

Cornerstone

Newsletter & Magazine December 2022

A Family of Friends - Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation

THE WOUNDED HEALER

An influential spiritual author of recent years, the late Henri Nouwen, wrote a book called "The Wounded Healer." In this newsletter we seek to explore more deeply what is behind that whole concept. The book contains this quote:

"Nobody escapes being wounded. We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not 'How can we hide our wounds?'... but 'How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?'"

"When our wounds cease to be a source of shame and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers."

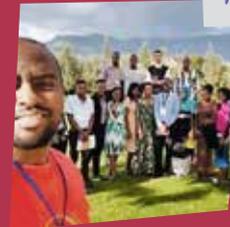
One of the surprising statements about Jesus found in the scriptures is: "...he learned obedience through the things that he suffered." (Heb.5:8) In the original Greek language, the word used here for the English word 'obedience' implies yielding or acceptance. It suggests a greater humility and wisdom that comes when the selfish, and prideful human ego is subdued. This is captured when Jesus prayed to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Not my will but yours be done." Luke 22:42

Jesus is called the 'first born son.' And, his life here on earth serves as a pattern for us. It gives us an example of similar circumstances and lessons that we also, as children of God, can expect to encounter. Therefore, just as Jesus experienced challenges and was wounded in various ways, we too can expect our fair share of tests and trials.

Yet, by the way he lived his life, the words he spoke, and by the spirit that he brought into this world, we have been able to receive healing on many levels of our lives. In a similar way, as we follow the example Jesus left us, we too can turn our wounds into wisdom, find healing and bring healing to others. We too can be wounded healers.

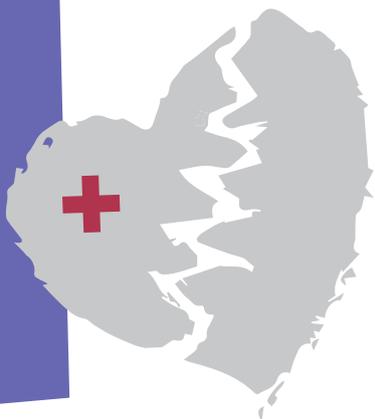


Inside



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- * Updates on various programs around the region
- * Centerfold pictorial
- * Thoughts from Tim



Jesse sharing an inspirational message with a group of eager students in Youth Impact Mission - Rwanda



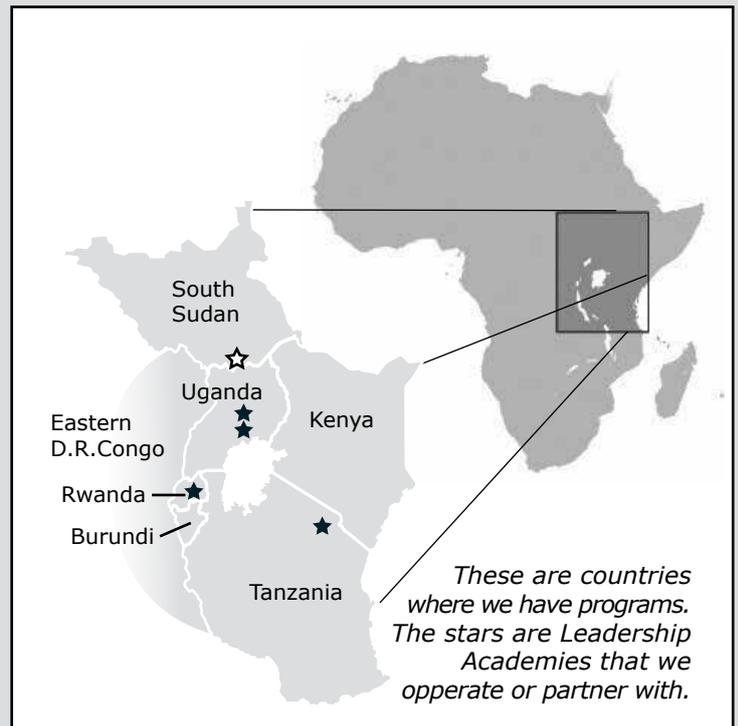
Cornerstone Development Africa

Our Vision: *An ever-expanding movement of transformational servant leaders in Africa, building a better world.*

Our Mission: *To be a family of friends in the Spirit of Jesus working together to develop generations of young leaders with vision and purpose, personal integrity, and committed to unity, reconciliation, and long-term relationships.*

Cornerstone Development was established in Uganda in 1988 to help in the rebuilding and development of the nation as it was emerging from a turbulent past. In recent years we have expanded to Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi and Southern Sudan. All our programs are directed towards helping under-privileged children, with a special emphasis on youth leadership development. Since its inception the work has steadily expanded to include over 2,000 young people today- in a variety of programs including five schools, five homes for homeless kids, three hostels for university students and sports programs - all designed for providing love, education and character formation.

Our core focus is on "Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation". That is, to raise up future leaders with a shared vision of positively transforming their communities and nations, as an outgrowth of their own personal transformation. Our approach involves creating loving, family-like environments in our schools and other programs for under-privileged young people, while empowering them with education and character formation in order for them to become leaders. Furthermore, the young people coming through our programs are forming a movement that seeks to make a contribution to the betterment of society while promoting reconciliation across



all that is dividing humanity. We as a community are a living model of this kind of unity in diversity, in that we are composed of all the different tribes, nationalities, cultures and religious backgrounds found in this part of the world.

In our character development curriculum we teach the timeless, universal principles of forgiveness, honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, hard work, humility, and of service to the less fortunate, as exemplified in the teachings of Jesus and the perennial wisdom of all traditions, but without affiliation to any one institutional religious group.

See more online: www.CDAfrica.org

Our core focus is 'youth leadership development' after the model of Jesus. So, in addition to our schools, all the various programs we run serve this focus by providing a practical "training ground" where graduates of our schools can learn to serve and pass on what they have received. Each year we put out two magazine's like this one. Earlier this year, we highlighted several PEOPLE in our community, and now in this current edition, we turn to highlighting our PROGRAMS in general.

What have we been up to?

