



# The Shaarda News



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## Testimonies from Obule by Josh

Celebrating the New Year feels like a distant memory. In fact, we have traveled 7,500 miles east and I now found myself nestled in the small wooden chair in the church in Obule, a small village outside of Soroti. This church is not impressive by human standards: mud walls, cow dung floor, and grass-thatched roof. However, it is home to 15 committed church members (from 3 different churches) who have been taking the Timothy Leadership Training (TLT) course.

On our first morning together I reminded them about our last course, "Caring for God's People." I asked them what difference that training made in their church's ministry. Here are a few of the answers:

Pastor Emmanuel: *In the past we only prayed for people but never visited them in their homes. The TLT gave us focus. We see that we, not the government, are responsible to care for people. Even unbelievers appreciate our team that visit's the sick. They know it began with this training.*

Charles: *Our church now has a team to visit people with HIV. The team visited one woman who shared her biggest practical problems: transport to town to get the needed drugs, good food for a balanced diet, and friendship when she is sick. Our team prayed for her and she experienced healing from her constant headaches. Our team also gives her money to get to town each month to get the drugs she needs.*

Margret: *In the twenty years since I was saved I have never attended a training. The TLT is the first training to come to our village. I now see that my things are not my own, but I need to share with people in need. I used to fear sharing God's word with people who have HIV, but now I know how to approach them.*

This month we began teach about Christian Stewardship. The first day we talked primarily about giving generously. We looked at ways to promote generous giving in the church. We also discussed obstacles to generosity and how to overcome those obstacles. The second day we talked about stewardship at home: taking care of the resources God has entrusted to each one of us.

At the end of the training, Pastor Martin had this to say: *"We find it amazing that every time you come this training gives us completely new ideas. We have only been teaching spiritual things like prayer and faith. Now we see that practical things like working hard, managing your time, and taking care of your body are all spiritual things."*



## Update from Soroti by Mandy

While we were in Michigan many of you were touched by the story we shared of Betty. (Also featured in our September newsletter.) We want you to know that Betty got a brand new pair of school shoes and books for school, thanks to many of you. She is very thankful. Thank you, most of all, for praying for Betty and other children here like her.

We also are sad to let you know that baby Rukiya died. (She is also in the September newsletter; we also shared about her in MI.) When we returned to Soroti I went to market to greet the great-grandmother and see how Rukiya was. I found out that Rukiya died November 21. Apparently she was sick and not taken for care in time. I was so sad. Poor innocent

Rukiya suffered and died. It is so frustrating because she didn't need to die. We helped save a



life only for her to die. It makes me so upset. Her death is really the result of sin. The mother slept with a guy; the guy didn't care for her or the baby and left for someone else; the mother is HIV positive and dies; Rukiya is now HIV positive and sick; grandmother doesn't care for her; and Rukiya - who did nothing and had no choice - died.

If only people knew God and lived His way. Rukiya then would have been born into a Christian home with a father and mother who loved each other and her. There would be no sickness, no unwantedness, and no death. God's heart must break to see people repeatedly go against His ways and cause so much pain and suffering. Some people blame God - He could have saved Rukiya and take suffering away - it is true. But it isn't His fault; it is ours. We choose to sin and suffering is the result. The devil loves it. His goal is to destroy us. God is the only answer. He is our hope. He is the peace in a messed up world, the One we can trust in. Again, that is why we are here in Uganda. We want to bring that hope, that peace, that true life in Christ to those who aren't living it and don't know it.

Our Chinese friends who are here working on the road are winding down and preparing to leave. One of our closest friends, "T", already returned to China. Josh met with T the day before he left and was thankful to hear him talk about how interesting he finds his Bible. Our teammates gave Chinese Bibles to many of the workers several months ago. T said he had packed his Bible to take back to China. He and a co-worker had been reading it every day. T said he refused to leave it behind so he was glad when the co-worker also received a Bible. Please pray that God's word will take root and produce fruit in the hearts of these men.

#### Items of Prayer

- ★ Thank God for a wonderful time in Michigan. We were able to share with many of you what God is doing here in Uganda. We were also kept safe in all our travels.
- ★ Thank God for Luka who turned one on January 14 and is now walking!
- ★ Thank God for the work He is doing in the church leaders in Obule. Pray for Josh as he continues to lead the Timothy Leadership Trainings in Obule and three other village centers. May God raise up godly leaders here in Ateso region.
- ★ Pray for the children here in Soroti. Every day we are struck by the suffering and needs of the children. Pray that God gives us wisdom to know how to share His love with them and how to help them.
- ★ Pray for our new team members, Bobby and Rachel Kolb. May God lead them and use them in the lives of children and youth during their year in Soroti.
- ★ Pray that God provides a teacher for Lydia and Grace.



\*Check out our blog ([shaarda.blogspot.com](http://shaarda.blogspot.com)) to read about our adventure back to Soroti, see pictures, and much more!

*Thanks,  
Josh, Mandy, Lydia, Grace, & Luka*

Send Support to: International Teams 411 West River Road Elgin, IL 60123  
Note: for the Support of Josh & Mandy Shaarda Thank-you for Partnering with us!