

Uganda 2007

Where and what is Kabalagala

It's a school set up by i.Hug and run by Mary Dicker's daughter Jane. It is situated not so very far from Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

Towards the end of August Mary Dicker flew out to Uganda to undertake two weeks of intensive work with some of the children who attend the school. She also worked with the guardians of some of the children, and undertook seminars and training sessions with the teachers, children's workers and volunteers at the school to help them.

Many of the children attending the school have suffered greatly. Their stories are just so sad. Trauma - loss - poverty - beatings.

Although it was the school holidays, the children still arrived at school, often before Mary, and the school staff (including the volunteers) were completely committed to attending their training sessions.

In the following pages you will see pictures of some of the children and you will meet James who is undertaking a counselling degree and will continue the counselling work started by Mary. You will also glimpse something of the life of Jessica, a helper in the school.

What you will not grasp is how different life is in Uganda - how Jane and Mary would collect water from the stream, the walks along



KABALAGALA
COMMUNITY ACADEMY.
ALL THE SEMINARS
AND COUNSELLING
TOOK PLACE HERE

Community Academy?

the long dusty (or muddy when it rains!!) road to school, the need for security guards and the corruption of some of them, the devastating effects of AIDS, the reality of street children, the fact that life can be short and that death is an every day occurrence.

Neither will you read of the great sadness of parting as Mary's time came to an end and she said tearful farewells to children and adults alike.

If you would like to find out more about the work of i.Hug why not look up their website at www.ihugfoundation.org

Jessica

*Happy are those who are concerned for the poor,
the Lord will help them when they are in trouble.*

Jessica is 24, a vibrant Christian with a gift for working with children. She attended our training courses for staff at Kabalagala Community Academy. Jessica helps as a volunteer at the school. She helps to cook lunch for the children and washes the dishes. One of the things she said she gained from the training was: "I learned how to listen to children, to give them the attention they need, to love them and care for them and build their self-esteem. These are all things that I missed from my own childhood."

Jessica was concerned because she had found some lumps. She approached the school nurse and the nurse was alarmed. Sadly, she has no money for medical treatment but a colleague from Fegans had given a large sum of money for me to take to Uganda. The instruction was that we should use the money in the way we thought best. Jessica has now been for a biopsy. We await the results.

Please pray for Jessica.

MARY DICKER



STOP PRESS:
*Jessica had an operation
to remove the lumps, and
they were not malignant.
Praise God!*

So Glad to See You!

There is a verse in the Bible that talks about 'mourning with those who mourn' and 'weeping with those who weep.' In essence that is what I feel my job involves. My job at its best that is!

Today, the children who came back to school had lost weight, were sick and were so, so, so sad. It was totally depressing to be around them. They were dejected. So, we talked about it.

What made them sad? Some were sick; Promise's sister had been badly burnt in the holidays, Pingu had been burnt. We talked and talked and then, after acknowledging and allowing them to feel the way they felt, we could make room for other feelings.

Some were still sad the whole day but some of them had some space to feel something else. So, we all hugged. Stupid isn't it? But we hugged each other and said, "I am so glad to see you." And then there were a few smiles.

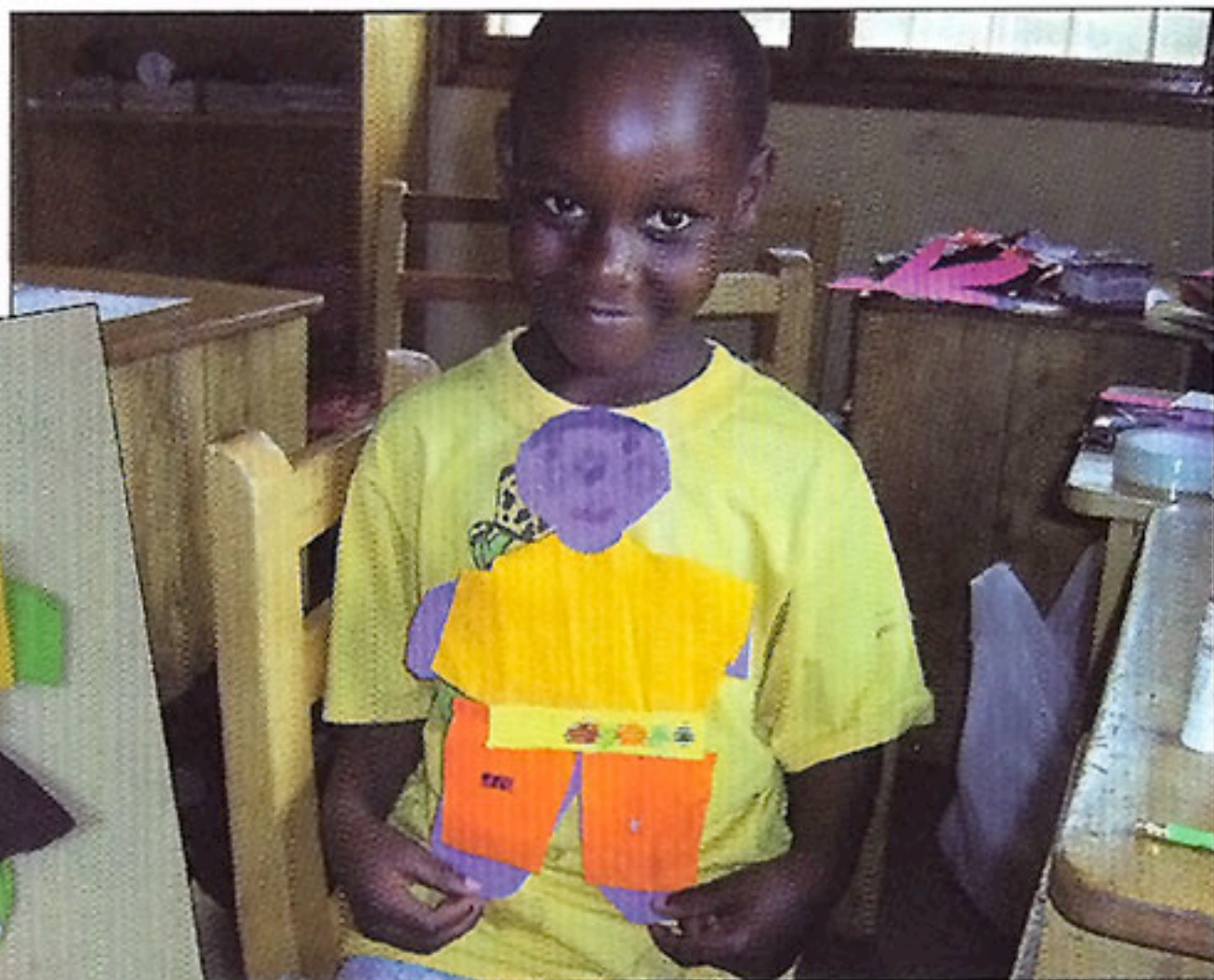
They knew. They knew that I really am glad to see them and that their friends are really glad to see them. No matter how sad they are, no matter how sick they are, there is a place which has people in it who want to hug them, who want to hear about their pain, who want to share their joy and who are glad to see them.

JANE DICKER

BELOW: JANE, JAMES (CENTRE) AND RONALD DISCUSS 'THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN' IN A STAFF TRAINING SESSION.



A PICTURE
OF HERSELF



A LITTLE GIRL WHO ATTENDED PLAY THERAPY