

QUARTER 1 2021

# SCHOOL FEE REPORT

PRESENTED TO FRIENDS OF REACH OUT

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# INTRODUCTION

Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja continues to offer psychosocial support to families faced with life threatening illnesses. School Fee Support is one of the psychosocial support activities that the organisation has put a lot of effort into, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic, when the schools have been closed. Children have been home from March 2020, and the candidate and semi-candidates resumed school in November 2020 and March 2021, respectively. The organisation made several adjustments to accommodate the children on the School Fee Programme. They included: promoting home schooling through distribution of revision materials and story textbooks, providing them with monthly food supplies and routine monthly counselling visits.

The students' monitoring program has continued on a monthly basis in 2021. Children are visited either at home or in school and counselled. During such visits, the team checks on the childrens' progress, provides guidance to guardians on how to handle the children, listens to the children's needs and provides moral support to those who are not able to return to school yet.

The government of Uganda arranged for Primary 7, Senior 4 and Senior 6 to sit for their final examinations in March and April 2021. This was followed by re-opening classes for the semi- candidates (Primary 6, Senior 3 and Senior 5). The children were so excited to go back to school. Of the 122 students on the programme, 11 are in nursery, 94 are in primary, 12 are in secondary, 5 are in vocational and 7 are candidate students (all of which are in the boarding section).

However, the Ministry of Education decided to stagger the return to school, based on class level. First to return were the candidate classes, followed by the semi-candidate classes and then the rest of the students according to the table shows below:

## 2020 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CALENDER

Class	Begin	End
P.6, S.3 & S.5	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
P.4 & P.5	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
S.1	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2021
S.2	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
P.1, P.2 & P.3	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2021	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Nursery & Pre-primary	Till further notice	Till further notice

Unfortunately, our little children in the Nursery Section will not be resuming school anytime soon as seen from the time table.



# SCHOOL FEE PAYMENT



Candidate classes and finalists in vocational institutions reported to school on the 18th of January, 2021 to allow them have more time for revision and prepare for their final examinations. They included six candidates in Primary Seven and two finalists in Vocational Institutions. All their school dues including tuition and other requirements were provided and paid for.

The second set of semi candidate classes that included the primary six pupils, senior three and senior five students were required to start school on the 1st of March, 2021. All preparations were made to ensure their school fees were paid and all the necessary requirements were purchased on time so that they can report back to class on the first day. We are still waiting for government's position on when nursery section, Primary 1, Primary 2 and Primary 3 children are to report back to school.



# FOOD SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING TO THE REMAINING STUDENTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE HOMES



While the candidate students and finalists are at school, they receive meals at break and at lunchtimes. However, the continuing students who are still at home are not assured of regular meals due to economic constraints within their families, and so RHHJ provided these families with food support.

Each student's family was provided with monthly food support which included: 5 kgs of maize flour, 2 kgs of beans and a bar washing soap to maintain their hygiene. With this food support, children - especially the girl children - were protected from taking risks while in search for a meal! It has also enabled these children to stay in their respective homes as they are assured of at least a meal on a daily basis and therefore no reason to move from home to home in search for something to eat.

# COUNSELLING



The psychosocial team has kept in touch with the children and their families through the monthly children visits. During such monthly visits, the children are counselled and encouraged to keep safe. The Parents/guardians were also guided on how to monitor their children and assist them with the home schooling and teaching children house work or house chores.

This is aimed at maintaining the children's hopes alive as they patiently wait for their classes to be allowed to return to school. It has also helped to improve the relationship between the RHHJ team

and the children which is beneficial in developing control on the children as well as maintaining discipline and keeping the children in check.

Through these monthly home visits of these children, RHHJ team has been in position to tackle or deal with behavioral issues among the students/ pupils - especially the teenagers!

