in Uganda as a result of MLI's mission trips.

MLI has several teams planned for 2020. Exercise your faith and join us in Africa. LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE SCRIPTURES: "...without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Whenever you and I exercise the kind of faith that pleases God (whether in the USA or Africa), amazing and transformative things happen!

Rick

News Brief

GENERAL FUND: MLI's staff and Board of Directors are very thankful for the many ways you support the work in Africa. **Your gift to the general fund is a vital source and blessing.** We are grateful for the trust you extend to our office to place your gift where most needed. Generous donors have now given



over **\$40,000** to Pastor Wambua's feeding project for the Turkana Tribe residing in NW Kenya (pictured right). Also, funds have been received to help prepare dormitories for Pastor Timothy's school in Basana.

WIDOW'S PROJECTS: (1) **Our Itukulu project** is ready to proceed to build on our recently purchased land a small facility for the milling machine (and grain storage). Footers followed by brick walls will be the first phase. **Any amount appreciated.** (Also: adjoining plot for growing maize is now available for **\$725**). (2) **Esther's House** is being constructed & continues to move forward (**donors please continue to fund**).

OTHER MLI PROJECTS: (3) **Uway Church:** Sides need to be placed on the church with either metal or brick. **Your contribution will be greatly appreciated toward the next phase.** (4) **Mary Kunya** (wife of our bookkeeper) has a business that needs a refrigerated juicer **\$670**. This will provide great income for her and the family.

REMODELING USA MISSION CENTER: We are presently raising funds to remodel our new mission center in Pearisburg, Virginia. We need both volunteers and monetary assistance. (Note: Additional info is below.) **Any gift will be gratefully received.**

OTHER IMPORTANT NEEDS: Please continue to support our **Street Kids & Medical Funds; MLI Office—Uganda** (security, taxes, electric, water, etc.)—**any amount**; MLI Church Plant—Kigera really needs a permanent structure—**any amount appreciated.** **Monthly salaries for several staff members \$50** & two staff teachers **\$90** & two pastors at **\$70** (Pastor Emma and Pastor Wasawa). **Office Laptop Computer Needed:** MLI's main computer (old) has **CRASHED**. We are now forced to purchase a new desktop. VP Wendell Drumheller is overseeing the restoration. **Any amount appreciated.**

COMMENTARY: There are too many projects to support! MLI could easily spend \$45,000 to bring closure to some of the pressing needs and projects: Several MLI church plants need permanent structures—Milling machine and building in Itukulu for widows project—Funds for Abraham (a street kid in school) for housing...**\$45** every 3 months—Several motorcycles have much age needing to be replaced. One motorcycle is **\$1500**—**OTHER NEEDS**—Brakes and mechanical check for MLI'S 1997 Van; cement floor for Kadomala Church; Julius, who is learning to read/write, needs tuition for next term at **\$95**; Shelia, MLI's receptionist, goes to school on the weekends. Tuition per term is **\$125**; also, MLI staff has overwhelmed our budget needing school fees, maintenance for motorcycles, medical, staff food, etc.; Our monthly security cost, utilities, cell/data time are additional expenses. MLI's ground rent (tax), building maintenance in Uganda, fuel, transport/requirements for our teachers to travel, etc. etc. **ALL** have taken a toll on our budget. Daily we have people that need help (e.g. Albert, an old street man, needing food; street boy transport, two women who had husbands who left the family were literally crying for help. We are grateful for whatever you can do.



Left to Right above: 1) MLI sharing the gospel, funds, soap/beans/maize flour with Itukulu widows; 2) a cake made by Mary Kunya for widows; 3) Pastor Wasawa in his home. 4) Rick at Kagoma Church preaching under the trees.

Left to Right below: 5) Street boy sleeping near MLI headquarters 6) Septic Tank being constructed at Pastor Timothy's School in Basana. 7) Rick preaching at Buwenge Church.



NOTICE: June and July are Cell Phone collection months. Please ask your friends, Bible study class, church, and family to donate their old cell phone. Thank you for helping!

Rick is currently in Uganda from May 15 to June 19. He will be back in the MLI Charlottesville office July 1st.

Pearisburg Construction Team: (Update) A licensed plumber, who is employed by Virginia Tech, continues to work on the waterlines in MLI's new office. We need an electrician, plumber (what is remaining), carpenters, ceiling & floor tile, painters & laborers to remodel the MLI office/warehouse in Pearisburg during the Summer of 2019. Funds greatly needed for building materials as well as help with feeding volunteers. Out move date has been moved to 2020.

February and June Trips for 2020 to Uganda: February 1-14 and June 13-26. Contact our office for additional information. More detailed information forthcoming.



Thirty dollars (\$30) a month brings great happiness to an African Widow! **Will you prayerfully consider adopting this dear widow?** She needs a loving family.

Name: Manjeri Nabirye is 64 years old (1956) and cares for 3 children. Her husband died of motor accident 2015. **Testimonial:** I thank God for my salvation and for care and support through MLI. Manjeri Fellowships at Itukulu Baptist Church (Pastor Kadoko).