



20 Years Together

St. Margaret's Uniting Church Australia

Rubaga Youth Development Association Uganda



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THE RYDA STORY 1996 - 2016

In 1992 Rubaga Youth Development Association (RYDA) began its work with orphaned and vulnerable street children in Rubaga, a suburb of Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

St. Margaret's Uniting Church, Mooroolbark, Australia, began supporting RYDA's work in 1996. This Time Line records major moments of our involvement with RYDA over the past 20 years. It also includes some, but not all, of the wonderful donations from other sources.

There are many other people and organisations who have been most generous. Gifts have arrived from folk who respond because they have listened to a presentation from our guest speaker, or read an article in Crosslight, or because they have a friend or family member who attends St. Margaret's. Telling the RYDA success story has reached the hearts of many donors.

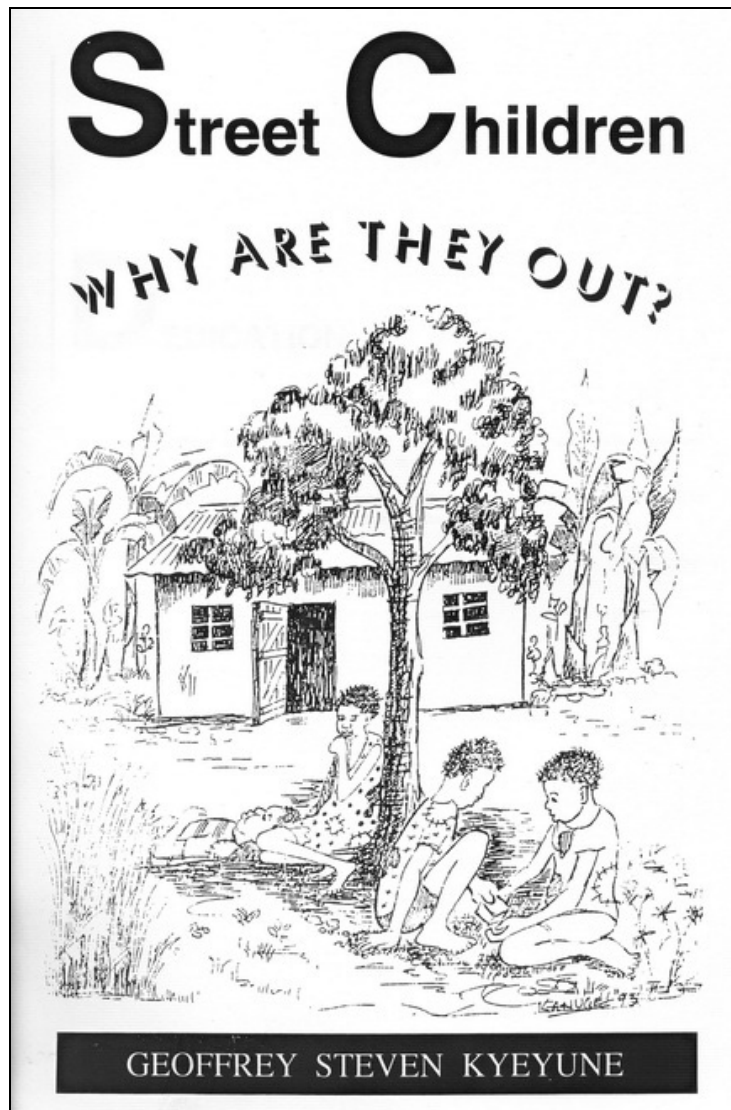
These include St. John's Cowes UC who have supported for more than five years, Glen Waverley UC and Ringwood North UC. Also Kalinda Primary School, Mary & John de Bono, Jim and Margot Foley, Singularity Singers, Billanook College and friends from the former Karyrie Parish and The Berriwillock Wheat Scheme.

Records do not show every single supporter but we have become a conduit for donations from across Australia and beyond. Every single cent that is given is transferred to RYDA to continue the amazing work of visionary Geoffrey Kyeyune and the RYDA organisation in providing education and skills training to the vulnerable youth of Uganda.

