



Msgr. Matthew Odong presents the relic of Blessed Joseph Ambrosoli to Papal Nuncio during the beatification ceremony on November 20, 2022.

## Farm Report by Fr. Paul Peter Rom



Greetings from Uganda! Once again we're happy to share the good news from the farm. Our dream of establishing sustainability through agriculture is becoming a clear and blessed reality every year, thanks in large part to your generous support.

This year we have decided to open 50 more acres of land to help transition more easily from first-season crops to second-season crops. To date, we have cultivated 40 acres of corn, 10 acres of rice, 20 acres of sunflowers, 15 acres of beans, 15 acres of soybeans, and 5 acres of assorted vegetables. The G35 research and development corn seed, donated by Ed Baumgartner of BASS Hybrids, has reached 7 acres of planting capacity and is showing promising signs of adaptation and resistance to drought and pests.

Our aquaculture project is also progressing well. Our own fish farm had its first harvest of tilapia for the consumption of our students. The government of Uganda is interested in this venture and we are grateful for their support. They have given us 4000 tilapia fingerlings and 50 kg of starter feed. It is unfortunate, however, that we still have only one pond which had to be emptied in order to put in new fish.

There is much to be learned from using the natural gifts from God. A major lesson is that conservation of the environment is crucial to sustainability. With that in mind, we are now fully engaged in tree planting, including fruit trees. The apiary section has really thrived and we have harvested

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Netting fish from Farm fishery to feed students.

## From the Desk of Msgr. Matthew Odong

Dear Friends & Benefactors of Hope for Uganda,

Prayers and greetings. I come to you today not only with my report on life at Sacred Heart Seminary (SHS), but also with a story about a visiting priest who transformed lives with his gifts of hope, charity, and love. Fr. Joseph Ambrosoli came to Kalongo in the Archdiocese of Gulu Uganda in 1956. He was both a Comboni Missionary priest and a medical doctor from a wealthy family in northern Italy. His destination was a district where people lived in abject poverty with no electricity, no running water, no hospital, and no nursing or midwifery schools in the area. At the time of his arrival, there was a dispensary with a grass-thatched roof, managed by the Comboni Sisters of Italy. Treatments offered were limited to malaria, wounds, snake bites, diarrhea, headache, and hookworm. Moved by compassion, Fr. Ambrosoli decided to live among this poor community - dedicating his life to the spiritual and physical healing of the suffering people. Generous gifts from wealthy friends and family allowed Fr. Ambrosoli to build a modern 600-bed hospital and a midwifery school, where African girls could learn how to help mothers give birth. Fr. Ambrosoli died on March 27, 1987, and is buried among the people he served with love. By decree

of Pope Francis, Fr. and Doctor Ambrosoli was beatified in November of 2022 in the Archdiocese of Gulu. The life and witness of Blessed Joseph Ambrosoli has challenged all of us to prayerfully consider becoming agents of hope that transforms lives.

Sacred Heart Seminary Lacor was also founded by Comboni Missionaries in 1937 and is the focus of our work today. The 86-year-old physical campus is constantly in need of renovation and repair. Thank you for supporting this work, and putting a new face on this important institution for the education of future priests and leaders. Your support has resulted in renovating the science laboratory, geography block, Church, and visitors' block of 24 rooms.

In addition to their educational formation, the seminarians are given many opportunities for personal growth, from entrepreneurial ventures like raising rabbits, chickens, and tilling soil for growing and

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## AFSS Update

by Miss Atim Berna Prisca / Headteacher

The main purpose in education is to transmit knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the next. These components of education are essential to making the educated person relevant in the community through positive transformation. Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS), like many other great educational institutions, aims at providing holistic and quality education rooted in Christian traditions and values.

