



This issue's theme: Working together to change lives

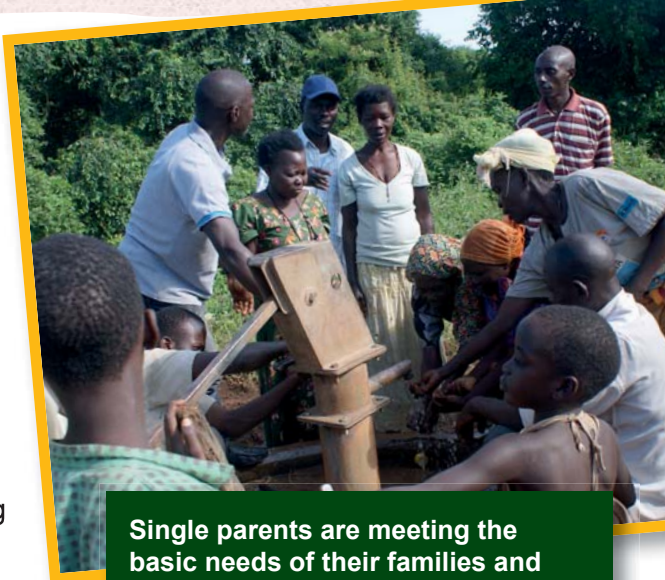
'Together we can do something wonderful'

In 2001, building on many years' experience of working in international development, Andrew and Jane Betts founded Advantage Africa to help vulnerable people in East Africa improve their lives. From the start they were keen to involve others and took advice from friends, experts and charity founders. They developed a strategic plan, recruited trustees, registered as a charity and invested the first £10 donation in a fundraising manual.

Advantage Africa has come a long way since then. Over 100,000 vulnerable children and adults in Kenya and Uganda now have improved education, health and incomes. Rates of skin cancer among people with albinism in eastern

Uganda have plummeted, disabled young people have graduated from school and are contributing confidently in their communities, and single parents enjoy supportive friendships and are meeting their families' basic needs.

All this has been achieved because of people like you who donate, volunteers who work as trustees or do sponsored events, churches which offer their annual tithe, companies that put people before profits, and our tremendous partner organisations in Kenya and Uganda who go the extra mile for people in need. In this edition of Milestones we celebrate this process of working together to change lives. It's a process that Mother



Single parents are meeting the basic needs of their families and the wider community for safe water, healthcare and incomes by working together with Advantage Africa, its supporters and partners. This borehole in Kijararo Uganda, is one of 20 established or rehabilitated since the charity began in 2001.

Teresa may have had in mind when she said *'None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.'*

Working together to help single parents like Florence



Florence proudly displays her eggs with SPAU's Project Officer Sarah Nakazzi.

35 year-old Florence fled to Uganda from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda when she was just 10 years old. She became separated from her parents and doesn't know where her family are. Florence now lives in the rural community of Ddwaniro and is a single mother of two children.

Advantage Africa helped Florence to rear poultry to meet her family's basic needs. She has so far collected more than 40 trays of eggs which she sold at 10,000/- per tray, bringing

in nearly £100. Florence is determined to succeed in her enterprise and says the income will ensure her children go to school and she can save money towards tracing her relatives.

By working together with our individual supporters, the Single Parents Association of Uganda and the Guernsey Overseas Aid & Development Commission, Advantage Africa has enabled 100 single parents like Florence and their families in Ddwaniro to improve their health and incomes.

Working together to prevent needless deaths from skin cancer

Since 2013, the priority for Advantage Africa's partnership with the Source of the Nile Union of Persons with Albinism (SNUPA) in Uganda has been to ensure people with albinism, who lack the protective pigment melanin, can protect themselves from life-threatening skin cancer.

High SPF (sun protection factor) sunscreen is either unavailable or unaffordable in Uganda and we began by bringing in as much as we could in our luggage. With donations from supporters like you we bought a cryogun for SNUPA's local dermatologist Dr. Ngobi to

remove pre-cancerous lesions at our skin clinics hosted in schools, churches and the Jinja public library. Our friends at TUSC (Transport for Ugandan Sick Children) helped to bring people with albinism from rural areas for their skin checks, sunscreen, hats and training in sun protection.

In 2015, Dan, one of our volunteers, researched the UK sunscreen market for us and we sought partnership with manufacturers he identified. The company Ultrasun responded with enthusiasm and began donating their SPF50 sunscreen and helping to fund skin clinics.

The Uganda Revenue Authority agreed to waive all tax and duty (previously 53%) on imported sunscreen for people with albinism. And in 2017, Channel 4 News anchor Jon Snow presented Advantage Africa's appeal on Radio 4 which raised £25,000 towards skin cancer prevention.

These many partnerships have helped the project grow to 8,000 bottles of sunscreen being distributed through 34 skin clinics across eastern Uganda every year. More than 1,000 people with albinism (who previously had a life expectancy of just 30 years) are now protected from skin cancer.



Top: Dermatologist Dr. Ngobi.

Right: Volunteer Dan and the Uganda Revenue Authority

Below: The SNUPA team.