*Marj Hookey
April 2016*

1996

- April 27th Doug Williams meets Ugandan Geoffrey Kyeyune at breakfast in San Diego.
- Geoffrey was there to gain support for the troubled youth he was working with on the streets of Kampala. Unfortunately there was little interest in USA for his cause.
- Doug thought we might be able to help. He gained the support of our minister Lesley Shekleton and together they encouraged the congregation to collect pre-loved books and toys that could be shipped to Kampala.
- Geoffrey felt encouraged by our support and in August he visited us.
- He brought the manuscript for his book *Street children: Why are they out?*
- Jean Lardner with typing skills but no computer skills used a lap top computer to type the manuscript and a few copies were printed for Geoffrey to take to Uganda.
- Later in 1996 this book was professionally published by Fountain Publishers, Kampala. Geoffrey used this edition to make his cause known internationally.
- Before he left to return we gave Geoffrey a clothes basket full of tennis balls and skipping ropes – this event showed us that we *could* and *did* make a difference.
- The Social Justice Committee initiated an appeal to raise **AUD1000** for the purchase of a computer & printer.
- This was achieved and the first computer for RYDA was sent to Uganda.





Norm and Gael Brabazon: a long ride ahead

They'll ride for RYDA

Victorian Uniting Church couple Gael and Norm Brabazon will need plenty of pedal power later this month. They'll get on their bicycles in Adelaide and head for Alice Springs, via places such as Woomera and Coober Pedy. Distance is more than 1500 kms and they expect to do it in 19 days.

But they're on a mission. They want people to sponsor them so they can raise funds for a Ugandan Christian organisation, the Rybaga Youth Development Association (RYDA), which is working at the problems of neglected youth, women, street children, and other disadvantaged groups. Its mission is to empower young people with knowledge and skills to enhance their own lives.

The Brabazons heard about RYDA at their church in Mooroolbark, outer eastern Melbourne, during a visit by the agency's director, Geoffrey Kyeyune. RYDA is now one of the congregation's projects.

People who want to sponsor the riders should contact Ina Koetsier and Doug Williams (8 Greenbank Drive, Mooroolbark). Phone 9726 6968 or fax 9726 8316.

2000

- Alison Streader, an artist with great skills, held an Art Exhibition of her work and donated the profits to RYDA.
- Terry & Carol Ruthford visit RYDA bringing soccer balls and other gifts and a cheque from St. Margaret's.
- At this stage RYDA was operating in cramped rented premises in Rubaga with make do fittings and equipment. They were only able to support a small number of street children.





2000: Terry & Carol visit RYDA

2001

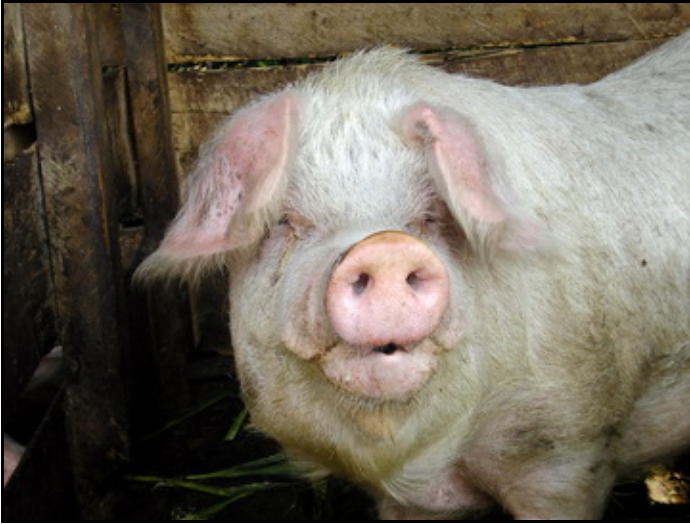
- In March Geoffrey & Irene visited from Uganda.
- An African Curry meal was organised by Ina and prepared by Carol & Terry Ruthford, their friends and relations. **\$A1545** was raised within two weeks.



- Previously with donations several sewing machines had been purchased.
- Other donation were added and a transfer of **\$A2371** was sent which was used to purchase fabric and sewing requirements to enable RYDA to complete a contract they had won to provide local schools with uniforms. It was hoped that the uniform manufacturing program would become self sufficient.
- Alison Streader assisted by Nancy Isherwood agreed to organise a group to form *The Friends of Diana*. The group commenced in April 2001 with 25 donors. Each school term a payment of **USD185** was sent to enable Diana to be educated . This group paid for Diana's Primary and Secondary education for seven years. Diana then continued her education at university.