One of the ways in which students are prepared at AFSS is through leadership. They are encouraged to learn and offer leadership skills in three arenas:

- 1. Prefects:** These students are elected by fellow students to perform certain responsibilities on behalf of the student body and school administration, based on the rules and regulations of the school. The election process begins with applications and interviews by an election commission comprised of AFSS staff. Once the vetted students are identified, the open campaigns begin. Later the elections are conducted by secret ballot. This democratic process prepares students for the world of leadership, inside and outside the school.
- 2. UNSA:** The Uganda National Students Association is an organization legally recognized by the Parliament of Uganda. Their aim is to serve all students in Uganda at the secondary level. This is also an elected position.
- 3. Volunteers:** These students voluntarily offer leadership and guidance when a need is identified. One prominent group is the Child Charity Movement (CCM), whose goal is to share the plight of their fellow needy students. They raise funds locally through small-scale businesses within the school, using their own pocket money to facilitate the venture. Money raised is used to buy scholastic materials for those in dire need.

The alumni of AFSS have organized to form a Girls' and Boys' Association with its leadership structures clearly spelled out. They come together



AFSS members of Child Charity Movement Club delivered support to former AFSS student, Angel Faith Agenorwot (blue shirt), who transferred to another school, to help clear school fees.

from many different professional areas of pursuit, continuing to learn from each other and grow in their desire to contribute these skills as adults. I am glad and take pride in the fact that we have already received testimonies of our former students who are becoming great leaders - given time, hard work, and opportunity (see page 4 for alumni testimonies).

My appeal, without a doubt, is for your continuing prayers and financial support of our students who struggle to pay tuition. **Without your help, many will be forced to leave AFSS, often having to settle for a life very different from the one our students enjoy.**

Thank you all,  
Berna

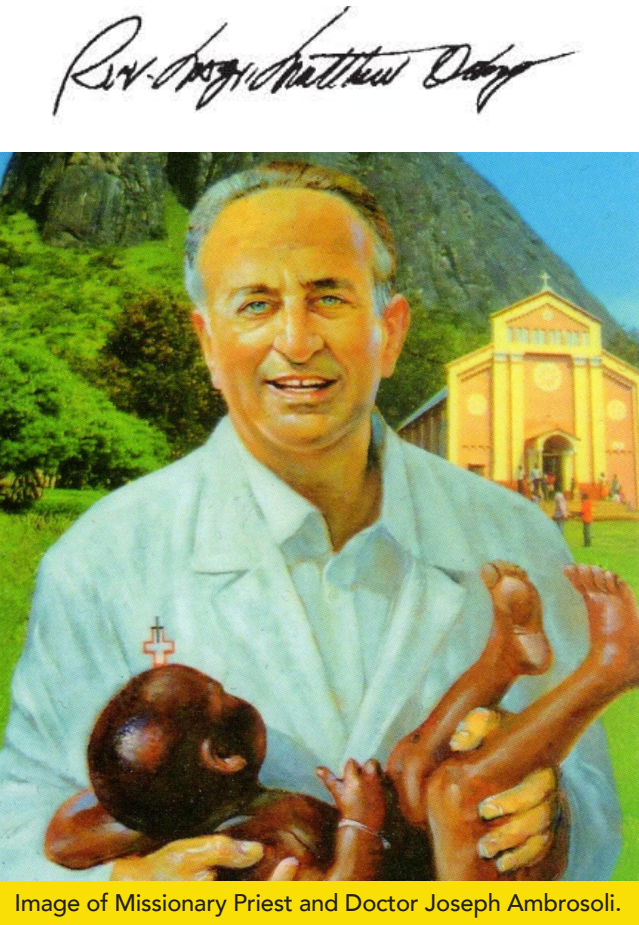
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SAVE THE DATE!

Join us Wednesday, September 27, 2023 for the annual Appreciation Dinner at beautiful Providence Academy in Plymouth, MN. Enjoy fellowship and help us celebrate the good work being accomplished at Sacred Heart Seminary, Archbishop Flynn Secondary School, and the Archbishop Flynn Rural Development Education Center.

The evening agenda is as follows:  
5:00-5:45 Mass in the chapel  
5:45-7:00 Social and dinner in the Great Room  
7:00-8:00 Updates from Msgr. Matthew, Fr. Paul Peter Rom, PhD. and HFU board members

To be our guest, please send an email to [info@hopeforuganda.org](mailto:info@hopeforuganda.org) and you will be added to our invitation list. You won't want to miss this exciting and inspiring event. We hope to see you there!

