



RISING

Rooted in Christ • Resilient in Hope • Rising Together



Founding staff members: (back row from left to right) Jean Pierre Ngomankindi—Cook, Rev. Fred Isaac Katagwa—Rwanda Executive Director, Pastor Charles Gashumba—Kigali Child Sponsorship Coordinator, Jane Kayirebwa—Procurement Officer, Jane Mirembe—Business Manager, Specioza Dusabe Mukazayire—Regional Manager Central Bugesera, Luc Garuka—Cook





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Dr. Charles B. Mugisha
Founder & President
Africa New Life Ministries

*Photos by Wurzbach Fisher Photography
and Benny Ishema for the Rwanda
Communications Team*

ROOTED IN CHRIST. RESILIENT IN HOPE. RISING TOGETHER.

Dear Friends,

Twenty-five years. It does not feel like it's been that long. It feels like a marathon of faith—one steady step at a time, trusting God for what we could not yet see and believing Him for what we could not yet measure.

When Florence and I returned to Rwanda in 2001, we had no budget, no staff, and no guarantees. Just a belief that God was not finished with this nation. We believed He could lift children out of poverty, restore families, and raise leaders who would help rebuild a country still healing from unimaginable loss. There were seasons when the pressure felt heavy and the future uncertain. But God was faithful. Over these 25 years, my confidence has grown—not confidence in myself, but confidence in God. Winds have come, but they have passed. Challenges have risen, but they have not prevailed. Again and again, we have seen that anything God begins, He sustains.

Today, because of His faithfulness—and yours—more than 12,000 students are sponsored across Rwanda. In 2025 alone, 885 students graduated from high school or the vocational equivalent, and 193 students completed college, and more than 688 pastors and ministry leaders were equipped through Africa College of Theology. Since 2001, more than 19,000 students have been sponsored, and more than 5,000 have graduated from high school. When I look at these numbers, I do not see statistics. I see lives and families changed. I see prayers answered. I see faithfulness.

From the beginning, we refused to separate Christ from compassion. Education alone cannot transform a life; only Christ can. So, we have held firmly to what we call the two hands of the gospel: proclaiming Christ and demonstrating His love through compassionate action. Child sponsorship remains at the center of this mission because when a child rises, families rise. When families rise, communities rise. And when communities rise, a nation rises. We have watched this happen one student at a time. We rise together.

Today, I see alumni leading in churches, schools, hospitals, businesses, and public service across Rwanda. I see men and women who once needed support now supporting others. This is not success as the world defines it; it is faithfulness to the call of God and to the trust He placed in our hands.

Scripture reminds us that it is required of those who have been given a trust that they prove faithful. That has always been our aim. And through it all, YOU have been faithful. For 25 years, sponsors and partners have walked with us. Some of you have sponsored a student for 15 or even 20 years. That kind of steady love reflects the heart of Christ.

Hebrews 6:10 tells us, “God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.” I hold onto that promise for you.

As we look toward the next 25 years, our hope is not built on strategy alone; it is established on what God has already done. He lifted us out of a pit and set our feet on solid ground. That is our story. That is the story of every student whose life has been transformed. And we believe He is still writing that story.

Thank you for rising with us. Thank you for trusting God with us. Thank you for being faithful.

In Christ,

Charles

Dr. Charles B. Mugisha
Founder & President
Africa New Life Ministries

Q&A

RISING TOGETHER: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. CHARLES MUGISHA AND ALAN HOTCHKISS

Q Alan: Charles, your vision for Africa New Life has carried the ministry since the beginning. How has your leadership changed over the years?

A Charles: The greatest growth in my life has been confidence in God. Over the past 25 years we have faced many challenges that could have ended this ministry. But none of those challenges has been greater than God. My trust in Him has become steady. You can shake it, but you cannot break it. In the early years we had nothing. No money, no staff, no structure. Faith was our only option. Today we have systems and budgets, which are good for sustainability. But we must always guard against allowing structure to replace faith.

Q Charles: Alan, when did you first realize that Africa New Life was not just a short season of ministry, but something God intended to sustain?

A Alan: For me, that moment came in 2010 during the economic recession in the United States. I remember lying face down on the floor praying, telling God I had done everything I could. In one of the clearest moments I have experienced in prayer, I sensed

the Lord reminding me that if we received the grant we had applied for, it would not be because of my effort. It would be because He had been listening to the prayers of the children in Rwanda for many years and had chosen to answer them through this ministry. Later that same day the foundation called and told me we had received the grant. In that moment I realized this work was bigger than any of us.

Q Charles: This year we are celebrating the theme Rising Together. What does that phrase mean to you?

