



KICONCO:

When a young woman in Georgia, USA, saw a picture of a family in her homeland of Uganda, she knew she wanted to help them.

By Breanna Call Herbert

Bring! As Kiconco B. sat in her home in Georgia, USA, another picture came into her mom's inbox. It was from Kiconco's uncle who was working in Uganda, the country where Kiconco had been born 12 years earlier. Kiconco expected to see the pictures and texts that her uncle sent every Sunday, but what she didn't expect was the impact this picture would have on her and her summer.

AN INSPIRED PICTURE

In the picture, a group of children were huddled together. Normally, Kiconco and her mom looked at the pictures and then deleted them, but this time, the Spirit inspired them not to. Kiconco looked at the children more closely. "They were wearing clothing that was ripped and didn't fit them

properly," Kiconco, now 13, says.

"They were wearing rags," Kiconco's mom adds.

Kiconco was especially drawn to the two girls in the picture. She asked her uncle about

them and found out that they were sisters being raised by their widowed grandmother, Nuliati. Her uncle then sent another picture of the two girls with their grandmother in front of their home, which had dirt floors and grass for a roof. Kiconco's mom says, "They were standing right in front of their little house that was so beat up." When the rainy season hit Uganda, their home would turn into a mud puddle. This made it hard for the family to cook because they couldn't light a fire. It also made it difficult to sleep because there wasn't a dry place to lie down.



Above: Kiconco and her mom were prompted not to delete this photo. Below: Her uncle later sent another photo of Nuliati and her granddaughters.

DECIDING TO HELP

This picture touched Kiconco. She told her mom, "I'm going to help this family." At first Kiconco decided she was going to send her clothes to the two girls in the picture. But then she says, "I decided to think bigger and brainstormed with

12-YEAR-OLD
HOME BUILDER



Kiconco worked hard and did many different jobs to raise money for Nuliati's home.

my mom. Sending clothes wasn't enough. It would help them more just to have a house. They had clothes. They just needed a house more." And so Kiconco decided to raise money to give them a home.

When Nuliati heard that Kiconco was going to help them get a house, she fell to her knees and cried. She had been praying that God would help her. Kiconco's mom says, "She got to the point that she suffered so much that she thought God didn't know she existed." But God had been listening to Nuliati's prayers, and they were answered in a unique way.

A SUMMER OF SACRIFICE

Kiconco knew she would have to raise money to help give the family a home. She decided to complete small projects and to send the money to her uncle in Uganda, who had found a contractor to build the house. It would take a lot of time and energy, but Kiconco went to work. She says, "When you help people and serve them, it makes you feel good. And it makes them happy—and everyone around you."

She babysat, made and sold bread, watched people's dogs, and painted fingernails. Every day, Kiconco tried to find projects so she could continue to raise enough money to build the house. She packed and moved boxes, cleared poison ivy, harvested corn,

and washed decks. Little by little Kiconco made progress toward her goal. As she earned money, she sent it to her uncle so that the contractor could start building Nuliati's home.

Raising money was hard work, and every now and then, Kiconco was worn out. "Sometimes I didn't want to work anymore. I just wanted to stay home," she says. Kiconco's mom adds, "She really was sacrificing her whole summer." But on those days, Kiconco felt God helping her move forward.

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RECEIVING HELP

Kiconco's mom started a GoFundMe page and posted about Kiconco's project on social media. A stranger from Chicago saw the post and told her grandson about it. He donated the money he earned from mowing grass. One of Kiconco's school teachers told her Sunday School class about Kiconco's goal. The members were so touched that they donated money. One of Kiconco's friends also told her grandmother about it. Her grandmother told the members of her church, who were so happy to hear about it that they also donated money. A woman from Kiconco's ward also sewed a quilt and sold it to raise money for the family. Kiconco's friends and family donated to the cause too. Overall, 35 people donated money to Kiconco's project.





When Kiconco started receiving help from others, she said, "Wow! This could actually work!" From the support of others, Kiconco gained an extra boost of energy and found more work. Finally, after many hours of hard work, Kiconco had raised enough money to finish building Nuliati's home.

ONE STEP FURTHER

The week before Nuliati and her granddaughters moved into their new home, it rained every single day and night, and the little grass roof the family slept under didn't keep out the water. Their new home had a tin roof and cement floors. Here, they could sleep and cook during the rainy season.

Even though the home was finished, Kiconco knew the family didn't have any furniture. In fact, they had never owned beds or even blankets. Kiconco wanted to help but didn't know what else to do, because they had sent all of the money they had raised, and there weren't any more jobs for them to do to raise money.

Then Kiconco told her mom, "I think you might need to take the money from my savings account and go and buy them three beds so they don't have to sleep on the cold cement floor."

The next morning, Kiconco's mom prepared to go to the bank but felt she should wait for the mail to come before she went. When the



Have you or someone you know provided an act of extraordinary service like Kiconco? Share it with us by emailing newera@ldschurch.org. We can't wait to hear from you!

mail finally came, to Kiconco's surprise, she found two envelopes that each had a check donating to the project. Kiconco's mom says, "We opened the mail, looked at each other, and laughed. We almost did a dance!" Now, Kiconco had just enough money to buy furniture for the family. She says, "I knew God was helping me."

Kiconco immediately sent the money to her uncle, who bought the family three beds, blankets, a table, and chairs.





With help from Kiconco's donations, the home for Nuliati and her granddaughters was built.

A FINISHED HOUSE

When the truck pulled up with the furniture, the family was so happy and grateful. Kiconco's mom says, "Even after they moved in, they felt like it was a dream. They were just amazed at the whole thing."

Kiconco says, "It made me happy to finally look at the family's home and to look back at what I had done. It was awesome!" To other youth who want to help others, she says, "Just have faith. You can do anything if you believe you can."

Kiconco's mom adds, "It really strengthened our faith because we never got stuck in any stage of building the house. Every time we ran out of funds, something big would happen."

Nuliati and her two granddaughters still walk barefoot and don't have electricity. But when they walk home in the drenching Uganda rains, they can dry off, cook a meal, and rest. Kiconco says the most important thing she learned was that "when we serve others, we are serving God." Kiconco's small and simple projects came together to bless a family. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Marty Arrington, a director of Church public affairs in Georgia, USA, contributed to this article.



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