

## February 2024 Newsletter



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Thank you for your support of The Child is Innocent (TCII). I've just returned from our annual Leadership Training in Uganda where I spent a week with all of the students in our program and our program's graduates. I directly witnessed how much your generosity has profoundly changed their lives!

### Your Support

During the Ugandan school year, which runs from February-November, your support provides complete academic scholarships to dozens of children from Northern Uganda aged 8-18 years old. These students are selected based on academic potential and financial need. Once accepted into the program, students often become the first in their family to receive an education beyond primary school. As such, there are few they can look to in their own families for guidance on how to apply their education to a career and overcome challenges they encounter along the way. That's where our annual leadership training comes in.

## Annual Leadership Training

For one week every January, on one residential campus, we bring together all of the students and recent graduates of our program – graduates who now have jobs in engineering, nursing, law, medicine, teaching, business, accounting, commercial agriculture and more. The students work in small groups with their graduate mentors on teambuilding projects, science challenges, art endeavors and reflective exercises. In the process, new friendships are formed and the current students establish relationships with our successful graduates – people who were in their shoes only a few years before. These graduates form a network who mentor and support these students throughout the year once they return to school.

## 2024 Leadership Training

2024 marks our 20th year as an organization. Starting with just 12 scholarships per year in 2004, your support has allowed for hundreds of graduates over the past two decades – who are now employed in diverse fields dedicated to rebuilding post-conflict Northern Uganda. This year, some of our earliest graduates, now in their 30's, brought their own kids to meet the team. It was inspiring to see how these graduates are prioritizing education for their own children and are able to support them with jobs made possible by the scholarships TCII provided years ago. Several graduates are even supporting education for additional children in their community outside their own families through the wages they now earn. It has been a privilege to witness these graduates transformation from those needing financial support themselves, to those now providing that support to others.

This year we welcomed 12 American volunteers to the leadership training in Uganda. Many were sponsors who wanted to meet the students they had helped support in person and to witness the impact of this program firsthand. I invite any donor to TCII who would like to come to Gulu to join us next January in Uganda - it is an unforgettable experience seeing just how much of a difference your support makes to this community and, it's also a lot of fun! Please reach out to me directly if you would like to join next January!



Our treasurer, Edwine Michel teaching an 'Introduction to Akido' class to interested students



Lakica Maureen, one of our graduates, now a nurse, mentoring one of our secondary students



The graduate mentors from this year's leadership training

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In the meantime, please know how much your generosity has not only changed an individual's life while allowing for the creation of a community in Northern Uganda that now has the knowledge and resources to empower itself and its next generation. Thank you for making possible this network of students and graduates who raise each other up in the face of poverty. As always, please email me anytime with questions, concerns and ideas.

THANK YOU!  
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The Child is Innocent

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