2023 Parish Visit Update

Plans are underway for the 2023 annual visit by Msgr. Matthew Odong and Fr. Paul Peter Rom. A record nine parishes will each host one of the priests for a mission appeal during the weekend Masses. The schedule for Minnesota parish visits is:

- September 9/10 – Fr. Paul at **St. Therese** in Deephaven
- September 16/17 – Msgr. Matthew at **Immaculate Heart of Mary** in Minnetonka
- September 16/17 – Fr. Paul at the cluster parishes of **Ss. Joachim and Anne** in Shakopee
- September 23/24 – Msgr. Matthew at **St. Patrick** in Oak Grove
- September 23/24 – Fr. Paul at **St. Francis Xavier** in Buffalo
- September 30/October 1 – Msgr. Matthew at **Holy Family** in St. Louis Park
- September 30/October 1 – Fr. Paul at **St. Aloysius** in Olivia
- October 7/8 – Msgr. Matthew at **St. Anne** in Hamel
- October 7/8 – Fr. Paul at **Our Lady of the Lake** in Mound

During their homilies and a Q&A session following Mass, both priests will share stories of how your support is enabling many eager young people to fully develop their God-given talents.



Farm Report *continued from page 1*

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*Ed Baumgartner*

Meet Hope for Uganda's Newest Board Member

Sheila Kruesel's skills and talents as a former executive and sales leader have created faith-filled and devout connections with people around the world. This experience has now led her to serve on the board of Hope for Uganda.

With more than 30 years of generating and leading corporate revenue for several top corporate American technology companies, Sheila's passion for helping others has been the foundation of her success. "Making others successful and driving social impact has truly been the highlight of my corporate career."

In 2014, Sheila made her first mission trip to Uganda. Since then she has sponsored four separate missions, raising capital to build and expand secondary schools. "Today", says Kruesel, "thousands of students have graduated from these secondary schools and received their high school degrees. Graduates have entered universities, become priests or sisters, or pursue a life that allows them to build, grow, and lead their local communities. The mission at Hope for Uganda is simple – bring hope to the people of Northern Uganda through faith, education, health, and sustainability."

Sheila joins Jerry Powaser as co-Advancement Chair and is taking the lead in a website update, as well as coordinating the Letters to Lions Pen Pal Club between Providence Academy and Archbishop Flynn Secondary School students. We welcome her passion and expertise!



Fr. Paul Peter Rom, PhD. celebrating mass at St. Aloysius in Olivia, Minnesota.



## Executive Notes

Dear Friends of Hope for Uganda,



Peace be with you! Let me begin by thanking you for your prayers and financial support. Young lives are being transformed forever because of your generosity. For amazing confirmation of the value of your love, be sure to read the alumni stories and testimonies on page 4.

Hope for Uganda welcomes Sheila Kruesel to the board. Sheila brings extensive executive-level sales, marketing, communications, and social media experience to our mission. She has “hit the ground running” and is making significant contributions to our revised website and Letters to Lions Pen Pal Club. You can learn more about her passion for serving the people in Uganda on page 2.

In a much-anticipated trip to Uganda, parishioners from Immaculate Heart of Mary are scheduled to make a pilgrimage in early July of this year, led by Mark and Anita Whims. Canceled several times, this group has been planning their visit since 2019. Please pray for their safe travel and the incredible experience that awaits them with our Ugandan friends.

My wife, Marie, and I are also very excited to visit Uganda this summer. Marie is the daughter of founders Dan and Bobbi Vaughan, so you could say

she’s been waiting 30 years to make this trip! After hearing about Uganda and witnessing from afar, through her parents and Msgr. Matthew during his many visits to their home in Minnesota, she is more than ready to meet the people who are being blessed by Hope for Uganda. Please pray for our safe and fruitful journey.