## HOUSE CONSTRUCTION FOR THE VULNERABLE STUDENTS ON THE PROGRAM

RHHJ supports vulnerable children to continue with their education while they are sick, while one of their parents/guardians are sick or when they are orphaned after the death of their parents or guardians so as to break the cycle of poverty. Such children are also surrounded by other factors that may hinder them from concentrating on their studies. Some of these children have no shelter or a place to call home! Sleeping outside in the cold, adds more stress to their lives which leads to poor adherence to medication or slower rates of recovery and poorer quality of life for the sick children thus leading to lots of suffering and death. Therefore, during this first quarter, two houses were built for two students - Abdul who is in Primary six and Emmanuel who is in Primary 5.

### ABDUL

Abdul is 15 year old total orphan who lost both his parents to HIV/AIDS leaving Abdul at a very tender age, unfortunately also with HIV. Abdul was left under the care of his step-mother but later Abdul fell ill and was on his death bed! As usual RHHJ came in and with care, Abdul has grown into a very handsome young man and he is in P.6.





Abdul lacked proper housing since his step-mother's house was too small to accommodate Abdul with his sisters; he decided to build a muddy grass thatched house for himself and each time it rained, he would get wet! Therefore, after a thorough assessment, the team from RHHJ agreed to construct a better one roomed home for him, which would help improve the quality of his life

## EMMANUEL

Emmanuel is a 15 year old total orphan who is being cared for by a Good Samaritan. Born with HIV/AIDS, after the death of his mother, his maternal grandparents disowned him because his father never paid bride price for their daughter (his mother). So to them it was a bad omen to the family to keep such a child! The poor boy was left in the hands of the Good Samaritan who has since taken it upon himself to care for him in each and everything concerning his health. However, his care taker is equally a poor man who could not provide a better housing for himself and the boy, so Emmanuel had to sleep out in the kitchen that was in a depilated state. Each time it rained, it would pour on him! Therefore, on assessment, the RHHJ team decided to construct a one roomed house for him and his caretaker to enable him have proper shelter over his head!





# CHALLENGES



On a sad note, we lost one of our primary six students, Kizito. Kizito succumbed to what was suspected to be Kaposi Sarcoma - his death was quick and when he died investigations into his illness were still being done. Let's pray for his ill mother to gain the strength and comfort from the Almighty as she mourns her son who passed on at a very tender age. The mother is also a patient under the RHHJ Palliative Care Programme.

One of our girls on the school fees program fell pregnant and ran away from her father's home to the in laws home. This is the first case of teenage pregnancy recorded amongst children supported by Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja during the COVID-19 Pandemic, when schools were closed. This challenge calls for more and more emphasis on counselling of our students! As RHHJ, we pledge to continue supporting through counselling and hope that no more girls fall victim to teenage pregnancies.

Increment in school dues; all learning institutions have increased the school fees. This is because the schools have got to work in line with Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for the COVID-19 Infection control. There is an increase in the cost of living brought about by the COVID – 19 Pandemic and its effects hence the hike in fees.

The demand for new uniforms and school shoes grew for almost all the students because they grew and put on so much weight. To some, their uniforms are either too short or too tight for one to fit in.

Failure by some schools to re-open after a very long period of time, this is because some of them were renting the premises and now due to the long closure, they could not pay! Therefore, they opted to close the schools for good. This has become a challenge since the students and their guardians have got to suffer into finding new schools.

Change of administrations and teachers in schools, during the total lockdown of all learning institutions due to the corona virus outbreak, many teachers resorted to doing some other work as a way of putting food on their tables. However, these jobs turned out to be more profitable than the teaching profession, thus abandoning teaching.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

Two houses were built for the two students that no decent place to call home.

The children in their respective homes were supported with food to nourish them and counselling was provided to all children.

School fees for all the students meant to be in school were paid, except those whose schools are still in transition of changing administration.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RHHJ is very glad for the funding towards the School Fee Programme. Thank you so much our beloved donors. With your support RHHJ is in a position to give a helping hand to some of our unfortunate children to help them get the education that they so greatly need.