

Orphans of Rwanda *update*

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OUR MISSION

Orphans of Rwanda, Inc. (ORI) is dedicated to helping orphans and other socially vulnerable young people in Rwanda pursue a university education and ultimately become leaders in fostering economic development and social reconciliation. ORI provides holistic support—including tuition, housing, health care and a range of supplemental training programs—to ensure that its students are prepared to excel.

ORI Welcomes Its Newest Class!

This fall, ORI proudly welcomes our fifth class of talented students into our program. From a competitive pool of 1,475 applicants, ORI awarded scholarships to 47 young people—26 women and 21 men. Prospective students submitted written applications along with their secondary school grades, and we tested the language skills of 475 of them. After interviewing 135 finalists, we selected the incoming class of 47 based on their demonstrated academic success, motivation to attend university, career aspirations and socioeconomic vulnerability. The entire ORI team—students, Board members and staff—extend our heartfelt congratulations to the class of 2012!



Meet Some of ORI's New Students

Tharcisse Ngarukiyintwali is the head of his household. He started working as a night watchman at a sports club to pay for his secondary school. After completing secondary school, he enrolled in a computer training course and earned a certificate that has enabled him to teach computer skills to others.



Marie Rosette Niwewarwego, from Butare, loves accounting and proved it by earning an impressive score on her national exam. Her goal is to open her own accounting firm so that she can one day be able to support her family.



Sibylle Ugirase, a young woman from the town of Nyacyonga, encountered many difficulties as a single parent orphan, but she studied diligently and scored highly on the national exam. Sibylle was awarded the First Lady prize for secondary school girls who received outstanding marks on their national exams.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

ORI Student Selected as a Google Student Ambassador

Google recently selected Simon Mvunabandi, a second-year ORI student at the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), to serve as the Google Student Ambassador to KIST. During his one-year term, Simon will work with KIST faculty and Google engineers to design and facilitate a number of events on campus that will promote technology and provide the student body with unique learning opportunities.

After working only two weeks as an intern at Peak Performance Specialists Limited, a Kigali-based IT company, Simon had demonstrated his talent and was offered a position, which he accepted. Simon's exemplary work ethic and professionalism have set him on the path toward a successful career in IT. His new position as a Google Ambassador will give him the opportunity to share his computer skills with other students.

Julie Lelek, one of ORI's Rwanda-based Program Managers, spoke with Simon about his work with computers and his reaction to being selected as a Google Student Ambassador.

Julie: What is your favorite course at KIST and why?

Simon: My favorite course is Web Design, because the subject is so interesting. The Web can help people share information so easily, and I find that fascinating. In our department, all of the courses complement each other, and the faculty makes everything very enjoyable.

Julie: What are your main responsibilities in the IT Support department at Peak Performance?

Simon: My duties include troubleshooting computer problems; answering client questions regarding company-supported applications; implementing and configuring networks; providing recommendations on company

applications; ensuring that all of our clients' anti-virus software is installed and working correctly; serving as a liaison between administration staff and the technology department; and documenting problems and resolutions for future reference.

Julie: That's an impressive list of tasks you're in charge of! In your new leadership role as a Google Student Ambassador, what is the first thing you plan to do at KIST?

Simon: The first thing I'm going to do is teach my fellow students how to use Google and show them all the advantages it can give them when they're doing research.

Julie: How did you feel when Google told you that you were going to be their Student Ambassador?

Simon: I felt full of joy and happiness! I knew that I was taking another step in my life, and serving the community is one of my aims. I am doing my best to make the world a better place.

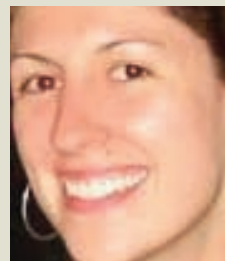
Spotlight: New Additions to the ORI Team



Stephanie Nyombayire, Service Delivery Officer

Stephanie graduated from Swarthmore College in 2008 with a concentration in political science and a minor in psychology. She co-founded the Genocide Intervention Network in 2004 and has taken a leadership role to help stop the genocide in Darfur. Her

2005 journey to several Darfurian refugee camps is documented in the film "Translating Genocide." In early 2008, Rwanda's First Lady Jeannette Kagame honored Stephanie as a Young Rwandan Woman Achiever.



Becca Schendel, Program Manager

Becca joins Orphans of Rwanda from the University of Maryland, where she was the Coordinator of Semester Programs in the Study Abroad Office. While at Maryland, Becca managed five study abroad programs and spearheaded UM's new program development, including establishing a service-based summer program that

connected Maryland students with HIV+ youth in northern Cameroon. Becca holds a Masters of Education in Higher Education Administration from Harvard University and a B.A. in African History from Brown.