Finally, I am very excited to announce the roll-out of the new Hope for Uganda website. Most of you will never be able to make the trip to Uganda, so we will try to bring more of Uganda to you! Enhancements to the website will include monthly updates and pictures of activities at all three of our locations (both schools and the farm), more detailed information and progress reports on priority projects (current and past), and personal/professional profiles of Hope for Uganda board members and leaders on the ground in Uganda. The space in this newsletter is limited and it’s only published twice a year, so the website will allow us to post more content and pictures in a more timely fashion. Thank you to Sheila Kruesel and Luke Ziesmer for heading this important project.

If your heart has been touched by our mission, please read “Unwavering Hope for a Brighter Future” below to see how you can continue to bless our brothers and sisters in Northern Uganda. May the Lord abundantly bless you and your loved ones!

Your brother in Christ,  
Todd Ziesmer

## Unwavering Hope for a Brighter Future

We praise the Lord for the generosity of all Hope for Uganda benefactors. Your recent support has made it possible to initiate many important projects, namely to begin construction of the long-awaited security fence at AFSS, repair and paint the SHS church, renovate the priest/guest residence at SHS, and build a corn crib at the Farm to reduce crop losses. Phase 1 of the Technology Upgrade – installing WiFi capability on both campuses – is also underway and should be completed by the end of summer. Excitement for all of these projects is palpable. Thank you so much!



SHS Priest/Guest House renovation is underway – replacing wood-framed windows and doors with metal (to stop “feeding” the termites).

**Our highest priority continues to be scholarship support for SHS seminarians and AFSS boys and girls.** Due to rising costs in tuition, food, supplies, and teacher salaries, request for scholarship assistance has risen almost 50% since last year (from \$265,000 in 2022 to \$390,000 in 2023). Please prayerfully consider making the most generous gift possible to enable these students to pursue the development of their God-given potential.

**Eight new priests will be ordained in the Archdiocese of Gulu in early August.** It is an extraordinary blessing to have these young men positioned to minister to the growing Catholic community in Uganda. Researchers are projecting that Uganda will be ranked in the top 10 Christian populations in the world by 2050. **Please help us raise \$36,000 to provide motorcycles, Mass kits, and chasubles for these soldiers for Christ.**



Beautiful! SHS campus church maintenance and repairs have been completed – thank you!

Other projects in need of imminent charitable consideration are the following:

- The **boys’ bathrooms and showers at AFSS** suffered structural and plumbing failure recently, necessitating the use of makeshift privacy fence outdoors using water jugs. \$20,000 is needed to rectify this situation.
- **Travel and visa expenses need to be covered for the two trainees** who will participate in a two-year agriculture program at BASS Hybrids in Puerto Rico. The goal is to develop hybrid seeds that will thrive in Northern Uganda’s climate. This will be a \$5,000 expense – a potentially priceless investment.
- The Farm project is still in need of **grain bins, a pig barn, and a chicken coop**. Just imagine the value these things would bring to this very important sustainability community.
- Preliminary plans are underway to build an **Administration block and Chapel on the AFSS campus**. Please consider contributing to these exciting enhancements to the lives of the staff and students.



These 8 deacons are preparing for ordination to priesthood this summer. Please help them secure motorcycles, Mass kits, and chasubles.

## Remembering Loved Ones

One of the greatest gifts you can give loved ones (living or deceased) is offering their prayers and intentions with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Unfortunately, because of its popularity, many of our local parishes are booked months in advance or do not have dates available that are meaningful to you.

There is a way to address your wishes AND encourage priests in Uganda. For a modest stipend (\$7-\$10 per Mass), you can have your special intentions offered by a priest from the Archdiocese of Gulu, Uganda. Because priests in Northern Uganda receive no other compensation, a Mass stipend is often the only money they receive to help perform their ministries.



To bless your loved ones, as well as to help support the priests in Uganda, please send a list of your intentions, preferred dates, and a donation to Hope for Uganda and we will coordinate with the Archdiocese of Gulu.

Thank you!



AFSS boys use this makeshift outdoor “shower” while waiting for funding for bathroom/shower renovation.