Our strategic themes for continued excellence this year have been around 'one-to-one mentoring' and 'holistic development' of the young people we work with. It has been exciting to experience the growth in our different programs to this end, as we continue to innovate and advance towards our greater vision of an ever-expanding movement of transformational leaders in Africa, building a better world!

This year we worked a lot on investing in the leadership foundations of our work to build our capacity for several areas we are expanding into. We brought on a full-time country coordinator for our work in eastern DR Congo, and officially opened an office in Goma. This has helped us start up a more robust presence of our work in eastern DRC including high school outreach work and more alumni engagement. We are currently exploring what a 'Stage One' program could look like in Congo for us, and we are clarifying a vision for expanding our work there going forward.

We are also increasing our work with Burundian youth by building up our leadership team in Bujumbura as well as expanding facilities at CLA Rwanda and this year admitted 20 more Burundians. We will continue adding 20 each year for the next two years until the school population gets to 180 (120 Rwandans / 60 Burundians). In Kenya, we have worked to better organize ourselves and formalize our administrative capacity by bringing on a full-time country coordinator, and starting a high school outreach aspect of our work in-country. In Uganda, Youth Corps began a new strategic partnership work with 'Rescue One More', that seeks to improve responses to cases of sexual abuse in local communities, both at a primary care level, and at a systemic level with 'community action teams' of local authorities. In Rwanda, Peter Nkotanyi took over from Sam Birondwa as Headmaster of CLA Rwanda and has been doing a great job taking the school

into a new era of excellence. Sam continues to be involved in our community in many ways and we view this as a very successful transition for him and our community. In Tanzania, we've opened an administrative office in Dar es Salaam in order to better support our community there, and also to pull together the final requirements for hostel construction due to start in January.

Across the region generally, this year we continued investing in the leadership capacity of our Outreach programs by ensuring every country has a dedicated manager in our office for each YIM & AYL and more admin support - we see it as an area we have the highest leverage for expanding our impact. All in all it was a great year for us and we are all excited about all that is yet to come!



Tim on a vision-casting trip in Goma, DRC





Cornerstone Leadership Academies

Uganda

The past year was a bit of a re-boot year for us as we fully reopened post-covid lockdowns with a lot of hopes, so many ideas and with many things on the table to do. It has been a year of a lot of learning from one another but also a year of encouragement to one another as you know that the effects of Covid 19 did not only influence our pupils but also us as staff.

After a period of strategic planning to start the year, we set our sights squarely on several new initiatives we wanted to implement in our classrooms. Namely, these were a book reading program, a writers' club, environmental club, schools-against-crime club, patriotism club, and debate club introductions among them. We have also been more purposeful about the mentorship our students receive, bringing in one COSA stage three alumni once a month to meet with them and lead a Discipleship session. We appreciate the help from COSA (our alumni) very much. Our students have really benefited from building relationships with so many new people from our larger social networks.

In terms of infrastructure, in the past year we also got a facelift at the school, a thing we are very much grateful for. To name just a few examples: a brand-new building that doubles as a computer lab and a science lab, a spruced-up library, updated faculty/teachers' housing and a revamp on the school kitchen. I am also pleased to report that our

school community at the ranch, received a water filtration system making filtered water accessible to everyone. As the school breaks at the end of the year, we will embark on a final phase of renovating our dormitories, and constructing some new teachers housing. By remaining dedicated to excellence, we are able to take pride in knowing that we are making the most of the resources at our disposal while we serve God's kingdom here on earth.

In our community our life patterns are essentially the same for everyone and overtime through the many chapters of life, as we grow up and we live together, we find similar things wounding us in the process. In our weekly fellowships we encourage each other to grasp the unique blend of strength and weaknesses, the kind that represents the character of Jesus and we share this with one another and those under our care (the students). Sharing my own journey of failures, redemption, reconciliation and restoration with others has not only been liberating but at the same time fulfilling for me. I have cultivated the awareness that Jesus' strength works best in our weaknesses so now I am no longer embarrassed about my weaknesses, rather I give allowance to the divine transformational power to work through me. Hardships, persecutions and calamities no longer have to define me, because through my weakness I find my true spiritual strength. I know now that we are like sign posts that Jesus uses to reveal the beauty of his grace in our lives to others. When I live up to his calling for my life, I reveal his character which calls others to freedom, kindness and strength.

By Kenneth Tumwine

Rwanda

This year presented us with a lot of interesting new challenges and opportunities. The biggest of these was the transition in school leadership from the previous school Head Master (Sam Birondwa) to myself, Peter Nkotanyi. By all means this process has been highly successful, and we are all excited about the new era of excellence that CLA Rwanda is embarking into!

On top of this, we also started an expansion program to have more Burundian students join the academy - a process that received strong support from the entire team. To this end, we will be bringing in approximately 20 additional Burundian students each year until our total population reaches 180 (120 Rwandans 60 Burundians). To accommodate this expansion, several new buildings and facilities have been built: a new boys' and girls' dorm, a pair of brand-new classroom buildings, a football/soccer field, a volleyball court, and improved water mains and plumbing across the campus.

After starting the annual selection process a little early, the new school year kicked off with me and a few members traveling to Burundi to conclude the recruitment processes. In Rwanda, my colleagues and I created a new online application procedure, to which 2,300 people responded in less than 48 hours. The team had to put in long hours in order to sift through all the applications and select the right pupils to fill the required quotas.

The year began with the election of student leaders; all of our students are trained to be leaders, but we give them the opportunity to vote representatives who will lead them for a year. They share responsibilities because no one is permitted to hold two leadership positions at one time. We have learned that responsibilities contribute to healing, particu-

larly the responsibilities our students hold in care groups where heart to heart stories are shared within the context of family/care groups.

In addition, we also hired three new teachers to fill some vacancies, and we are grateful to such talented new staff on board. Teachers have been great agents of change because they voluntarily open up about their lives to their pupils and give their all to the students and the school's initiatives. For instance, they have kept up with one-on-one mentorship, fellowship, and support for nighttime extra classes, identified and supported weak students, and attended and taught discipleship lessons, all of which have contributed to the transformation of pain into insight and healing.