2002

- RYDA web site established at www.blackdouglas.com.au on behalf of St. Margaret's to support RYDA's first world presence.
- August - we provided funding for a poultry project when 300 chickens were purchased to provide both eggs and meat for RYDA.
- September - We funded a water tank for the new property at Buloba. The land, about 8 miles out from Kampala, had been donated by a member of the board. RYDA had begun a building program to prepare for moving with a view to expanding its work.
- December - 10 sets of triple bunk beds were purchased for the dormitories.



2003

- Friends of Diana maintain donations for her education.
- Also a general donation of **USD364.87** sent mid-year.
- Mid year RYDA moves to new site at Buloba.
- Now has room for 300 children.
- Purchased 5 pigs.
- Geoffrey reported ill for many months with malaria.

2004

- Donation of **USD567.90** made in January.
- February – Diana completed primary education.
- Pig population now 25 .
- Poultry now producing 7 trays of eggs daily. Used to feed the children.
- Ron Goldie donated **AUD500** prior to moving to assisted accommodation.
- Donation **AUD1250** used to purchase cement and aggregate stone for building computer and secretarial classrooms.



- Construction had reached this stage by Sep. 2005.



2005

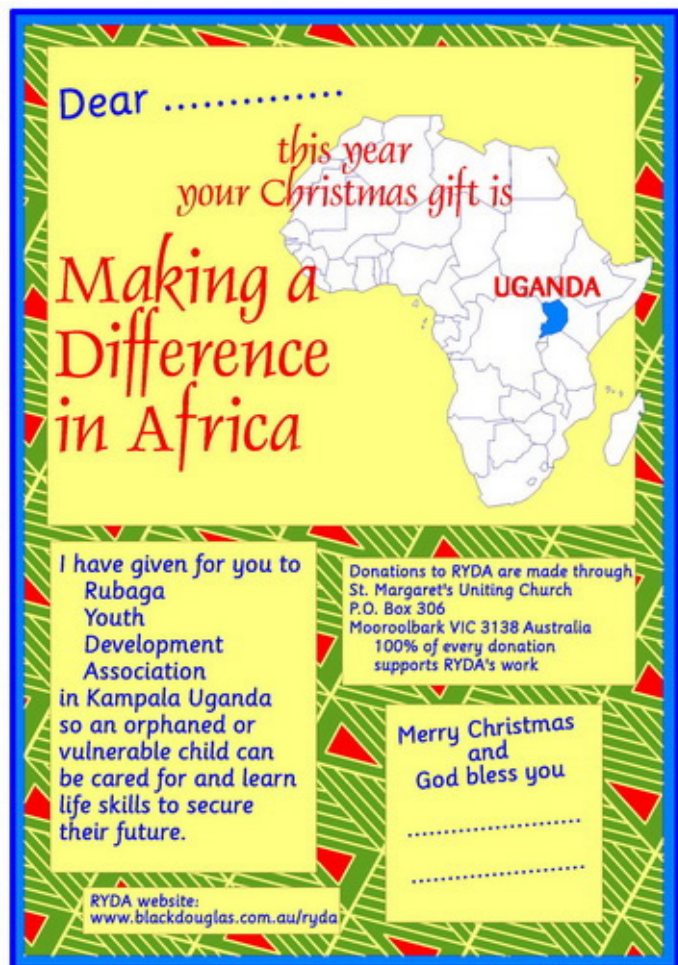
- Living Today published an article on RYDA.
- Croydon Secondary College *Breakfast for Africa* program raised **\$A177.00**.
- Geoffrey visited in October.
- October - we sent **\$A3000** to RYDA – used for purchasing roofing materials which was used for the new Music block the building was completed in six weeks.

2006

- February donation of **\$A1000** which included **\$A400** from the Bowls Club.
- June - Books, pens and other goods making up a 20kg box was packed and sent by Ina.
- Continued support from *Breakfast for Africa* Program.
- Donation enabled texts for the catering, computer and metal fabrication areas to be purchased.
- Many letters written to international aid organisations by St. Margaret's seeking assistance for RYDA.
- Gift certificate program established. **AUD492.40** enabled the electricity bill to be paid and food to be purchased.