- **Very necessary renovations continue at Sacred Heart Seminary.** The original campus was constructed in the 1930s and the termites are having a field day! Please help save this precious environment where these young men work hard and discern the priesthood.

With so many ways in which to give financial support, we hope there is something here that deeply touches your heart. May God bless and reward you for sharing your treasure so that our brothers and sisters in Uganda may experience unwavering hope for a brighter future. Thank you so very much!

## HFU Board of Directors

- Dr. William Kottemann** – Chairperson
- Joseph Ditsch** – Secretary and Administration/Operations Committee Chair
- Corrina Conley** – Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair
- Sheila Kruesel** – Advancement Committee Co-Chair
- Jerry Powaser** – Advancement Committee Co-Chair
- Mark Whims** – Projects Committee Chair

## Are You Being Called to Serve?

Has the Lord grabbed your attention after reading this newsletter? Please consider answering that call by offering your talents to the Hope for Uganda organization. To learn more about the board and the opportunities to help our brothers and sisters in Northern Uganda, contact Todd Ziesmer at **info@hopeforuganda.org** or 952-222-8330. You’ll be happy you did!



## Letter of Appreciation

By Margaret Angeyo

Dear Benefactors of Hope for Uganda,

I am a 24 year old alumnus of Archbishop Flynn Secondary School (AFSS) and a beneficiary of your generosity. I came from a very humble background but was blessed with the opportunity to attend AFSS. When it became apparent my parents could not pay the tuition, I met with Monsignor Matthew Odong and openly explained my situation. I was depressed and in a state of hopelessness. Monsignor was so kind. He told me to pray, to be a good girl, and never lose hope in life. Then he took me to meet the Headteacher and asked her to put my name among those students who were being supported by the “Good Shepherd Scholarship Fund”.



Margaret Angeyo – AFSS graduate, now an English and literature teacher

God is great! Throughout my school life, I followed the advice of Monsignor Odong who told me to pray hard, love God, be a disciplined girl who abides by school rules, and work hard for a brighter future. When I completed my studies at AFSS, I was admitted to Gulu University where I undertook a Bachelor of Arts Education, majoring in English language and literature. I am now a professional teacher. My heart is full of joy and gratitude to Hope for Uganda for supporting my education.

I humbly appeal to you, my benefactors, to consider supporting the critical scholarship fund that enables young, needy, and intelligent boys and girls to become productive citizens. Thank you!

## AFSS Alumnus Profile

of Quinto Ojok

Quinto Ojok graduated from Archbishop Flynn Secondary School in 2015. Since then, he has distinguished himself through advanced learning of the law, namely a Diploma in Law, a Bachelor of Laws, and a Post Graduate Bar Course. He’s currently awaiting admission into the role of Advocate.

He takes education seriously but is quick to espouse a philosophy that goes well beyond book learning. “Archbishop Flynn Secondary School is a life-transforming institution that has achieved so much in terms of improving livelihoods, not only in Pader, but the entire country. This has been through high moral values that model visionary leader results, and I must infer that the advantage the school has isn’t limited to knowledge one learns from it, but how to use it in the best interest of the society as well.” Quinto’s quest for leadership skills began in the classroom, but he often involved himself in extracurricular voluntary opportunities throughout his education, continuing to this day. He believes hard work, whether you are educated or not, is the answer to success.

Like so many in Northern Uganda, Quinto began his formation in a society characterized by violence and ravaged by poverty. But by the grace of God, he found AFSS where he began his journey of hope. His gratitude runs deep as he humbly appeals to his government in Uganda and to the benefactors at Hope for Uganda to facilitate education for people like him. Citing Rom 12:12, Quinto is guided by the premise that God did not bring us here to suffer, but to flourish through the hope the Lord provides.



