

Good News: Teen volunteers raise funds for orphanage in Uganda

Posted: August 27, 2011 - 12:00am | **Updated:** August 27, 2011 - 8:16am

By [Cindy Holifield](#) , [Sandy Strickland](#)

When local teen volunteers set their minds on a project, they followed through, and an orphanage across the world was built.

Volunteers from The McKenzie Noelle Wilson Foundation collected funds from bake sales and school canteens, and from selling necklaces and donating birthday gifts. The funds were used, along with matching donations, to house a 20-girl orphanage in Uganda, in partnership with Okoa Refuge. The orphanage has been named Amaka ga McKenzie or "McKenzie's Home." The girls will be fed, sheltered and given medical attention, along with education and counseling.

"I see the world through new eyes because I realize how fortunate we all are and how small acts of compassion can change and improve so many people's lives," said Sarah Bates, one of the teen volunteers.

Although the surroundings are brown, the building itself is blue with colorful butterfly murals, inside and out. There is also indoor plumbing with running water for toilets and showers, something not easily found in Uganda.

The foundation, named for McKenzie Wilson who died in 2010, is dedicated to helping young people recognize their full potential in an increasingly complex and challenging world.

For more information on the foundation, go to mckenziegives.org or mckenziecares.org. For more details on the orphanage, or to see a video created by Stanton College Preparatory School student Kaitlyn Hamby, go to caregivegrow.org.

Here's more good news:

- The Normandy Rage All-Stars are baseball city champions. The team is made up of 6- and 7-year old players who were selected as All-Stars from Normandy Athletic Association. Along the way, they won the Cedar Hills Tournament, the Argyle Tournament, Fort Caroline's A tournament, and then won the All-Star City Championship, which was made up of 28 teams in three brackets from all over the First Coast.

Players are Garrett Earrey, C.J. Crawford, Craig Harper, Ashton Nugent, Baylor Newsom, Zack Mehl, Chase Williams, Marcus Hall, Jordan Hilliard, Blayne Lucas and Logan Ayers. Coaches are Scott Newsom, Randy Williams, Carl Hilliard and Josh Earrey.

- Riverside Avondale Preservation and HabiJax have received \$12,000 from guided tours held recently. Tours were given of John Gorrie, a condominium, a former school and historic landmark that recently underwent a restoration and renovation into condos and townhouses.
- School supplies were collected and delivered recently to children of The Sulzbacher Center homeless shelter. The Public Defender's Office supplied the donations to coincide with the first day of school. Included were notebooks, folders, pens/pencils and crayons. The office holds charitable events every few months to help the adults and children at the center.
- Caroline Emery, court counsel for the 4th Judicial Circuit in Jacksonville, has received the Jacksonville Bar Association 2011 Professionalism Award. She was recognized for promoting professionalism and civility within the judicial system.
- Jordan Ansbacher, a lifelong resident of Jacksonville, was honored with a bronze plaque in his name at the foot of a 40-foot flagpole, set in bronze, and large American flag, at the Youth Crisis Center on the Southside. The event, held on Flag Day, was presented as a dedication to Ansbacher's efforts on behalf of the Youth Crisis Center's runaway and throw-away kids and their families.

Ansbacher has served on the board of directors for more than 25 years, has helped raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and has given his time and money to carry out the work of the agency.

Have good news? Send items to goodnews@jacksonville.com. You can fax them to (904) 359-4478 or mail them to The Florida Times-Union, P.O. Box 1949, Jacksonville, FL 32231.

cindy.holifield@jacksonville.com, (904) 359-4295

sandy.strickland@jacksonville.com, (904) 359-4128

[Share](#) |

0

| [Email](#) |

[Print](#)

[Subscribe to The Florida Times-Union](#)