2007

- March donation enabled materials for exams to be purchased.
- April – through contacts of our Minister Jennie Gordon we obtained thousands of high quality Australian animal soft toys when a business unfortunately failed. Over **\$A4000** was raised during the year Majority donated to RYDA.
- Some of the small toys were packed and sent to RYDA where the girls were all given a toy. They were delighted and each girl gave their toy a name.
- October - Lydia graduated from university with a Diploma in Social Work and Social Administration. She will now begin a degree in Human Resources and Development.
- November – Geoffrey, Irene & 2 small daughters visit – while here the centre ran out of food. In 30 hours St. Margaret's raised **USD446.25** which was immediately transferred.
- December –transferred **USD3302.44**.



2008

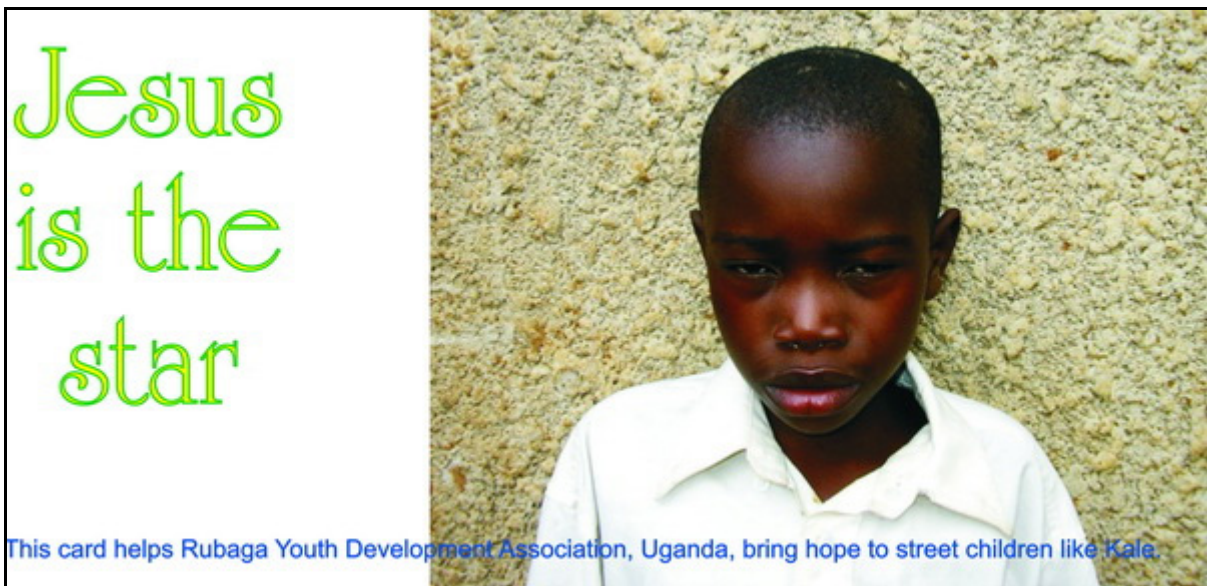
A crises year for RYDA...

- Civil unrest in Uganda
- Save the children no longer able to help with funding.
- Unable to pay staff. Electricity was turned off. No materials for training.
- Geoffrey's daughter needed a hole in the heart operation. Family cow sold to help fund operation. Friends in Africa & Australia help pay for operation & a replacement cow, which later produced a heifer calf.
- Geoffrey was involved in a major bus crash – 7 died – he sustained serious injuries. He later developed hypertension.
- No funding to enable 57 children to sit final exams.
- Again as each crisis emerged we sent emergency funds.
 - April – **USD1447.15**
 - May – **USD1057.00**
 - October – **\$A2835.00** enabled all exam materials & food to be purchased.



