

ChildVoice

We're Celebrating Our Most Recent Class of Graduates!

This is an exciting time at the Lukome Center in northern Uganda as six young girls, including our first five from South Sudan, graduate and move on to their new lives. The road to this milestone has not been easy, especially for the South Sudanese girls; their country is in the midst of a civil war, and most of them face a future where they may never be able to return home.

We've been fortunate to help each graduating girl come up with a plan either to enter one of northern Uganda's refugee settlements or rejoin her family in a nearby town. And thankfully, as former ChildVoice students, these girls now have the skills and training that will enable them to support their children – and even other family members!



Coming Full Circle for ChildVoice

Now here's a story we love telling!

Josephine, pictured above in the blue dress, was one of our earliest Lukome Center graduates. She grew up in a poor village in northern Uganda and dropped out of school in second grade because of the conflict raging with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) at that time. It was simply too dangerous for her to walk the long distance along isolated dirt roads to her school.

Josephine was living with her mother at an IDP (internally displaced persons) camp when she was abducted by the LRA in May 2004. At age 13, she was trained as a soldier and





Spotlight on Our Uganda Staff: Esther

Hair Salon is one of the most popular vocational classes at the Lukome Center, thanks in no small part to the talent and dedication of Esther, at far right in the above photo.

Once a child mother herself, Esther has trained virtually every girl who has gone through the ChildVoice program since 2006; she stills remembers them all by name and makes herself available when they come back to ask for tips or advice.

Esther personally suffered a great deal during Uganda's war and has healed from the trauma with the help of other staff. She also arrived at the Center completely illiterate, but thanks to the efforts of her colleagues, she is making good progress. We applaud Esther for her hard work!

For more exciting news, visit childvoiceintl.org.

forced to kill. She says she lived in fear for her life every day for two long years. Eventually Josephine escaped, but not before she was taken as a "wife" and had a baby to care for. She came to the Lukome Center at age 17, having no skills and no way to earn a living for her and her child. She felt desperate and hopeless.

But thanks to ChildVoice and the dedication of our staff in Uganda, Josephine got a fresh start and the chance for a brighter future, something she has never taken for granted.

Today, we are happy to report that Josephine owns her own hair salon in Gulu, having graduated from the Lukome Center with an obvious talent for hair styling and weaving. "I am so thankful to ChildVoice for the gift of knowledge and the skills they gave me," she says. "Now I can support my family and help other girls who were just like me."

The best part of this story is that Josephine does, indeed, use the skills she learned at the Lukome Center to train other young girls in need, including several former ChildVoice students she has mentored. One young graduate, Sharon (pictured in her red ChildVoice t-shirt with Josephine and former student Susan) is now employed by Josephine in her hair salon! The love, encouragement, and confidence shared by the staff at the Lukome Center have come full circle in the life of Josephine, as this successful young entrepreneur now helps others in her community.

Upcoming Lukome Center Trips

- 2018: April 7–21, August 4–18, and October 13–27

Join an existing trip or schedule a dedicated trip for your church or community group. To learn more, contact our Team and Intern Coordinator, Kelsi O'Neil, at teamsandinterns@childvoiceintl.org.

Team Trip Update

November was a busy month at the Lukome Center as 14 team members, including three ChildVoice staff and a group of seven from Lutheran Church of Hope in Iowa, traveled to northern Uganda. It was a time of fun, fellowship, and working alongside our students as they did their lessons and went about their daily chores.

One highlight was sharing times of singing and dancing each evening, as the girls taught our team members songs in Acholi, the local dialect, and encouraged them to join in the dancing. Why not come along with us on one of our team trips and experience the culture for yourself?