Emmanuel, Christine, Frank

Becoming Part of the Mission

Reflections from Christine Chiu, ORI's Former Program Manager in Kigali

Frank and Emmanuel are inseparable. They lived in the same group house during their pre-university training and sat next to each other in French and computer classes. They were ecstatic about being admitted to the same university last fall—the School of Finance and Banking. They also used to share a cell phone and would pretend to be the other when I called, laughing at my confusion. It always brightened my day when they would visit me at the office, usually in tandem, slapping me high fives and inquiring about my weekend.

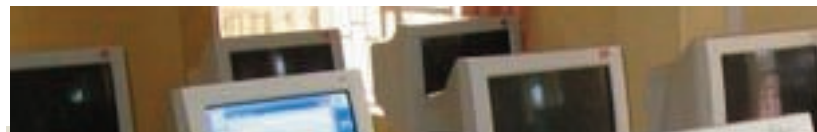
Though they in many ways act like typical teenagers, Frank and Emmanuel have experienced hardships that are anything but typical. Both were orphaned by the Rwandan genocide and the HIV/AIDS epidemic at an early age, and struggled to survive as refugees in Uganda and Burundi, respectively. They found menial jobs and relied on the support of surviving family members to put them through secondary school. Through hard work and perseverance, Frank and Emmanuel both earned spots in ORI's program last year.

The opportunity to meet and work with individuals like Frank, Emmanuel and the rest of the ORI students was an eye-opening experience for me. I learned so much from them: from how one might go about juggling enormous tasks like learning English, taking care of younger siblings, and starting university, to how to throw my hands up and “shake it” on the dance floor, Rwandan-style. But what sticks with me the most from my time in Rwanda is the importance of optimism.

Many of our students experienced the worst the world has to offer, yet they remain some of the most ambitious and forward-looking individuals with whom I have crossed paths. While they aim for financial prosperity, our students' aspirations stretch far beyond material success. Each one dreams of changing the country, and the world, for the better—whether as a social worker, a business person, or even the president of Rwanda.

They believe in the possibility of a better world and are determined to contribute to its realization, despite having witnessed almost inconceivable atrocities and tragedy.

Though part of my job was to serve as a role model for the students, they in fact became my role models. Joking with Frank and Emmanuel, discussing career options with the graduating students, preparing our new students to begin their university studies, the students' optimism and ambitions for the future have inspired me to emulate their values in my own life. When I signed on to work with Orphans of Rwanda, I knew the mission of the organization was to educate young people. Little did I know that I myself would be one of them!



New ORI Computer Lab Thanks to the Left to Tell Charitable Foundation

The Left to Tell Charitable Foundation is having a huge impact on our students' lives through its generous support of a new ORI computer lab as well as its sponsorship of a 10-week intensive computer training course our new students will attend before they begin their university studies. The brand-new computer lab, complete with 18 desktop computers, has already been built at our Kigali office. It will help all our students improve their computer skills by dramatically increasing their access to the Internet and a range of software programs. Rwanda's increasing focus on information technology has made top-notch computer skills a requirement for both academic and professional success. All of us are extremely grateful to the Left to Tell Charitable Foundation for its investment in our students!

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Above: Nicholas Rutikanga and Julliet Busingye

ORI Students Visit the U.S. this Fall

ORI is thrilled to announce that two of our students, Julliet Busingye and Nicholas Rutikanga, will visit the U.S. this fall. They will be speaking at ORI events that will take place in various cities and they will also attend an American university for a week. The kick-off event for the trip will be held on Tuesday, October 21, at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan. Tickets are available for purchase on our homepage. Stay tuned for more details about other events that will be held across the country.

Visiting Student Profiles

Nicholas Rutikanga

Nicholas's passion for mathematics and physics earned him a scholarship to a government secondary school, and later enabled him to gain admission to the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST). Nicholas now studies civil engineering and environmental technology; he particularly enjoys courses in drafting, computer programming, nuclear physics and mathematics. When he graduates, Nicholas hopes to work as a construction engineer, working on airports and houses in Rwanda, with an eye to starting his own business.

Julliet Busingye

A second year student at the Kigali Institute for Science and Technology (KIST), Julliet is working towards completing an International Advanced Degree in Computer Science. Her courses include advanced work in database development, system analysis and Web development. Julliet also serves as president of the Orphans of Rwanda Student Government Association and has acquired leadership skills she hopes to use in her future career. She plans to find a job with a computer company in Rwanda after graduation and to start an organization that serves Rwandan women, teaching them about computers and motivating them to achieve their goals.