This is all in an effort to achieve our school mission: *"to create a life transforming learning environment that will mold young men and women into future Transformational Servant Leaders of Rwanda and beyond, men and women whose lives fully reflect the character qualities and leadership principles embodied in the life of Jesus."*

In order for us as leaders to be able to create such a learning environment for our students, we must be able to process and transform our own wounds, in order to help address the wounds of the students who are given to our care. We all know that education alone just informs the mind, and that the real work at hand is transformation of the heart. Our biggest hope is that we can help our students transform their wounds into wisdom and become healers themselves!

Healing is a process that has its origins in each individual's own life experience. We are all on our own journeys, and the more we can do our own work, so that we can be helpful or useful to others, the more we become true agents of change in this world!

By Peter Nkotanyi



CLA-Rwanda's
2022 graduates
get-together

Tanzania

We started the year off strong and set out to complete a handful of targets in a number of areas. This year, we have made an effort to encourage students to put forth significant effort into their studies. Among the many things we have done in this regard include administering examinations on a regular basis to boost students' self-assurance in taking exams and convening academic panels to discuss students' progress and figure out how we may help a student who is not doing well. To remedy this, we have put each student under the tutelage of a single educator who is in charge of their education and acts as a mentor. Students continue to feel accountable, which has led to increased focus on schoolwork and improved grades.

Through activities such as Junior Achievers (JA) competitions, Debates, Public Speaking engagements, and Highschool Leadership Development (HLD) outreaches, our students have been empowered with 21st century skills. Our CLA teams came second in the Tanzania National Debate Championship, second in the Tanzania National Public Speaking Championship (where two of our students came in the top 10), second in the Tanzania National Quiz Challenge, and second in the Tanzania National Junior Achievers National Championship.

The emphasis this year on the mentor-mentee relationships is only one example of how our efforts have benefited. Here, we have matched each student with a teacher who will serve as a role model and guide as they develop in the four key areas of their lives: mind, spirit, community, and body. We have teamed up with our COSA (alumni) office to introduce our students to former students who will remain their brothers and sisters long after they have left CLA.

In the context of the mentor-mentee relationship, which has been a major focus of our work this year, the concept of a wounded healer naturally arises. If our service and work with young people does not originate from a heart that has been wounded by the suffering about which we talk, then no one will take us seriously.

An integral aspect of our job is mentoring, and being

vulnerable when mentoring has always been essential. This means that we need to learn how to reach out to people and tell how we were able to emerge stronger after being injured, despite our weaknesses or hurts. The truth about mentorship is that our struggles as mentors help us discover our new and better paths, and through the story of our struggles, we can inspire others to discover their own new and better paths.

In her role as a care giver, Mother Teresa epitomized what being a wounded healer is like. When told that 'untouchable' people in Calcutta were dying, she dedicated her life to this cause. To this end, she embarked on a journey to Calcutta, where she established a hospital and began her hunt for victims of disease and hunger. She had them taken to the hospital so that they might be loved on, prayed over, and cared for. In her service toward the sick, she elaborated on what it means for Christians to love like Christ. She held those deemed untouchable and many even perished right in her arms.

When questioned why she was doing this, the frail woman with a huge spirit said, "What you do for them, you did for him. Be vigilant. You'll witness the injured, sick, lonely, hungry, thirsty, and unhappy. If you reach out with your wounds to heal others', you may catch a glimpse of Christ's face and realize that you are, in fact mending his wounds. "You helped Him by helping them."

Working in this way has not been without its challenges, but we have learned much along the way, and it has been a source of great joy to us to know that in treating the wounds of the young people who pass through our academy, we are mending the wounds of Jesus himself.

By Julius Ejalam



CLA students visiting the retention hon for behavioroal change



Precept sharing time at the Kibuli Boys Home

The Youth Corps

We started the year with a campaign to encourage our staff to be more intentional about mentoring – both having one of their own, but significantly advancing in this area with our beneficiaries. To this end, we gave all of our coordinators additional personal responsibility to ensure that they continue to receive mentoring throughout the year, so they have a source of inspiration and support themselves, as much as they are giving to others. As we near the end of the year, I'm confident that we've improved our program's ability to impact its beneficiaries by providing them with more in-depth relationship-based personal transformation. We do this because we see it as the model that Jesus used in his life and work, and believe it is the only real lasting way to impact society at large – one transformed life at a time.

We would not have reached nearly as many of our goals this year without the dedication of our team. This is because some of our staff members who had a poor self-esteem about themselves had to help certain beneficiaries boost theirs. Over the past three years, I've come to learn that each member of the Youth Corps staff has a personal reason for having a love and excitement for children beyond simply wanting to contribute in the recovery of the children in our program.

One of the highlights of our work this year is an initiative with a new strategic partner that will help victims of sexual violence find safety, healing, and justice. The Rescue One More project arrived precisely as our program was struggling to secure justice for many of the girls staying at our safe shelters. Community Action Teams (CATs) in the Rubaga subdistrict were also formed for this initiative. They will work with our staff to eliminate sexual violence against children (SVAC) in that area, and in 2023,

we hope to expand this effort by establishing further Community Action Teams (CATs) and maybe opening additional safe houses in the remaining four divisions of Kampala.

As part of our community service program, we have enrolled more than ten kids in a brand-new program created by a former member of our Youth Corps (Drake), who now volunteers as a mentor at the Kibuli Boys' Home.



Nurse Sarah conducting a community health service program

We also participated in a number of events with the Cornerstone Development Safe Guarding team, where we taught in several schools about sexual violence against children, the rights of children, and child abuse (causes, prevention and reporting lines).

In the past few years, we have had some ongoing registration challenges surrounding our Kibuli Boys home that has held our program back in various ways. As we ended the year, we were happy to officially bring all the issues to a close and were granted full license to continue operating by the local authorities!

