

Kiwanis Assists Ugandan Orphan Project

The Kiwanis Club and Foundation of Tierrasanta will assist a Ugandan Orphan Project initiated by Tierrasanta resident Natalie Crane. In 2009, Crane embarked on a remarkable yearlong journey to Uganda to provide aid to needy people in Africa. She grew up in

Tierrasanta, the daughter of Dr. Paul Crane (a Kiwanian) and Jill Crane. She graduated from Serra High School in 1996 where she was an outstanding student, A.S.B. Senior Vice President and a star player on the Serra field hockey team. She received a field hockey scholarship to the University of Virginia and graduated with a degree in English Literature in 2000. She lived and worked in Washington, D.C., before returning to Tierrasanta in 2006.

It was Crane's lifelong dream to provide community service in Africa. On arrival, she lived with the family of a Ugandan friend and sought to establish a community project or work with an existing project assisting women and children. A bout of severe malaria hospitalized Crane a few short weeks after her arrival. While in the hospital, a niece of the family with whom she was staying died of AIDS. The woman, Alice, had five children later known to Crane as Agnes, Richard, Beatrice, Sylvia and Rachel. Abandoned by their father, the children were orphans and fending for themselves. Crane visited the orphans several weeks after the death of their mother. She found them living in substandard conditions without a consistent food supply, clean water, proper shelter, clothing, medical treatment or education. They suffered from malnutrition, disease and the trauma of watching their mother succumb to AIDS.

The children were in jeopardy and in need of substantial assistance including medical care. Richard was nearly lame from a bone infection (chronic osteomyelitis) in his right leg, worsening due to the lack of treatment and basic sanitation. Fellow villagers and extended family members were aware of the plight of the orphans but unable to provide significant assistance because of their own burdens in a country among the poorest in the Third World. Crane and a relative, Ester Nabwire, came to the rescue immediately moving the children to a permanent shelter. Ester accepted responsibility as the children's caretaker/guardian even though she had her own daughter, Asher Natalie (called "Peanut"), and insufficient means to fully care for additional children. To provide a source of income, Crane established The Five Angel's Snack Shop, a small eatery for Ester to manage. Ester remains the guardian for the

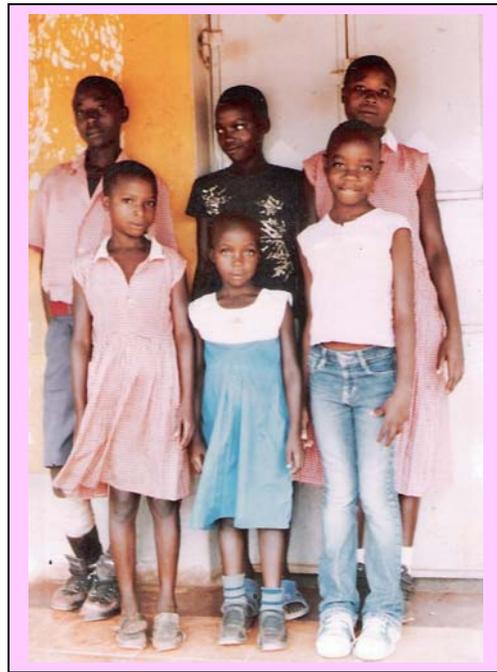
Natalie Crane with Ugandan Orphans



L to R: Nasulumbi Agnes, Asher Natalie "Peanut"(the Caretaker's daughter), Nabuduwa Sylvia, Natalie Crane holding Taka Rachel, Ajambo Beatrice and Ogola Richard

children supporting them with the proceeds from the snack shop and monetary assistance provided by Crane, including after her return to Tierrasanta in 2010.

Crane has been successful in sustaining the Ugandan Orphan Project. During the two-years after her return to Tierrasanta, the children have grown happy and healthy in Ester's care and the Snack Shop consistently makes a profit. These profits help pay for the children's everyday expenses, such as food, water, clothing, and basic medical attention. However, profits are insufficient to cover fully the children's needs, including education, shelter and long-term medical care. With Ugandan schools charging fees based on the institution's quality, the cost of education is high in comparison to the income the snack shop can generate. In addition, treatment for Richard's chronic and painful bone infection continues to be expensive and difficult to obtain in Africa. He will need medical attention for the near future and the likelihood of another expensive operation.



2011- Front L to R: Nabuduwa Sylvia, Taka Rachel and Asher Natalie "Peanut" (the Caretaker's daughter) **Back L to R:** Ogola Richard, Ajambo Beatrice and Nasulumbi Agnes

Crane has been seeking donations from her family, friends and associates to help cover the needs of the children. She sends these donations directly to Ester Nabwire to care for the children and with no overhead expense except minor charges by PayPal when used by donors. Having become aware of this worthy project, the Kiwanis Foundation has offered to assist Crane in the role of accepting, managing and disbursing donated funds based on documented need and will not charge a management fee. This will allow donors a tax deduction to the extent provided by law. Crane will continue to administer and conduct fundraising for the project. Kiwanis is proud to assist with this worthy and impressive project to help children in need, truly the personification of the Kiwanis International motto, "Serving the Children of the World®."

To learn more about the children and the project and to watch a video showing their previous living conditions and how their lives have changed, please visit the project blog site at <http://www.bigskyuganda.blogspot.com/>. To learn more about the Kiwanis role and donate visit: http://tierrasanta.kiwanisone.org/public/pub_page.aspx?PageID=49762 .