2009

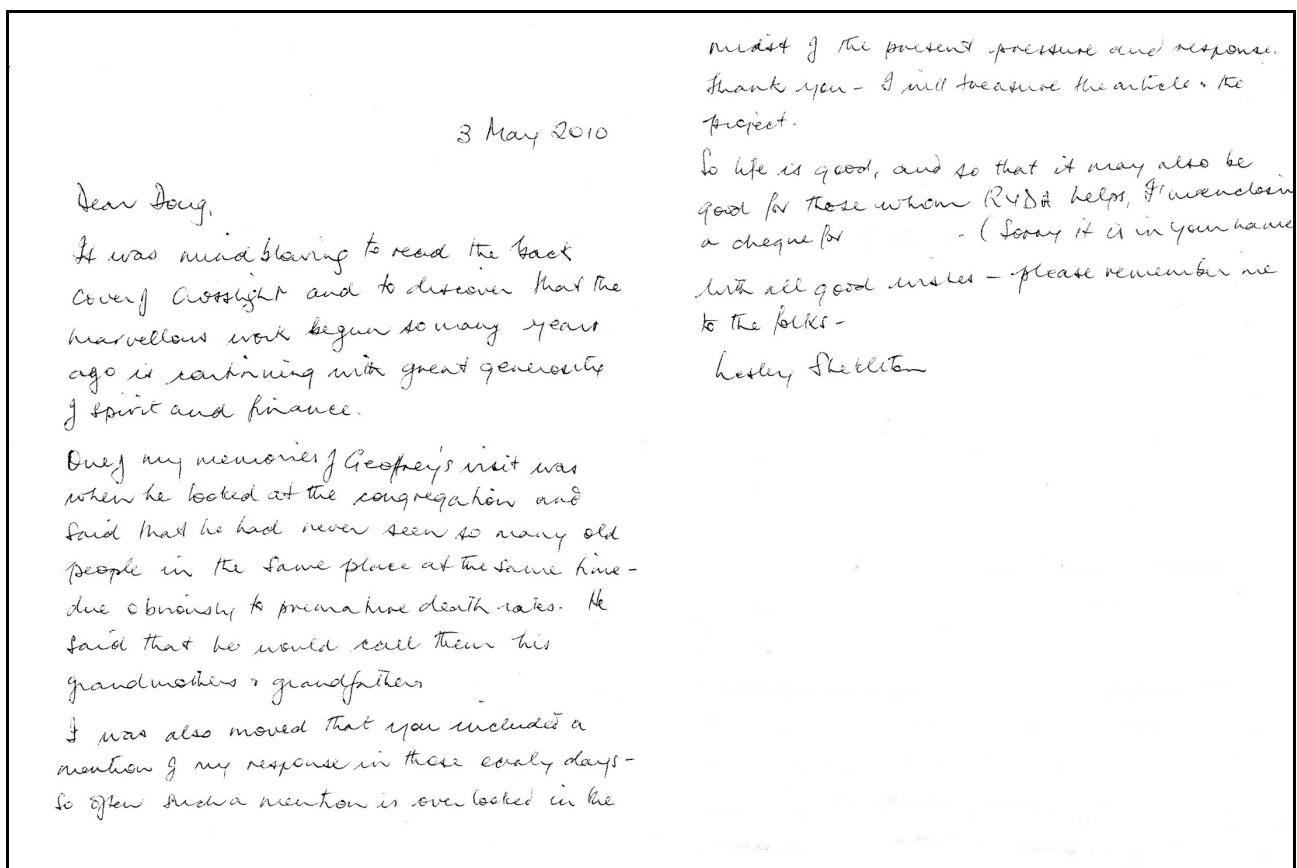
- April - Joyce Dodge opened her energy efficient home as part of a sustainable living program and her garden as part of the Victorian Open Garden Scheme. **\$A678.50** was donated to RYDA by Joyce from gate takings and refreshment sales.
- April transfer **USD1046.56**.



- June – St. Margaret's member donated **\$A1000** – this was used to add food to the store, pay the balance owing on an electricity bill, reconnect the Internet to the office and purchase training materials.
- October – Jean & Neil Daw donated specially designed RYDA Christmas cards shown on previous page. **\$A486** was raised in sales.
- December – Gift certificate sales of **USD1100** were transferred.

2010

- January – International Child Labour Project Application approved. Local funds of USD9196 need to be raised over 22 months – USD1600 in hand – **USD3500** to be available by February. 23/2 \$1900 short – 28/2 all funds in hand.
- February 22nd. Kasubi Hall, the centre of community life at Buloba since 2002, collapses in torrential rain.



