



Connect Africa Foundation

Newsletter December 2015

Connect Africa is 10 Years Old

As I prepare to return to Uganda for the start of yet another year I find myself reflecting on my first sojourn there in 2004. I arrived by myself to fulfill a lifelong dream to live and work in Africa. I settled into the village of Kyalliwajala taking in the newness, strangeness, blackness, smells, movements, sing song language, all the time watching, watching: Don't pay your bus fee until you see what others pay, notice how people dress, carry themselves, how they greet one another and shake hands. Watching, watching watching.



Very soon, I decided to help orphans with educational support. School in Uganda is not free and grandmothers are caring for 8-15 grandchildren. Then the guardians told me that they "did not want to be beggars" they wanted income.

That was the moment Connect Africa was born.

I still live in the village of Kyalliwajala, though today I am able to pronounce it, and I am still the only white person in this large community. My African name is Namukasa.



As I think about my **28 flights**, totaling over **1000 hours**, I realize I have carried to Uganda **6120** pounds of clothing, shoes, pencils, pens, pocket dictionaries, rulers, and backpacks. I have returned home with **1500** pounds of native crafts. I have carried more than **600** pounds of yarn for women to knit dolls for the "Dolly Mama" business, and returned to the US with more than **5000** dolls.

There are countless magical moments which make us smile:

- 2006: Six year old Julious tastes ice cream for the first time. It hurts his teeth and he wants to put it in his pocket for later.
- 2013: I watch an adult woman hold a pencil and try to write for the first time. It was painstaking for her and for me to witness. In

2015, she reads and writes.

- 2014: A donor who visited Uganda left his binoculars. One day when I was back in Boston, Joseph took the binoculars and asked Charles if he could see me.

Of course, there are challenging times as well:

We meet Aplio in 2009, when she was 14 years old. She had been working as a maid since the age of ten. The family she works for neither educates her nor pays her a salary. In 2013, we gave her a course in hair dressing. Though she continues to work as a maid and remains illiterate, we are hopeful that one day she will become independent.



Lastly, Why the name....*A guiding principle is to connect YOU to Africa and Africa to YOU.* These connections are what make us successful!

Watch our NEW [video](#) made this May as we celebrated our 10 year anniversary in Uganda. I hope it fills in the picture of the lush green of Uganda, the beautiful faces of the children, the structures we have been able to build and the Connect Africa family we have been able to nurture.

Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Lynn, Charles, Board of Directors

and the hundreds of Ugandans you are helping.

WE ALL THANK YOU !



www.connect-africa.org