

PCAU PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

PCAU and Uganda Cancer Institute to Host Joint Biennial Conference

The Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) and the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) will host their 3rd biennial [Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care](#) on Sept 23-24, 2021. Due to COVID-19, the conference will be a hybrid format with in-person and virtual sessions. The in-person sessions will be held at Serena Hotel Kampala.

The 3rd Uganda Conference On Cancer and Palliative Care

Cancer and Palliative Care in Covid-19 and Other Challenging Situations.

Hosted by
The Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) and
The Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU)

The theme for this year is “Cancer and Palliative Care During COVID-19 and Other Challenging Situations.” PCAU’s collaboration with UCI continues to be important for both palliative care and cancer care in Uganda and supports the integration of palliative care into Uganda’s health care system. UCI is Uganda’s leading cancer treatment, research and teaching center. The conference typically draws up to 600 local and international participants – including Center for Hospice Care/Hospice Foundation staff. Attendees include a variety of palliative care stakeholders such as palliative care-trained nurses and clinical officers, program administrators and many others who champion the development of palliative care not only in Uganda, but across Africa and globally. It is a valuable opportunity for practitioners, scientists, academicians, researchers and students to share the latest information and developments on cancer and palliative care.

Full Circle – Stephen Kasula, Road to Hope Program Graduate, Has Returned to PCAU to Support Other Children

Stephen became a student in the Road to Hope (RTH) program in November of 2012 with the goal of becoming a clinical officer (which requires training similar to that of a physician assistant in the US). His interest in healthcare came naturally... he was the primary caretaker for his dying mother. He was older than the typical student when he joined the Road to Hope, but the program saw a hard-working young man with great potential. He had financed much of his own education by making and selling bricks – while caring for his sick mother and arranging for others to help while he was in class. Dr. Ruta Ghandi and her husband, Dr. Vinod Chauhan, heard about Stephen’s struggles and agreed to sponsor him for the remainder of his high school education. Students typically graduate from the Road to Hope program after they complete the Ugandan equivalent of high school. However, Stephen’s passion to work in healthcare prompted his sponsors – physicians themselves – to continue supporting Stephen through his university education.

Stephen succeeded in becoming a clinical officer and he spent some time working at the clinic that helped with the care of his mother, prompted in part by the meaningful memories of the palliative care that his mother received from them. Stephen has always had a heart for palliative care, and in September 2016, he went on to work at a hospice program in Jinja (in eastern Uganda).



Stephen receiving morphine for the care of his mother.



Stephen celebrated his graduation with former PCAU country director, Rose Kiwanuka.

Stephen’s ambitions, however, didn’t stop there. He was interested in becoming a doctor and was accepted into Saint Augustine’s International School of Medicine in Kampala but needed financial assistance. Once again, Dr. Ghandi and Dr. Chauhan stepped up to support Stephen. He is now in his fourth year of medical school and excelling. He is currently in clinical rotations which will be followed by an internship before he completes his education.

As a beneficiary of the Road to Hope program, Stephen wanted to give back to the program that gave him so much. He is now an official paid volunteer for Road to Hope and uses his experiences to mentor the other children and inspire them to achieve their dreams as well. His involvement in the program’s work – offering his services and volunteering – started in 2017 while working at the Jinja hospice. Sixteen of the RTH children live in the Jinja region and Stephen’s presence there enabled him to connect with them. PCAU would ask Stephen to check up on the children in his spare time, so he would visit them at school or home and report back to PCAU with updates. It’s easy to see how the children identify with Stephen. Having been a child caregiver himself, he understands their pain and daily struggles, and for many of them, he has grown to be their role model.

In his volunteer role, Stephen helps support the well being of the children on the program; he liaises and coordinates with local stakeholders within the children’s communities to identify needs and monitor their progress. He also helps to manage the children’s enrichment activities such as the Empowerment Retreat and Children’s Camp.

Dr. Jacinto Amandua is a former Commissioner for Health Services in Uganda and a long-time supporter of PCAU. He noted, “Stephen Kasula has not only transformed himself, but his community and the other children. It’s incredible and God willing, the program will grow because of his involvement,” said Dr. Amandua, who has himself been a mentor and role model to some of the RTH children.



During COVID-19, Stephen has been visiting with Road to Hope children and providing updates to PCAU.



With the onset of COVID-19, Stephen’s involvement has deepened. He visits and supports children across the country, ensuring that the RTH children and their families receive basic needs and food. He is involved with the delivery of homeschooling materials and keeping in touch with the tutors hired to assist the children. In addition to this, Stephen also provides much-needed psychosocial support and even ensures the children are receiving proper medical care. As schools are reopening, Stephen is helping the children get back into their studies and assuring they meet all of the necessary requirements. Even as he has begun his residency rotations for medical school, he is spending much of his time supporting the RTH program.

PCAU – and the children who look up to him as a big brother – are grateful for his continued engagement in the program.

Road to Hope: Back to School Updates

Schools in Uganda reopened on March 1 in accordance with the COVID-19 protocols that minimize classroom crowding and meet other safety measures. These measures will help mitigate the spread of the pandemic for both students and teachers. The majority of the Road to Hope children are now back to school and happy to be learning in the classroom! Children in primary three and senior two are still receiving home schooling support from PCAU and will resume classes in late May and early June.

The 12 children in candidate classes (senior four and primary seven) who reported back to school in October 2020 have recently completed their national exams and are now on school holiday while awaiting the government to announce the results (hopefully in June). Each child’s performance will determine whether s/he can advance to the next level. As they wait, these children are back home with families and guardians, helping around the house and with farming since it is the rainy season. PCAU is in frequent communication with the children and will make plans with each for their next steps as soon as the exams results are released.

ROAD TO HOPE

Are you interested in supporting the Road to Hope program or sponsoring a child on the program? There are currently 23 unsponsored children on the program.

Please contact Denis Kidde at kidded@cfhcare.org if you would like to learn more about sponsoring a child.

Donate to the Road to Hope Fund



Our Contact Information
{{Organization Name}}
{{Organization Address}}
{{Organization Phone}}
{{Organization Website}}



{{Unsubscribe}}