- June – Following a RYDA presentation to St. John's Uniting Church, Cowes, \$730 dollars was donated by various members. This became part of **USD3000** transfer.
- October – St. John's declares October 'RYDA month', an act which soon became an on-going commitment to RYDA and a firm partnership with St. Margaret's. Jean and Neil Daw organised the printing of special RYDA Christmas cards as an addition to the annual Christmas Gift Certificates that were begun in 2006.
- December **USD2765.07** transferred.

2011

- March – Visit by Geoffrey and his son Solomon.
- **\$A800** in offerings donated plus 2 notebook computers, clothing, stationery, text books and tennis equipment. 70kg of luggage!
- October 9th - Rev. Arnie runs a half Marathon for RYDA which raised **\$A7098.88!**
 - \$5000 for rebuilding Kasubi Hall.
 - \$1000 for electricity.
 - \$1000 for food.
- Child Labour project completed.
- November – Lydia whose primary & Secondary education was funded by Cathy & Peter Millar & friends & who has completed 2 tertiary qualifications begins work as a Project Social Worker with RYDA.

2012

- January – transferred **USD1383.51**. Donations for Gift Certificates Dec. 2011.
- 70% purchased spent on water as Uganda is suffering in a drought.
- Also paid for toilet system repairs, food and daily needs.



Uniting Church rooftop courtyard Lt. Collins St. Melbourne. Crosslight, the newspaper of the Uniting Church has published several articles about RYDA since 1996.



Geoffrey, Jean, Doug, Ina, Solomon at St. Margaret's. In 1996, Jean typed Geoffrey's book and Ina organised shipping of RYDA's first computer.



Billanook Principal Roger Oates
RYDA Principal Susan Nabirye

- April – Visit to RYDA by Billanook College staff & students – took with them 6 laptop computers.
- **\$A1000** donated for electricity.
- July – Singularity sings the *Mikado* & donations, transferred **USD1523.90**. Used to pay for drilling for an underground water survey looking for water for showers & toilet blocks.
- Nov. – Transferred **\$A2800**.
- Used to purchase roofing materials for Kasubi hall.

2013



- May - **2,230,000** Ugandan shillings transfer to RYDA.
- Purchased food, paid electricity bill and reconnected phone & Internet services.
- Singularity sings *Patience* for RYDA **\$A370** raised.
- August – Crossways Project in Hong Kong packs container and ships \$95,000 of goods selected to fulfil RYDA's needs to Kenya.
- St Margaret's raised **\$A6600** to pay for the land transport costs to Uganda.
- October - Rev. Arnie again runs a half marathon and sponsorship raises **\$A5583** sent for Kasubi hall roofing.
- Berriwillock wheat scheme contributes **\$A2000**.
- Additional **\$A3500** needed to pay unexpected taxes and duties to release Crossroads container from wharf.



2014

- February – transfer **USD1727** raised from December 2013 Gift Certificates.
- Purchased - final roofing materials, plastering of building and windows.
- June – transferred **USD3500** to provide final payment for Toyota Bus donated by Miva in Switzerland. This included a donation of **\$A1000** from St. Margaret's Bowls Club.
- October 12th – Rev. Arnie runs the Melbourne Marathon in 4 hr 13 min – an amazing effort!
- **\$A5140** raised in sponsorship.
- Money enabled completion of Kasubi Hall project – purchased windows, doors, electricity wiring & television for the hall. Balance used to secure the property with main security gates.
- Hall renamed **St. Margaret Hall**.

2015

- January 4th – St. Margaret Hall completed.
- RYDA connected to town water – connection fee paid to Water Board.
- March Doug Williams visits RYDA and attends opening celebrations of St. Margaret Hall. Building project lasted from February 2010 to January 2015.



- **USD3424.72** transferred.
- August – urgent need to supply graduating International Labour Organisation students with 'start up kits' of tools to prepare them for the workforce. **USD2725** transferred.
- September - Tree falls on kitchen and demolishes it.
- Sammy Stamp grants **\$A3000** to help rebuild kitchen.
- More donations added. **USD3424.72** transferred.
- Kitchen completed by November. Includes a new food store. Has electricity connected and many additional facilities.
- Funds also enabled roofing for the new boys dormitory which is still under construction.

2016

- February – security fence near girls' dormitory part collapses in heavy rain.
- **\$A1100** transferred.
- Fence is fixed and balance used to construct a simple dining hall near the kitchen.

Now for the next 20 years...