

# Our·ganda Newsletter




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*21 baptisms -  
so far!*

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## Addiction **Recovery** Comes to Bundibugyo

Dear Friend,

**What would you think** if you saw a young man with ragged shorts wearing a T-shirt with the word “WASTED” in capital letters?

Here’s what you’d think: *Loser. Troublemaker. Angry. Possibly dangerous. Probably higher than a kite most of the time.*

- His father died when Mathew was a toddler – and left enough kids to field an entire soccer team.
- His mother had no money, so Mathew and his siblings couldn’t attend school.
- No one his age had a job because good luck finding a job in a zero-income village.
- By default, Mathew ended up in a band of brothers where everyone spewed fire-fangled words, fought and connived to find drugs, and spiraled ever deeper into dysfunction and despair.

**When Justine and Robert found Mathew, however, they didn’t think WASTED.** They instead saw a young man with potential. A heart that probably longed for something better. A person God loves. Someone who, with some patience and guidance, might start to think about the future, might someday make good choices, might even become a kind, strong, even courageous leader.



But how did Justine and Robert even meet this troubled soul in a little village called Kakuka in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains?

- Step Seven (stepseven.org) is an addiction recovery ministry based in Colorado. Their director, Tom, learned about Ourganda's ministry in western Uganda. After considerable discussion and prayer, Tom and two of his colleagues decided to join Ourganda's mission trip to Bundibugyo last summer.
- Tom, Ben, and Shane fell in love with the beautiful people in our villages. They learned that alcohol and drug addiction decimates thousands. They were shocked that in all of western Uganda, no church, no nonprofit, no government entity has an addiction recovery program.
- Step Seven offered to partner with Ourganda. "How about if we pay for salaries for two leaders?" Tom inquired. "They could start recovery groups in your villages. Your team knows the culture, has contacts with responsible leaders, and is already highly respected. Our team has experience with recovery groups on this side of the ocean. Let's find out if what works here will help the addicted over there!"

Vincent, our Ugandan leader, recommended that we hire Justine (a Pentecostal pastor) and Robert (an elder in an Adventist church), both of whom had personal experience with addiction. We agreed to start with four villages. In the center of each village, Robert set up a speaker and a microphone connected to a 12-volt battery and Justine invited everyone who struggled with alcohol or drugs to join a recovery group that would meet every week starting next Tuesday.

### **Wasted Becomes Rescued**

Mathew and some of his friends decided to check it out. They sat in a circle and listened to Justine talk about God's love; they paid attention when she prayed and read stories from the Bible. They returned to the group the next week, the week after that, and every week.

### **A few weeks ago, Mathew decided to become a follower of Jesus!**

Three months after the Ourganda van rolled into those villages with Step Seven leaders and high hopes, 21 former addicts have been baptized. Every week, between 100 and 120 men and women meet for teaching, support, prayer, and commitment. People are dreaming who never before thought beyond today. Men are kinder to their wives. Young people perform acts of compassion for people in their village who need a hand up. ***God is surprising pretty much everyone with astonishing transformation.***



**I say it's time to buy a new shirt for Mathew to replace his old one. How about a T-shirt that says "RESCUED"**

Ourganda is excited about our villages. Our teams are igniting hope. So many fantastic things are happening that encourage us to keep focused and stay the course so that someday, every man, every woman, and every child will feel safe, happy, and healthy.



## **A Note from Ourganda's Director**

Please let us know how you would like to help. You can choose between a one-time gift or (even better) a monthly donation. Every dollar you give empowers our team to ignite hope in one more heart.

**Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!**