A Alan: To me, Rising Together means that ordinary people across Rwanda, the United States, and around the world have joined together to accomplish extraordinary things for the Kingdom of God. Together we have empowered students, trained pastors, planted churches, cared for the sick, and strengthened entire communities.

Q Alan: Charles, how do you see that partnership from Rwanda?

A Charles: Rising Together means we refuse to grow alone. In the Kingdom of God,

success is never individual. When one part of the body becomes stronger, the whole body benefits. When one part struggles, we all feel it. Rising Together means shared strength. Sometimes I carry your faith when yours is low. Sometimes you give me courage when I feel uncertain.

Q Alan: When you look ahead 25 years, what gives you the greatest hope?

A Charles: My hope is built on what God has already done. Rwanda has changed dramatically in the past 25 years. Today we see alumni leading in medicine, education, churches, government, business, and many other sectors. I would not say they are the future leaders—rather, they are already leading. God has lifted us, and He is still lifting lives.



PICTURED: Dr. Charles Mugisha, Founder and President of Africa New Life, and Alan Hotchkiss, Executive Director of Africa New Life.

2025 FINANCIALS

2025 REVENUE \$15,713,539

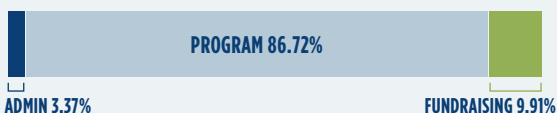
2025 EXPENSES \$15,504,010

EXPENSES BY PERCENTAGE

Administration 3.37% ■ \$522,096

Program 86.72% ■ \$13,445,758

Fundraising 9.91% ■ \$1,536,156



All financials figures cited in this document for fiscal year 2025 are unaudited as of press time. Audited numbers will be available in June 2026 at africanewlife.org/about-us/financial-accountability.

OUR MISSION

Africa New Life Ministries exists to communicate the message of Jesus Christ in word and deed, to Rwanda and all the nations. This ministry will help all peoples to understand the relationship with God available to them through belief in Jesus as Savior.

This will be accomplished by providing access to education, leadership training, and healthcare; through church planting and Christian discipleship; and through holistic care for vulnerable children, and women and men in need.

To learn more, visit africanewlife.org/impact.



LEGACY TRIPS

RISING HIGHER TOGETHER

It began with a bold "yes." Thirteen women laced up their boots and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with a shared purpose: to turn their steps into hope for children in Rwanda. What started as a single adventure soon became a movement.

The first climb in 2017 sparked what we now call Legacy Trips. Ordinary men and women choosing an extraordinary challenge, not for themselves alone, but for students who need opportunity, nourishment, and encouragement to keep rising.

Since that first ascent, more than \$1 million has been raised through these adventures by people like you. Every mile walked has helped translate generosity into practical care for children and families across Rwanda. Each climb is a physical challenge with eternal impact.

Today, through a partnership with Beyond Adventures, supporters continue to take on challenges like Mount Kilimanjaro, Machu Picchu, and now Everest Base Camp, raising funds that help provide meals and care for students in Rwanda.

Through Africa New Life's Food & Care Program, these efforts make it possible for students to receive nutritious lunches and the support they need to learn, grow, and build a hopeful future.

As we celebrate 25 years of ministry, we are grateful for every climber and every gift given along the trail. One brave step can spark a ripple effect that reaches far beyond the summit!

There are still mountains to climb.

There are still children waiting to dream.

And together, we will keep rising.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE



ERIC RUGAMBA

BUILDING WHAT HE ONCE ONLY IMAGINED

Eric was six years old when Africa New Life came to his neighborhood in Kayonza.

His father worked at a petrol station, and his mother did tailoring jobs when she could. With several young children at home, finances were stretched thin. Schools nearby were transitioning from French to English, and Eric's father was searching for a place where his son could begin his education with stability and hope.

A neighbor told them about a new school that had just opened: New Life Christian Academy. The next morning, Eric was enrolled.

At first, his father could manage the tuition. But as the school grew, the costs increased, and it became difficult to keep up. Africa New Life was patient. Staff visited the family, listened to their situation, and began searching for a sponsor.

In Primary 3 (3rd grade), Eric received the news that would shape his future. He had a sponsor. "I still remember the feeling! It was a great moment for my family."

Eric became the first in his family to be sponsored. Later, his siblings would also receive sponsors, but he was the first to step into that opportunity. Along with academic support, he attended Saturday discipleship gatherings where students were taught the Word of God and shared meals together. It was there that Eric began his relationship with Jesus.

As a child, Eric was fascinated by how things worked. When he saw a car pass by, he wondered how it moved. When someone made a phone call, he wanted to understand what made it function. A dream began forming in his heart: he wanted to become an engineer.