Quinto Ojok – AFSS graduate, preparing to be a lawyer

## AFSS Alumnus Profile

of Caroline Menya Akullu

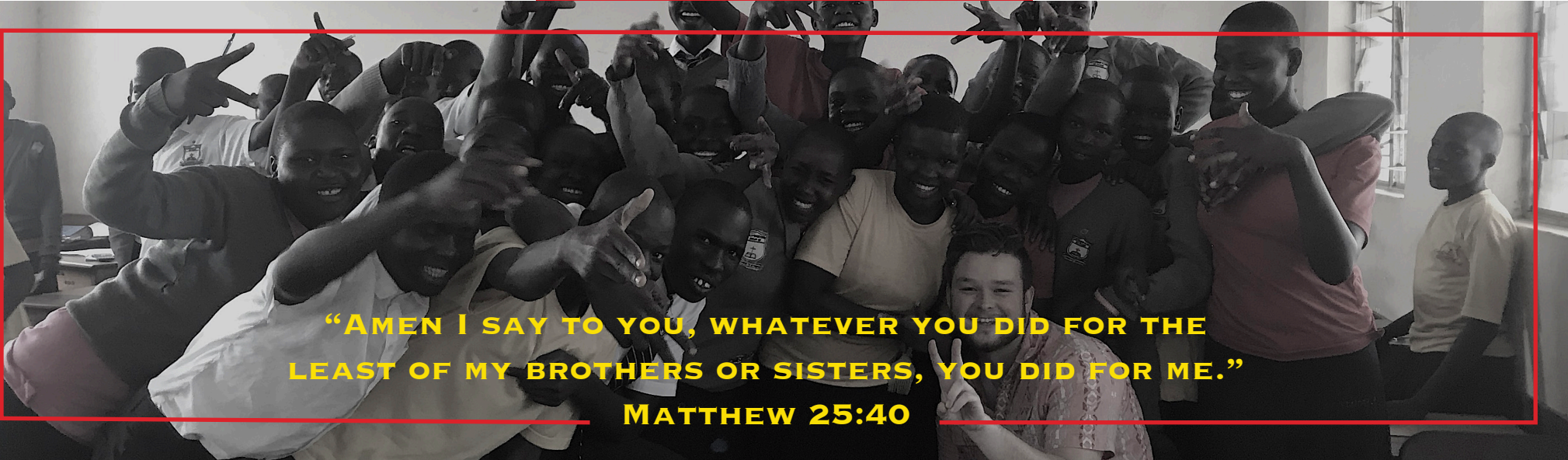
Caroline holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and is in her final year of pursuing a Master’s degree in Curriculum Studies and Foundations of Education from Gulu University. She is an activist for quality education, and, as a newly elected District Female Youth Councilor of the Pader district, she advocates for young people as they pursue their educational goals.



Caroline Menya Akullu – AFSS graduate, pursuing a Master’s degree in Curriculum Studies and Foundations of Education

Her journey in leadership began at Archbishop Flynn Secondary School in 2015, where she was elected by students to represent them on the Uganda National Students Association (UNSA). Later, at University, she failed to win a contest that proved to be a wonderful life lesson. “This gave me a learning point on how to better myself as a leader. As the saying goes, ‘The one who falls and gets up is stronger than the one who never tried.’ I never gave up...” Later that year she massively won Speaker for Gulu University Women Empowerment Network.

Caroline is inspired by the wisdom of leaders like Peter Drucker, who said “Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results and attributes.” She is also motivated by outstanding female leaders, and believes good leadership is not defined by age, and that one should always be willing to learn and unlearn certain things. She looks forward to serving in higher positions where she will be able to create an even greater impact on her community. It appears Caroline has learned to try her best no matter the role she’s in – a real testimony to the journey she began at AFSS.



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Visit us on the web at  
www.HopeForUganda.org



Hope For Uganda is a Minnesota 501(c)(3) Non-profit corporation legally established in 1998 to support educational, faith formation, and relief activities in the Archdiocese of Gulu in Northern Uganda.

## Make a Difference

### Pray

Please keep the people of Northern Uganda and our mission in your prayers.

### Volunteer

If you would like to offer your skills or time to the organization, please contact us.

### Donate

Financially support the organization, which in turn provides hope to the people of Uganda.

**YES!** I want to give hope to the people of Uganda through my generous donation.

See enclosed donation form.