By Harriet Adongpiny



YIM program coordinators at a retreat with Sam Bironywa in Bujumbura, Burundi

Outreach Initiatives

Africa Youth Leadership Forum (AYLF)

Highschool Leadership Development (HLD)

& Youth Impact Mission (YIM)

One thing that has come out clearly in our work with student leaders at high school and university levels across the entire east African region this past year is the realization of mental health related issues amongst our 'frontliners'. It is something that we hadn't seen to this magnitude in the past, and addressing it in appropriate ways at this point in time has become a new mission for us.

It was in January of 2022; while at our annual University Campus coordinators' retreat in Makueni, Kenya, we began to really clearly see the reality of mental health related issues in our volunteer staff team. This came out of the small group sessions as the volunteer staff deeply shared on experiences and struggles they were going through. The team had arranged that we use the SASHET tool to guide the Small Group conversations.

SASHET is a connection tool within a small group to help members share at Heart Level and leads to deeper connection on how the members are feeling, heard, and valued. This enables more openness, clear communication among members while at the same time gets people comfortable talking

about their feelings and gives an immediate status update on the members participating.

During those small group sessions, it came out clearly that our leaders were struggling with a lot of mental health related issues. This example was in Kenya, but sooner than later, we discovered that it was a comparable situation among all our volunteers as we went on using the SASHET tool in the subsequent retreats in other countries around the same time in the region. We were charging our volunteers to go out there to lead and continue their roles and duties yet they were really hurting - they were wounded on the inside!

It was evident that not just the volunteers, but also our permanent and part-time staff too had a lot of mental health related issues they were dealing with; that they needed to heal if they were to go out lead and execute their roles and duties. As a community that seeks to apply the transformational spirit of Jesus in all that we do, we saw that we had a huge opportunity to work on a spirit of healing and spiritual growth in these young people's lives through the issues they are facing at this unique point in time.

The COVID-19 pandemic had left many of our leaders wounded and scarred. They had lost loved ones, others had gotten sick themselves, while those still in school had lost time because of distorted school schedules and university closures. These occurrences took a toll on our people and majority were left wounded.

It is at this point, we realized that we needed to make quick adjustment and find solutions to support our wounded leaders and volunteers to come through these difficult situations. Our programs are about people and relationships; and for us to do better, we needed to have frontliners who had come to terms with what was happening to them before they would lead and dispense healing to others.

The retreats helped us to create awareness about the issues; we were able to bring the issues of mental health to the surface through our seminars, workshops, and conferences. Emily Achayo - AYLFL Kenya - a professional counselor came on staff to provide professional support and help to whoever needed it. She availed herself and made it possible for everyone struggling to access her in person or online from across the region where we operate. We also want to appreciate Cornerstone Development head office for supporting the senior staff and other members of staff at AYLFL with funding to undergo counseling should the need for it arise.

We also had to re-align our programing to enable for more team building and fun activities; as well as incorporate increased personal time to enable members of our community to heal. Our new curriculum has elements of personal development such as self-awareness geared towards helping members of the community dig deeper into self-discovery and bring out any underlying issues/ wounds that need healing.

In Uganda for instance, our department's end-of-year newsletter newsletter was dedicated to the theme. In the issue, members of our community shared personal stories and experiences relating to mental health and other underlying issues of stress, depression, and a variety of struggles and how they dealt with them.

We have continued to understand more than ever how the world around us is creating more and more situations that are not going to make it any easier for anyone. The risks related to COVID-19 might have reduced, but Ebola in Uganda emerged recently, the economic difficulties - high inflation - have put more pressure on our members, the effects of the war in Ukraine, insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other things are heaping more pressure on members of our community. We can no longer take these experiences and how they affect our community lightly.

As long as we function, we shall continue to shine a spotlight on the need as well as find pathways to offer support and help to members of our community to navigate these issues.

By Allan Shepherd



Omar working with the Salaam Mentoring program in Kenya, visiting colleagues in Arusha, Tanzania



Enock sharing in a 'Doing Life Together' (YIM) small group in Kigali, Rwanda



Baraka and friends at an AYLFL workshop in Goma, DRC



AYLFL small group meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



Duncan speaking at the AYLFL gathering in Uganda

Cornerstone

Newsletter Pictorial



Launching a new chapter of BFA with COSA members in Arusha, Tanzania



Tim sitting down for some one-to-one mentoring over lunch at the end of year family of friends retreat in Kigali, Rwanda



Denis teaching a discipleship class at Ekitangaala THS



Ejalam sharing with colleagues at the end of year staff retreat Moshi, Tanzania



Residents hanging out at the Kigali Hostel

Advanced Leadership Initiative workshop in Jinja, Uganda





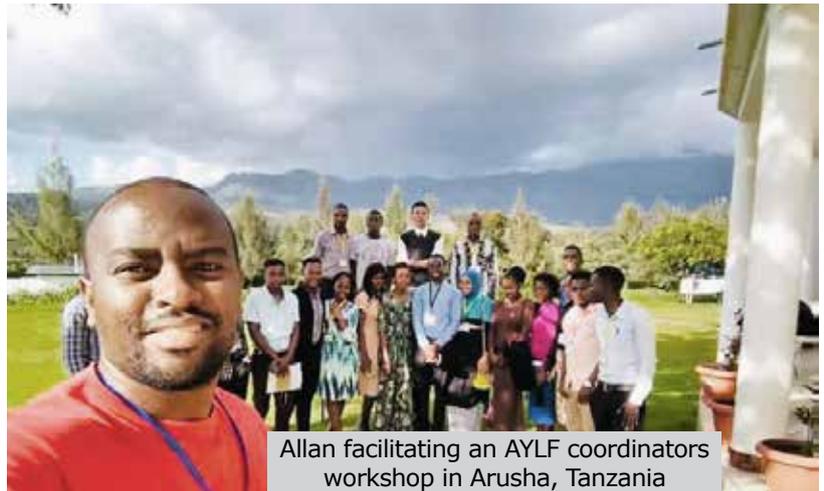
Coach Stone and Josephats visiting Baraka in Goma, DR Congo for a discipleship workshop



Praise and worship at the annual family of friends gathering in Kigali, Rwanda



Vocational Students at the Youth Corps Learning Center



Allan facilitating an AYLFC coordinators workshop in Arusha, Tanzania



Eric and some friends visiting the CLA Rwanda campus



Program volunteers having fun during the coordinators retreat, Burundi



Salaam mentoring program, small group at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania



Focus group session at the AYLFC annual gathering in Entebbe, Uganda

A Family of Friends!



