

My  
AFRICAN  
EXPERIENCE

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# WHY Uganda?

Ever since I began my teaching career I have dreamed of volunteering abroad. I suppose that this is because I have always felt that students on the Peninsula are blessed in having a good education and great teachers who are passionate about their work. I have always loved teaching and have had many years working with students in Child Care, Pre-School and Primary School. Since I came back from maternity leave I have been doing a lot of thinking about the direction I wanted my career to take. When this opportunity arose, I felt that this was the perfect time to do something for myself that I have always dreamed of, and at the same time attempt to not only make a difference to students less fortunate than ours, but to build a relationship between our local community and the school in Uganda. I feel that this is an amazing opportunity for us all to realise that we can do great things and that we can make a difference to other people.



# WHERE AM I GOING?

St Paul KASSO ( ‘KASSO’ standing for Kabira School of Adult Attention and Orphans )is a boarding school in the Rakai district of Uganda, located near the shores of Lake Victoria and the border of Tanzania. This district was hit hardest by HIV/AIDS crisis, affecting every family in the region surrounding KASSO.



KASSO was established by Dominic and Rose in 1999 as a very small school of 12 orphans. Both teachers themselves, Dominic and Rose decided to help children in Dominic’s home village of Kabira by giving them a chance to go to school. By the end of their first year there were 49 children and the school has grown exponentially since then.

From 1999 when the school was operated out of a single flax hut to today when over 600 children are educated in over 10 classrooms, the KASSO story is an incredible success. Dominic and Rose are determined to enable even the most disadvantaged to get a decent education.

Neither Dominic nor Rose receives a salary from KASSO and the school is financed by the school fees of those that can afford to pay- around 250 fee paying students that support the other students. Parents and Guardians that cannot afford full fees pay as much as they can or offer food from their garden to support the school. Around one third of the children are orphans.

## WHAT NEXT?

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2015, I will be boarding a plane to Entebbe Africa, staying one night just outside of Kampala before embarking on the 3 and a half hour journey down to KASSO. I will pay Dominic \$100 US on arrival to pay for my first night stay and for him to transfer me safely to KASSO. At KASSO I will be staying in the volunteer dormitory where there is a single room with a bathroom that has no running water. I will be able to pump water to use for washing and doing my laundry. My donation of \$250 US will pay for my stay and include all my meals. \$100 of that donation will go towards whatever I feel is needed at the time of my stay.



## HOW IS THIS TRIP MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

I feel that I have something to offer the students at KASSO through my teaching experience, but I do feel that this trip has the real potential in making a difference to the students and parents of OUR local community. It is my hope that by regularly communicating with the students at Red Hill Consolidated, I will be able to help them to create a real connections with the students in Uganda and real understanding of how different other children's lives can be compared to their own. I also hope that I can encourage local sponsorships for the students at KASSO and educate families that there are programs where 100% of their money will go straight to the student they are sponsoring. KASSO is not run by a larger organisation like World Vision where much of the sponsorship dollars go to administration. KASSO is run solely by volunteers.



# The Future

On my return from Uganda, I hope to become a contact person for KASSO and encourage other people who are inspired to volunteer abroad, that this is something they can do. Many people are intimidated by the lengthy applications and hefty price tags necessary for most volunteer experiences. KASSO have made this experience easy for me so far, where after a SKYPE call to the beautiful Emma Blackman (the volunteer coordinator) I have simply had to organise my own flights. Everything else has been taken care of!!



LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

## Reference:

Some of the information in this booklet came from the St Paul KASSO Volunteer Manual. The photographs came directly from the Kids Worldwide Website.