Sarah and her son Simon, one of 1,000 people with albinism helped. See her story below.



Top: The Ultrasun UK team.

Below: TUSC Uganda.



Left: Advantage Africa Programme Manager Jane with Sharik from SNUPA.



Working together to help Sarah survive and thrive

Sarah is a single mother with albinism in her late twenties who was diagnosed with severe skin cancer around her eye, on her neck and chest. With support from a kind family and the Uganda Cancer Trust, Advantage Africa and SNUPA enabled her to have life-saving surgery and skin grafts from the only surgeon in Uganda

able to conduct such an operation. SNUPA's staff and dermatologist Dr Ngobi nursed her back to health and Sarah was subsequently declared free from cancer and returned to her home village to the absolute joy of her three young children. Advantage Africa then helped her to establish a

small farming enterprise to earn an income to provide for her children's needs including food, healthcare and education. Sarah now helps SNUPA to keep people with albinism safe from skin cancer by telling her story and encouraging others to use sunscreen, hats and protective clothing whenever they are outside.



Top: Kenya Institute of Special Education.
Below: Teachers and pupils.



Top: Parents.
Below: Advantage Africa Programme Manager Rob Aley with school pupil Joseph.



Martin, one of 500 children with disabilities helped to access education. See his story below.



Donor organisations.

Working together to help children with disabilities

Many children with disabilities in Kenya are kept at home, separated from their community and denied a normal life because of shame, stigma and myths surrounding disability. In 2002, Advantage Africa embarked on its first project to address this situation by establishing a unit for children with learning disabilities within Mitaboni primary school. Until then, the children had been ignored and left out of school. With support from individuals like you, trusts and churches, we worked

with teachers and social workers with a heart for excluded children to establish two further units in Thinu and Kisayani. The three schools continue to provide education for up to 120 children with disabilities.

From this grassroots experience, Advantage Africa built more alliances to replicate what we learned about disability inclusion and promote a new model of school-to-home transition, tested at Mitaboni and Thinu.

By prioritising vocational and life skills, this ground-breaking project aims to improve the prospects of young people with learning disabilities when they leave school. We have recently developed a practical handbook for educators and parents nationally. In partnership with the Kenyan Institute of Special Education (KISE), we are now training special needs teachers from all over Kenya.

Working together to help Martin and his family

After several years at the Mitaboni Special Unit, Martin, who has learning disabilities, turned 18 and was ready to make the transition from school to adult life. Advantage Africa visited Martin and Alice, his grandmother and guardian, in their home to plan for the future. Together we agreed

that Martin would look after a cow which would generate income to help meet their basic needs. Martin was trained in rearing livestock and provided with a cow upon graduation. His cow now provides milk and income for the family every day. He says, 'I love my cow. She is my best friend!'

Martin feeds his cow.



Sponsored Events

We're grateful to members of the 'Olney Old Knees' who ran the Great North Run in September and together raised nearly £5,000 in sponsorship for Advantage Africa. Mark Braithwaite organised a Pilgrimage Walk from Milton Keynes to Olney to celebrate the famous hymn 'Amazing Grace' which was written there by the slave-trade abolitionist John Newton. Mark secured £500 from his company for Advantage Africa and George Mwaura raised a further £860 in sponsorship from the walk.



Walkers on The Amazing Grace Pilgrimage.

Please contact us if you'd like a place in next year's Great North Run or would like to do a sponsored event to help vulnerable people in East Africa.

Big Give Christmas Challenge



The Big Give Christmas Challenge is a wonderful opportunity to help vulnerable people like Florence, Sarah and Martin described in this newsletter.

From midday on Giving Tuesday, 3rd December, until midday on Tuesday 12th December, donations made online to Advantage Africa through the Big Give will be doubled. Please visit www.advantageafrica.org/biggive to make your donation for twice the impact! Thank you.

Concerts

Local choirs sang their hearts out for Advantage Africa over the summer. Olney Community Choir 'Singing for All!' raised £720 from their Summer Concert and Milton Keynes' Cornerstone Chamber Choir and Orchestra over £2,000 from their performance of David Fanshawe's acclaimed 'African Sanctus'.

Could you or your company / church / club / school put on a community event to raise funds to change vulnerable people's lives?

Introducing our new Patron

We're delighted that renowned journalist Jon Snow has joined singer-songwriter Martyn Joseph as Advantage Africa's second Patron. Jon, who worked in Kamuli, Uganda as a VSO volunteer in the 1960s, presented our BBC Radio 4 Appeal in 2017. He was drawn to the organisation by our focus on reaching vulnerable people and our practical approach to helping them improve their lives.



Jon Snow with our Uganda Programme Manager Jane Betts and Albinism Project Manager Peter Ogik.

What could we achieve together?

£25 per month can provide resources for a class of disadvantaged children like Martin.

£50 can provide a single-parent family like Florence's with chickens to earn a sustainable income.

£100 could fund the excision of life-threatening skin cancer from a person with albinism like Sarah.

Milestones is published by Advantage Africa, who support people affected by poverty, disability and HIV to improve their education, health and incomes. Our work helps people to help themselves and build a better future for their families and communities.

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