



Aloysius' Story

Three years ago, Aloysius stepped on the stage at the Arlington Academy of Hope opening ceremony celebration in Bumwalukani village. He represented a nearby village school – Busiriwa Primary School – one of the poorest in the region. Aloysius came to recite a poem about the importance of education and his commitment to it. AAH Board members and teachers present that day were so impressed by this young boy that they offered him a place at Arlington Academy of Hope. Aloysius immediately accepted. He knew his good fortune. Every year for the past 30 years, his old school had experienced a 0% passing rate on Uganda's Primary Leaving Exams.

Aloysius thrived in AAH's high academic, caring atmosphere where students receive individual attention, scholastic materials, textbooks, dedicated teachers, shoes, a uniform and lunch everyday. In 2006, Aloysius was a member of the first class to graduate from AAH, 100% of whom scored high enough to go on to good secondary schools. Aloysius scored in division one on the national Primary Leaving Exams – the highest level in Uganda.

Today, Aloysius attends St. Peter's College – Tororo, a prominent boarding school in eastern Uganda (and John Wanda's alma mater). Currently ranked ninth in his class of 51 students, he is an active, focused student who knows what he wants to be – a doctor. Aloysius and his fellow AAH classmates are proving that when provided the necessary resources, village children can learn and succeed. By establishing an educational model in the village, AAH strives to set new standards of academic excellence that lead to improved performance by local schools. We believe that education is the key to transforming rural Ugandan villages into vibrant, self-sustaining communities.



Moreen's Story

Moreen is a bright-eyed, hardworking P5 student at Arlington Academy of Hope. She plays on the school's netball (volleyball) team. Her favorite subject is science and she loves to read.

To receive the education AAH offers, Moreen must overcome many obstacles. Her family's modest house is located deep in the thick of Bumwalukani, an hour by foot from AAH. She lives with her parents and six other siblings. Her father is a butcher in Kikholo Trading Center. She has a brother in P4 and a sister in P3 at AAH. After walking two hours a day for school, Moreen has many responsibilities at home. Every night, she walks another thirty minutes to fetch water for the family at the nearest river. Moreen washes all of the family dishes by hand and washes her school uniform every single night. After her daily chores, she starts her homework, which she does by a kerosene lantern. Neither of Moreen's parents speak or read English so she helps her younger brother and sister with their homework as well.

Moreen is one of 26 girls in her P5 class of 48 students. The challenges for girls in a poor, rural village like Bumwalukani are especially great. The traditional system is stacked against them because they do not inherit land and don't own property, such as livestock. Girls in this area often marry by age 16, quickly become pregnant and often give birth to up to twelve children. But Moreen dreams of a different future for herself. She has seen her older female classmates succeed and now she knows she can too. The girls from last year's P7 class are Moreen's role models. All 16 girls out of a class of 31 students won coveted spots in good secondary schools. Moreen plans to follow in their footsteps. The exciting possibilities for a brighter future are real and open before her.



Rachel's Story

Rachel was one of the original children in the scholarship program started by John and Joyce Wanda nearly 10 years ago. This program led to the founding of Arlington Academy of Hope. Rachel is raised by a single parent (her mom), and considered an orphan in Ugandan terms. She is one of seven children. With no father to earn a living, her family has lived in hunger and abject poverty. Some women facing such dire circumstances see no other choice but to abandon their children. But Rachel's mom has done all she could to keep the family together.

When AAH opened three years ago, full scholarships were offered to children with the greatest need. Rachel was one of them. But the highest grade AAH taught at the time was P5. Rachel would have to drop back two grades from P7. This was a difficult decision for all involved. Rachel was considered mature and grown up and she would face the embarrassment of being "demoted". But Rachel wanted to study and this was a golden opportunity. Even so, no one expected her to go far. As a village girl with a single parent, her most probable route was early marriage just to get the food and shelter she needed to survive.

Rachel chose to pursue an education and at AAH she blossomed into a great all-around student. She was a top academic performer in last year's graduating P7 class and one of the school's lead singers. She scored high in division two on her Primary Leaving Exams and received an AAH scholarship to continue her schooling. Today, she attends Migadde College, a secondary boarding school in Kampala. The school's headmaster reports that the eight AAH students at Migadde are among the hardest working, best behaved in the school. Rachel is a student leader for her class. To this day, Rachel's mom is one of the most active parents at AAH. She volunteers there to cook, clean and play music even with no other child attending AAH.



Peninah's Story

Peninah is an 11-year-old albino girl in P4 at Arlington Academy of Hope. She suffers from poor eyesight, severe skin rashes and many other health complications. People in this remote, impoverished region often give up on albino children like Peninah because of the time and resources required to tend to their special needs.

Three years ago Peninah was a lonely, helpless girl who felt out of place and out of luck. The teachers at her old school were frustrated by the challenges Peninah presented and they wanted her to leave. Her parents were considering letting Peninah drop out of school altogether as an eight year old when AAH opened.

She was accepted in the new school where she experienced a very different environment. AAH was created to be a model school to help each child reach his or her full potential. AAH teachers recognized and responded to Peninah's unique needs. They put her at the front of the classroom, wrote in larger letters on the chalkboard and read questions aloud when her eyesight impeded her from reading. They made her feel welcome and accepted. Other children played with her. Peninah blossomed in this environment.

Then perhaps best of all, a concerned U.S. donor provided funds for Peninah to travel with the head teacher to Kampala for an eye examination. She received eye glasses and became the first girl in the village ever to wear glasses. Peninah could see the chalkboard in class from a normal distance. And she could see the faraway hills of her beautiful homeland for the first time as well.

Today, Peninah excels in her studies. She is ranked second in her P4 class of 48 students. Her family and all at AAH are very proud of her success.



Brian's Story

Brian is an enthusiastic P3 student at Arlington Academy of Hope. Boys like Brian who live in the village usually grow up and remain in this isolated mountain region their entire lives. Their likely route is to become peasant farmers and to subsist on the food they grow or barter for at the trading center. They will never see an airplane, a movie or a tall building let alone experience running water, electricity or a nutritious diet.

In order to survive many families see their children as more valuable working in the fields than going to school. But Brian's parents believe education can give him a better life. They enrolled Brian in Arlington Academy of Hope two years ago and since then his life has changed in many ways.

Brian's basic needs for food, clothing and healthcare are met by AAH. He receives a mid-morning meal and a lunch everyday, regular physical exams and immunizations from the AAH clinic and a new school uniform each year.

Today, focused efforts are helping Brian overcome the challenges he faces with reading. He made great progress in small reading group exercises last summer. Brian is experiencing many things for the first time. He was at AAH the day electricity reached the school and the lights came on in the classroom. Now he and his fellow students are able to use computers and even watch DVD movies occasionally. Brian has also gotten to travel beyond his village for the first time. Last year, his class took an AAH field trip to Mbale, the largest town in the region. In the future, annual field trips will take him to the Ugandan capital city, the Entebbe airport and Jinja, the source of the Nile River.

Thanks to a caring community of supporters in the U.S., new horizons are opening for Brian and hundreds more like him at Arlington Academy of Hope.