Josephats, Mary, with Modeste visiting the Huye Hostel in Rwanda

Cornerstone Alumni Programs

Rwanda

As a community, we are devoted to long-term friendships, and as friends, we carry 'each other's weight' by caring for and watching out for one another in times of need. When one of us is struggling, the rest of us pitch in to help. But we are only human, so we inevitably hurt one another sometimes, and we have to learn to forgive and make up for it, just as God forgives us.

If you want to help others heal and grow, you need a support group of people who will be with you, encourage you, and hold you accountable to progress. Therefore, we have established venues for regular gatherings where people can teach and be taught by one another.

If you compare 2022 to the two years prior, you'll find that it's been an outstanding year. A year of rebirth, if you will. After two years with no major events, we weren't sure what to anticipate, but the community reacted warmly once we got back to it. We have seen wonderful things happen, like people gaining new jobs, getting married, graduating from colleges etc, despite the difficulties we have encountered as a community because of Covid-19.

We celebrated Women's Day this year with the ladies of CLA-Rwanda in March, which is commonly recognized as "Women's Month." Inspiring both the older women and the younger women at the school, this meeting provided a chance for everyone involved to learn from one another's perspectives and life experiences. The day's high point came when Talent Match gave internship opportunities to two girls in Form 6.

We organized a homecoming in June for former students to come back to the school, and it was a great success thanks to the large turnout.

There was a lot of growth and enjoyment. All of this was done to not only help older and younger generations better communicate with one another, but also to facilitate the development of meaningful mentor-mentee relationships.

We held men's small groups, marrieds fellowships, and monthly fellowships throughout the year. We urged people in Stage 3 to voluntarily participate in a mentorship journey with those in Stage 2 (members of our community who are at college) because, as the old adage goes, "if you want to travel fast, go alone, but if you want to go further, go together." We tasked them to share with the young people the wisdom they've gleaned in their own lives over the years. We made it possible for them to share their wisdom and guide someone else toward more positive decisions. These connections today are flourishing and growing.

This year, we were fortunate to also acquire the property of the "Cream House" in Huye, a hostel property in the south of Rwanda. So, our students there no longer have to worry about finding housing or a place to host their fellowships and gatherings. Our Kigali Hostel facility, too, is completely booked. These two spaces have been so useful for holding a variety of gatherings for all our family of friends community.

At stage 3, one of the biggest obstacles is that adults, with their many different jobs and obligations, rarely have free time to get together and socialize. We're aware of this, and we're modifying our get-togethers in order to accommodate their busy schedules, a fact that we try to work around.

We can only be grateful to God and the larger family of friends for making all this possible not only for us here in Rwanda but also for our other family across our region!

By Jackie Mbabazi & Modeste Ntaganda

Tanzania

In Stage 2 and Stage 3 of our work in Tanzania this past year, the major goal has been teaching and exploring the concept of Intentional Mentorship. We used it as the theme for our annual gathering, and a message that all our activities have pondered on with different members of our community.

Our highlights this year have been;

- Successfully partnering our Stage 3 members as mentors to Stage 2 members.
- The Women's day celebration that targeted our Stage 3 ladies connecting and deeply interacting with Stage 2 and CLA-TZ ladies.
- Stage 2 coordinators moving around different universities to visit and remind members of the value the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood holds.
- The Kreutters' + Cavins' visit that brought Stage 2 & 3 members in Arusha together to celebrate these long-term relationships.
- Old students returning to the academy to facilitate discipleship classes as a way of giving back.
- The Sisters' Reunion and the end of year family of friends get together.

One of the great things Cornerstone has blessed us with is the gift of friendship. The young and old are constantly reminded that they are not alone, that they have community and we have embraced the concept of being ready mentors waiting for the mentees.

As a 'wounded healer', it's my daily prayer to follow Jesus' example of how to comfort people in their difficult times. As a leader, I have learnt through a series of unfortunate events in my life, that becoming a healer is a process that develops from sometimes being wounded yourself, because then you are able to understand the pain of feeling helpless, needing comfort, feeling like the weight of the entire world is on your shoulders, and out of breath. I have realized that as I collapse to the ground in sorrow over a lost loved one, a friend, everything that depends on me collapses too.

Expectations at work and from friends might not be met. Sometimes the people we lead forget that we are human too and want us to provide emotional and physical support without understanding the various circumstances we also face.

Despite all these, we still have to sustain the stamina and responsibility to heal the wounded. Even when we are feeling weak, we ought to have the courage to inspire others, be the leaders who show up and show others the way. I am constantly reminded of how I was wounded, but God healed me, and now uses me to heal others and support them through trying times they may be undergoing so as to come out refined just like gold does.

Being the mother of two daughters has been an advantage to me while working with the COSA ladies. I advise them like I would advise my future grown up daughters and it becomes easier to advise and tell them reality. They quickly get a sense of both a sisterly and motherly advice.

The same stands true for the COSA marrieds group. Having gone through a couple of challenges as a married person, I have found out that sharing my own struggles with this group of approximately 42 couples creates a safe space for them to share theirs. From my own experiences, I am able to guide them in their efforts to heal. Recently, we had a number of couples experiencing marital hardships, and they found it easy to open up to me because I had been vulnerable with them with my own experiences. As a result, anyone who is going through the same can easily reach out to me for support and advice. All these give me a good understanding of being a Wounded Healer.

With members taking up ownership of the vision, becoming more willing to give back, striving for holistic individual growth, on all levels, plus positively picking up the new mentorship roles, I can boldly say this has been one of the best years yet!

By Magoli Waziri



"Sisters Camp" of Stage 3 ladies in Arusha, Tanzania

Uganda

This year has been a great opportunity for us in “Stage 2” to support and serve our brothers and sisters while learning from Jesus’ example as wounded healers. While we may not be perfect or even at our best, God has entrusted us with helping others get through difficult times by sharing our lives and our example.

