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Burned Teen from Uganda Finds Hope, Help and Healing at Shriners' Hospital in Boston

Team Engeye, ChooseANeed, Just Cause, Compassion in Action, Senator John Kerry, Senator Edward Kennedy, Congressman John Lewis, Congressman Michael McNulty, Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel Conley and Many Others Work Together to Help Susan

Albany, New York ([PRWEB](#)) April 30, 2008 -- Young Susan Nabukenya never expected to see the world outside the boundaries of her tiny Ugandan village. Few of her friends or family did either. Such is life in impoverished rural Africa. However, Susan's prospects were far more dire than most. A tragic and fateful day early in her childhood changed her life in one horrifying instant. Her kerosene-stained dress had caught fire while she helped her mother cook a family meal over an open fire, and severe burns covered much of her tiny body. Her burns had been left to heal with no medical supervision, and her badly scarred leg never had the chance to heal properly. Walking inevitably re-opened her wounds, and the pain was excruciating. Susan was denied most of the pleasures that makes childhood and adolescence special. She couldn't play with her friends, and she was missing much of her schooling. Susan's mother passed away shortly after the accident, leaving Susan with her paralyzed grandfather who could be of little help to her. The prospects for this shy young woman were grim indeed.

Then one day in 2006, word came to Susan that a small clinic had just opened its doors in a nearby village. A remarkable group of medical professionals and students were in place to bring medical care to local villagers for the first time ever. Team Engeye knew when they met Susan that her needs far eclipsed the limited capabilities of the fledgling clinic which had no electricity or running water. If she were to have a chance for a normal life, she would need to have access to sophisticated surgical techniques and extensive physical therapy in the United States. It was a daunting task for anyone, but for this group of financially and academically-stressed medical students, it seemed almost insurmountable.

But now, fast-forward to early 2008. Susan will board a plane in Kampala, Uganda, on May 12th for an all-expenses-paid journey to the Shriners' Hospital in Boston where a team of surgeons and physical therapists will help her turn her life around. The list of questions and hurdles that at times seemed endless is now a footnote in Susan's story.

Just weeks ago, it appeared that all the work and energy that had been invested on Susan's behalf might be for naught when John Kalule's travel visa was denied. John is Engeye's co-founder and general manager who has donated his land and his life to the clinic, and who has been given legal responsibility for Susan's travel and medical decisions. He is Team Engeye's priceless Ugandan connection, and is an essential link in the collaboration that makes this project unique. Susan's visa was in-hand, but without John to chaperone her, the trip could not happen. It was this last-minute crisis that would make team Engeye aware of just how resourceful, dedicated and passionate its network of friends could be. Within hours of John's devastating phone call, with Susan in tears as her impossible dream seemed to be once again impossible, the wheels of compassion began to turn.

A virtual torrent of communications poured into the US Embassy in Kampala, Uganda, imploring that officials reconsider their decision, led by team members in Boston and Atlanta. Congressman John Lewis (D-GA), Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Congressman Michael McNulty (D-NY) and Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel F. Conley (Boston) jumped into the fray, and either made personal phone calls to the embassy or offered extended assistance during Susan and John's stay in the United States. By the next day, John's visa was approved.

In attempt to give Susan back all the years in school she never had, a scholarship fund has been set up to enable Susan to begin schooling upon her return to Uganda and continue through graduate education. Please visit [ChooseANeed.org](#) to donate to Susan's scholarship and [Engeye.org](#) for Susan's entire story and links to updated blogs. A photojournalist will accompany the next team to the clinic in February 2009 to document Susan's return to her new life in her village.

We welcome anyone who is interested in Susan's story to join her friends and supporters at the Boston Logan Airport at 2:30 PM on Monday, May 12th, to welcome Susan and John as they begin this incredible journey. We invite you to visit [Engeye.org](#) to purchase a red Engeye T-shirt (Susan's name is listed under t-shirt) and become a member of our team!

Team Engeye would like to thank all those who pitched in to bring this dream to fruition:

- Shriners' Hospital for Children in Boston: Providing all plastic surgery and rehabilitation at no cost.
- Choose a Need ([chooseaneed.org](#)): Donated round-trip airfare for Susan and John.
- Just Cause, Inc. ([jcause.org](#)): Lorrie King has coordinated all ongoing project needs, and has provided links to numerous social service agencies and friends on the inside.
- Compassion in Action/Koinonia Primary Care ([drbobcares.org](#)): Dr. Bob initially saw Susan as a patient at Engeye Health Clinic in Uganda, and Yolanda Caldwell has set up Susan's blog. Compassion in Action will assist in coordinating the scholarship fund for Susan.
- Dr. William Primomo and Dr. Robert Herzog: The office of Dr. William Primomo and Dr. Robert Herzog of Albany, NY have donated supplies for Susan and John.
- Bryan Meltz Photography ([bryanmeltz.com](#)): Bryan is creating a photo documentary of Susan's journey
- Theresa Weinman, Staff and Students at AMC: Theresa Weinman has been the rock behind Susan's entire project, coordinating all aspects of Susan and John's stay.
- In response to a request for help from Albany Medical College students involved in this effort, Albany Medical Center reached out



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to federal representatives in its service area and all took steps to help. Notably, Congressman Michael McNulty's (D-NY) office placed a call to the embassy in Uganda and was one of the first to report back that the Visa had been approved.

- CARE USA (care.org): Derreck Kayongo, a fellow Ugandan and CARE's Regional Advocacy Coordinator, created the fast friendship with Congressman John Lewis (D-GA).
- Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) and Staff Assistant Tuere Butler, Senator John Kerry (D-MA), Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel F. Conley (Boston): All of these wonderful supporters stepped above and beyond their business duty and made a dream come true for a girl who had lost all hope.
- Chetan Payne and Maria DeVito, residents of Avellino, Italy: Collected funds to help with food and shelter during Susan and John's stay in Boston, and shipped travel bags to them in Uganda.
- Suffolk County District Attorney's Office: Jackie Lamont is providing housing and parenting for John and Susan during their entire stay in Boston.

To follow Susan's journey over the next few months or to find out how you can help, please visit: <http://teamsusansstory.blogspot.com>

ENGEYE HEALTH CLINIC

The Engeye Health Clinic was established in 2006 by three medical students, Stephanie Van Dyke, Misty Richards, and Brooke Richards, in collaboration with two key Ugandans, John Kalule and Laurence Makana Sitati. Anny Su, a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture student at USC, is a new member of the Engeye Board of Directors. Despite the rigors of medical school, the team is in daily contact across the globe, bringing sustainable healthcare to Ddegeya Village in southern Uganda for the first time ever. For more information, visit: www.engeye.org.

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