Jesus was a radical individual who challenged social norms and presented us with new paradigms for living in the world. He could not help but be with others when he saw them in pain. Similarly, there are norms and boundaries within which we find ourselves operating while we do our day-to-day jobs. The methods we use to get our work done and attain our goals in office are often measured by a degree of ‘professionalism’. Supporting and empowering our members to develop into their full potential involves a great deal of concerted efforts in various programs, taking maximum care as we execute our duties in accordance with ethical concerns as well. Most of the time, we have to rush along quickly to get all our task for the day done. However, Jesus’ example of going the extra mile to be with people in their suffering, even when it was deemed improper, has taught us to keep in mind those who may seem like they are the least of our concerns. Like Jesus, we have learnt to sustain the flexibility to minister to the hurting beyond what is in our job descriptions.

We have discovered that Jesus’ kindness stems from the fact that he notices even the least of us. While Je-

sus was passing by, He noticed a man who had been blind from birth. Without regard to a busy schedule, Jesus helped those with disabilities who were considered a burden to society during his Ministry. Most of them were abandoned by their families due to these issues and had to rely on food and charity to survive. They were regarded as being of the lowest social class. They lacked both wealth and power to command the respect of others. But, Jesus noticed them and gave them time, even more-so than the wealthy and privileged. He notices even the least of us – because he knows our struggle.

We must prioritize God’s calling for us in our work, rather than man’s traditions. As a team, we occasionally find ourselves in situations when we must make compassionate decisions that are against the ‘status-quo’ and unpopular. Thankfully in instances where we had to, we have been able to take them to the benefit of the others. Following Jesus’ example has allowed us to witness a number of our wounded brothers and sisters get back on the course of their transformational journey - and this brings fulfillment on our part.

This year, we have been able to serve and support over 564 members in our Stage 2 work with university programs. We have seen some who were unable to complete their studies due to COVID 19 effects come back around and finally complete their studies. We have seen a good number of first-class degrees, and we’ve seen our members take on influential positions in their communities as a result of this. We can only say we are grateful for what has happened this year.

By Vasco Musinguzi



COSA Couples Breakfast Fellowship



ALI the Capstone Event where two alumni social-impact initiatives were awarded funding

In 'Stage 3' of our work, we have taken up the mission of "Seeking to create a lifelong brotherhood and sisterhood of friends, united in Jesus that will love and support one another while advancing a movement of transformational servant leaders in Uganda and beyond." In this, it is our responsibility to find ways to leverage our network of long-term relationships to restore hope to the hopeless, support those in need, connect members to opportunities to enhance their livelihood, etc. This I believe is a higher call to being wounded healers, and a deeper spiritual call to becoming a brother/sister's keeper.

This year particularly has been a very difficult one for our members. Many are dealing with job losses, heavy financial burdens from immediate family members, physical sicknesses, loss of loved ones, harsh business environments, to mention but a few. All this has tested our ability to support and be there for each other. We have all been wounded and left exposed by life's challenges... how then have we been able to watch over each other during this season?

Our approach has been around the following:

1) Promoting mentorship, nurturing & strengthening relationships through spaces of accountability in small groups, regional groups, & intergenerational networks.

Fellowships and joint gatherings are a big part of our community, and through these we have been able to hold each other accountable, find inspiration and pray for each other. This year, we conducted both physical and hybrid fellowships across the different regional groups and around Kampala. The theme for our fellowships has been on the COSA DNA; Things that we should be known for that is, Godly Character and Integrity, Leadership and Influence as well as Long term Relationships. In these fellowships, we have hosted our senior COSA members who have come to share their experiences and inspire us on direction of building a strong support network. Through the Advanced Leadership Initiative,

we have had older COSA members mentor emerging social entrepreneurs and help them build and reshape their social initiatives.

2) To support Christ centered transformational family life among our members.

Family is critical to any positive change in any society. We have therefore encouraged our members to raise up good families through supporting and providing platforms like couples fellowships, small house groups, peer one on one support, retreats, as well as supporting those getting married. Through these engagements, members are able to develop spiritual values to run their families, provide support for each other, be champions for good marriages in their communities and raise up children who are morally upright.

3) Equip & empower alumni with Business and Job Search skills for financial sustainability through providing relevant trainings, mentorship and promotion of a savings culture.

Finances remain a big challenge in living a decent life in this region. The job market and business world are never easy areas. Through our different interventions, we have directly supported 68 members to acquire jobs in the different organizations. We were able to conduct 4 business trainings and held a one day business exhibition which attracted 25 businesses. We currently have 256 members registered as part of our cooperative society that has improved on the savings culture for our members.

4) Mobilize a network of leaders & social entrepreneurs through a deliberate and collaborated effort that catalyzes transformational change in communities.

We currently have over 100 social entrepreneurs running several initiatives that provide services such as education, microfinance, water and sanitation, scholarships, empowerment trainings, medical services, mental & psychosocial support, mentorships and sports initiatives. This year we conducted an accelerator program and trained 20 emerging social entrepreneurs on basics of running an initiative and graduated them through our capstone event.

Leadership responsibilities have also been taken up in many different spheres. We currently have; 2 members serving in the parliament of Uganda representing thousands through their constituents. We have 49 pastors in churches who all are leaders of hundreds in their congregations. 4 of these pastors were elected as regional coordinators leading over 50 church leaders in a given region.

By Michael Eluku

South Sudan

Often times, the deepest wounds are those unseen by eyes and many of them go unnoticed due to our current fast-moving world. We are too busy and lost in the day-to-day activities that we seldom pause for a moment to listen to and catch the waves and vibrations, the people around us or our own selves are emitting. If we did just that, we would be able to hear the bleeding environment amidst the sounds of laughter and there would be no greater joy than providing a healing space to just one.

Jesus pointed us to this understanding in His teachings, and challenges us to reach out not just to ourselves but also to others. Jesus says we will find purpose and fulfillment in doing such things as making disciples, tending his sheep, and loving one another, among many others. These instructions reveal that our greatest responsibility is to others not self and in that process, we too gain complete healing as we provide it to other people.

In regards to that, we are glad that our department has seen members of our community reach out to others in different ways. One of our alumni, Ajok Mary, represented refugees at the UN assembly in New York, and another alumni, Yar Mary, founded Marie Medicinal Haven that works at skilling the youth and producing medical products and won a \$5000 award, and many others have joined the workforce with the government of South Sudan and different NGOs which has created opportunities for them to reach out to others.

Other big highlights this year have been that Yagub Daniel became the second best student at the Livingstone International University, Mundua Scholar was ranked the best student in the faculty of Human Resource management for Makerere University Business School - Mbarara. Toka Victor Given was elected as the Guild president - student council of Nkumba University and we had a number of other students elected in the different leadership positions at the different campuses.

At this year's stage III retreat held in Juba, we learnt that our alumni are gradually finding their places and voices in the community and causing transformation. We see these as great achievements because our community has grown to a level of competing and convincing

people of the values they stand for. Still on a high note, we gladly witnessed the first holy matrimony of one of our alumni Bakata Emmanuel.

One on one conversations have been a priority this year. Despite the challenges and setbacks brought along by Covid-19, we adopted the one-on-one strategy as a new and better way of connecting stage II and stage III members. It is true that these are hard times for many but with dependable people and mentors who share, guide, teach and walk with their mentees, our community can and will prevail.

Despite all the wonderful things that occurred, a small number of university students were negatively affected by the switch to online learning. Most of these students had to redo their studies and retake their exams. This also made them very busy which affected some of activities in the long run because their very tight semester school schedules hardly left them with time for anything else. This created gaps in keeping our community together and led to a few short-falls from our values and ending up wounded in one way or another.

As we end the year, we see these as learning points that we ought to focus on in the New Year. Closing such gaps that can cause more wounds as well as working and helping the students at every step of their journey to healing. And I believe, as we do so, we ourselves will continue to discover the places in our lives that need healing.

By Nelly Achola

LAOSA members meet Hon. Reath Tang in Juba



LAOSA Stage 3 retreat in Juba



Members at the COSA Business Expo highlighting the many ventures in our community

Long-range Alumni Study

We recently concluded a year long research project that looks at the long-range impacts of our programs on graduates of our Leadership Academy in Uganda. Focusing on alumni 10+ years after graduation, this project looked at jobs, family, and impact in leadership that our alumni have in comparison with a control group of comparable population unexposed to, or unassociated with, our work. As an exploratory study, this project began with the scope of alumni specifically origination from Eastern Uganda, and presents insights and an agenda for further research at a broader level. Here is a snap-shot of some of the significant findings:



Alumni are 3x more likely to initiate or be involved in community development projects



Alumni are 4x more likely to start their own ventures as a source of livelihood



Alumni are 10x more likely to earn higher wages in their career



Alumni are 2x more likely to have greater career ambitions than non-alumni



Alumni are more likely to have supportive social and professional networks than non-alumni



Alumni are more likely to complete higher education beyond Bachelors degree (i.e Master's)



Alumni are more likely to be actively involved in their children's development than non-alumni



Alumni are more likely to hold a leadership position in their place of work than non-alumni



Alumni are 3x more likely to be compelled to act by a sense of social responsibility, and give to charitable causes



Alumni are more likely to experience satisfaction with their life!

Wounded Healer

Six Aspects of a Leader as a Wounded Healer:

This year has been tough for many of us. We have gone through some difficult things but at the same time we are trying to help others who are also facing challenges. This idea of being 'wounded healers' has been a theme we have been reflecting on in our Cornerstone family of friends. Here are some thoughts related to this concept that I would like to expand on:

1. The Leader as a Healer. In our various programs of Cornerstone, taking up leadership is one of the core values which we champion. All good leaders serve as healers in their community on two levels:

a) First, they lead in a ways to address or heal problems in the communities where they lead. They find solutions for wrongs in society and bring healing across divisions in order to achieve unity and forge a way forward.

b) Secondly, they empower and help others to overcome their personal struggles. They are those who must be strong and give a shoulder for others to cry on. They are the ones others turn to for advice and encouragement - when they are struggling to cope with the hardships of life.

This "Leader as a Healer" concept can be seen in Jesus when he launched his manifesto in Nazareth at the beginning of his public campaign. He stood up in the temple, took up a scroll and read these words from the ancient Hebrew prophet, Isaiah, this is what he said referring to His mission: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the prisoners...and to comfort all who mourn." Lk.4:18

2. "The Leader As A Wounded Healer". However, one thing I know for sure is that those of us who take up leadership and strive to be there for others- are also struggling with challenges of our own. In other words, we too have been wounded in the battle-fields of life. Often while we are seeking to carry others, we ourselves are walking wounded.

So, much as we are trying to help others, to listen to their problems, to counsel and comfort other - we ourselves are having our own challenges! We are dealing with our own tough issues. The temptation in the face of this dilemma is to think: "Let me first finish all my own problems and when I am

100% ok - then I will think of helping others." But if we think this way we might spend our whole lives without helping others because problems and storms keep coming up right to the end of life. So, if want to fulfil the mission God has put us on earth to carry out - we must do what we can for others despite our own challenges.

3. There is no shame to admit that we ourselves at times get wounded. Various studies have shown that the leader who pretends to have no challenges is not as effective and valued as the leader who is open and honest within their teams. People tend to trust and can relate more to someone who is real and human like them. Being vulnerable creates more honesty and authenticity which strengthens the team spirit.

Here are some tips to cultivate some of this in your style of leadership: Be more humble and honest; Ask for advice when you are making decision; When you make a mistake, admit it and apologize; Listen to the counsel of your team to better your leadership.

4. Common Types of Wounds in Life. There are many categories or types of wounds that we can pick up in life. Here are a few:

- Wounds from Difficult Relationships
- Wounds from Loss of Loved One
- Wounds from Family Issues
- Physical Health Wounds
- Family Lineage Wounds
- Spiritual Wounds
- Poverty Wounds
- Emotional, Sexual, or Verbal Abuse



I am sure each of us has experienced some wounds from one or more of these categories. But if we are not able to do the tough work of healing – these wounds can become chronic and result in various states of illness including depression. So, that leads to the next aspect.

5. We can experience healing of our wounds. We are not meant to stay wounded forever. By remaining stuck in a victim mindset from the pain of our wounds, we hold back our own transformation. We can't see the greater gifts inherent in our wounds. We don't allow them to transform into strength and we don't dig deep for the lessons that we are meant to receive through them.

Emotional/psychological healing is the process of processing and learning from painful life experiences and distressing emotions. It often involves self-regulation, self-acceptance, and mindfulness. Cultivating healthy habits in the four spheres of life – spiritual, social, mental and physical are also important to healing.

6. Pathways to Healing. I do not consider myself an expert on this matter. So here, I just humbly share with you a few avenues towards healing that I am aware of or have found helpful in my own journey.

a) Reframing our painful stories: Reframing is the technique by which we shift how we have been viewing a painful experience and then changing the story we have created around it. For example instead of endlessly repeating how we were victimized in the past – we can instead shift to a narrative that emphasizes how we overcame that situation and moved on. In life, it's not necessarily the things that happen to us that “make or break us.” It is the story we create about what happened - that either empowers us or weakens us. Two people can experience very similar traumas but they can choose to process it and tell a story about differently.

b) Choosing forgiveness: Forgiveness does not mean what someone did to us was alright. It simply means we choose to let go of anger, revenge and resentment towards someone who hurt us. Forgiveness is one of the most powerful healing forces and it was a central tenet of Jesus' teachings.

c) Group or Family Therapy: This is where one or more trained counselors meet with a group of people at the same time to work through issues they have between themselves. It can be done with family members or as a group with people who have some sort of shared bond and are trying to resolve issues. One example of this is the “gacaca courts” that were set up in Rwanda within many communities after the genocide.

d) Individual Therapy/Counseling Sessions: This is simply where a counselor meets with you as an individual to help guide you on working through personal challenges.

e) A Support Group: We all benefit from having people in our lives with whom we can share our experiences and process our wounds as we pursue healing. In our Academies we set up “care groups” for this purpose. And, in our other programs we use ‘small groups’ as a way of helping our members learn the importance of cultivating a circle of friends to walk with through life's ups and downs. Throughout human history, a caring community of loving friends and/or family has always been one of the most effective ways for people to heal from life's traumas.

f) Working on our Selves. This refers to the whole process of self-reflection and developing greater self-awareness in order to understand and bring healing to unhealthy behaviors and thoughts. There are often aspects of our personality and patterns of behaviors that are a result of things that might have happened to us as far back as when we were children. Some of these things may be repressed or hidden from our awareness - yet they continue to influence our emotions and reactions. By examining things that “trigger us” (or provoke a strong reaction) we can bring to the light and find healing for an underlying wound or unresolved issue that is still affecting us.

g) Helping Others. There is something paradoxical about this whole ‘wounded healer’ concept (a paradox is something that at first does not seem to make sense – but when you look into it more deeply, you discover that it is actually the truth!) And this is the truth and the miracle that happens to wounded healers: As we begin to help others we activate greater blessings into our own lives and divine help begins to flow in a greater way into our lives.”

Conclusion: I love this saying: “One day you will tell your story of how you overcame what you are going through now and it will be someone else's survival guide.” Our wounds are meant to teach us to become compassionate and wiser. So, let us learn to work with those times when we get wounded and find the lessons within them in order to grow and to also guide others.

A wound that heals - normally leaves a scar which is often stronger than the original tissue prior to wounding. In a similar way, we can learn a lot and grow as we move through our tragedies and challenges. These experiences help us to empathize with and help each other. Through this whole process of being wounded healers we become better leaders.



The Leader as a “Wounded Healer” and Pathways to Healing

None of us gets through life without experiencing our fair share of adversity, challenges and suffering. In this world we all experience a mix of joys along with sorrows, and blessings along with losses.

Jesus spoke very directly to this point when he said, in one of my favorite verses: “In this world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33) And at another occasion he said: “no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake... will fail to receive a hundredfold in the present age... along with persecutions.” (Mk. 10:29). Of course, we don’t like that last bit but it’s a reality of our present human condition.

So, we all find this unavoidable mix of pleasant and unpleasant circumstances running through our entire life - like a set of parallel train tracks. Each day, there are things for which we can be grateful but at the same time each day there are disappointments and struggles to face.

I believe that one of life’s greatest challenges is to learn to move through life gracefully balancing gratitude and joy despite the ever-present challenge we

encounter. And furthermore, to work with the tough situations we go through in order to learn the lessons found in them, while also enjoying the beautiful, simple joys that life has to offer.

On this side of eternity - it’s hard to appreciate the spiritual benefits and growth that our souls gain from all this adversity we experience. It only begins to make sense to us when we realize that this human life is designed with the purpose of awakening, growing and developing souls. Everything we experience as a human on planet Earth contributes to that end.

This realization helps us to see that life as we know it on earth, without its struggle and its strife, its puzzles and problems, its inequalities and injustices - would have lacked the necessary conditions for souls to be able to progress in a manner suitable for their destiny. And, so this is the only logical conclusion I have found to the riddle of the ages: “Why does God allow suffering”?

Certainly, if all things were easy and simple within the Earth experience, there wouldn’t be much for human beings to work out. But, in its current challenging state, there has always been sufficient work to occupy humanity with each successive generation. As the scriptures put it we must all learn to turn our trials into gold.

Ultimately, however, we find hope in the promise that when the purpose of Earth as a difficult place, as a place of suffering, as a ‘school of hard knocks’ - will be fulfilled, then Earth, too, will be made anew and the kingdom of God will come on earth. There has always been a constant divine effort towards the transformation and redemption of “all things.” And, each of us who come into this world is tasked, as part of our growth and development, to contribute to this grand process. We are meant to work on changing our personalities to be more Christ-like and to bring in the kingdom of God to our spheres of influence in society.