In Senior 2 (8th grade), his first sponsor was no longer able to continue support. It was a frightening moment. But Africa New Life did not send him home. They continued covering his tuition while searching for another sponsor, allowing him to keep learning without interruption.

In Senior 5 (11th grade), during a school outing for top academic performers, a woman named Sharon learned that

Education created opportunity not only for individuals, but also for families and communities rebuilding their lives.

Eric no longer had a sponsor. On that bus ride, she and her husband Mike made a decision that would change his life. They committed to sponsor him through high school and into university. “We enjoyed more moments than we can count sponsoring Eric while watching him grow into an educated and spiritual young man,” they shared.

At the time, Eric was a quiet but determined student, already performing at a high academic level. “He was a shy youth performing at a national level at Africa New Life school when we sponsored him, and his continued success made us confident and proud to support him in college.”

Their relationship extended far beyond financial support. During a visit to Rwanda, Sharon and Mike met Eric’s family in their rented home, built with mud and without running water. “We had the privilege of visiting Eric’s family and receiving their love and gifts for supporting their son. The love and pride for our shared Rwandan son forged bonds never to be forgotten.”

Eric pushed himself academically, becoming the top mathematics student in his school. He was admitted to the University of Rwanda to study electrical engineering and graduated four years later with his bachelor’s degree. “Giving someone education is a lifetime investment,” Eric says.

After graduation, Eric began his career at Rwanda Energy Group as a professional intern. Through perseverance and excellence, he advanced to technician, then project engineer, and today serves as a project manager overseeing energy development projects across multiple districts in Rwanda.

The boy who once wondered how things worked now helps power Rwanda’s future.

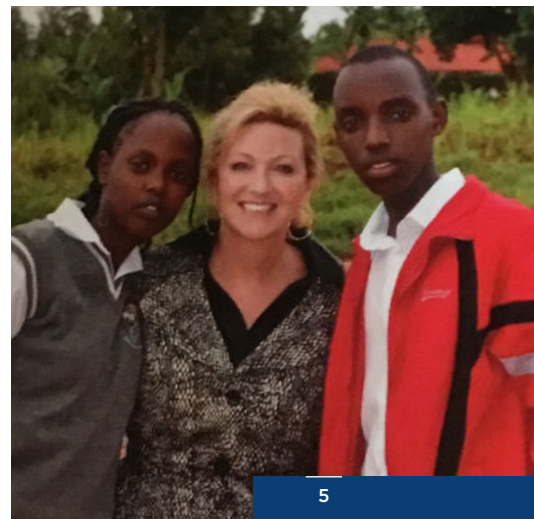
Eric’s journey has also transformed his family’s future. After securing his professional role, he was able to purchase a home for them. “Eric’s college graduation and securing a professional position enabled him to purchase a home for his family. He used the gifts given to him to provide for his family. Such a beautiful moment,” Sharon and Mike reflected.

The impact of sponsorship did not stop with him. Eric paid for his younger brother to attend college and is helping his youngest sibling finish high school. He is also pursuing a master’s degree in project management at Oklahoma Christian University.

Reflecting on Rwanda’s rebuilding after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, Eric believes Africa New Life arrived at a critical moment. Education created opportunity not only for individuals, but also for families and communities rebuilding their lives.

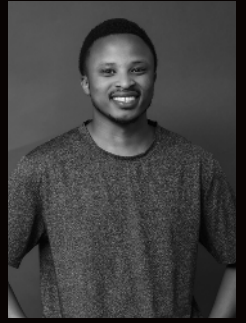
Sponsorship, for Sharon and Mike, was never just about one student. “Sponsoring Eric gave us the amazing opportunity to help a wonderful young boy mature into a successful, thoughtful, caring, and Christian man. He provided us his love and spiritual support, and for that we are forever grateful.”

From a six-year-old boy with big questions, to a leader shaping infrastructure in his nation, Eric’s story reflects what sponsorship makes possible. His life is a testimony to faithfulness, perseverance, and the power of education to transform generations.



OUR TEAM





GRACE CHAPEL

PORTLAND,
OREGON

A PARTNERSHIP THAT SHAPES THE CHURCH

Over decades, a partnership across continents has grown into something deeper than support. It has become a shared story of faith, shaped by relationship, trust, and a common calling in Christ.

For Pastor Mike Tatlock of Grace Chapel in Portland, Oregon, the partnership with Africa New Life has never been simply about supporting a ministry. It has been about joining what God is already doing in Rwanda.

Over the past 25 years, he has watched remarkable transformation unfold.

“In Rwanda, we’ve seen a nation move from unimaginable tragedy to hope and rebuilding,” Mike says. “Watching communities, churches, and students rise with faith and resilience has been deeply inspiring.”

That transformation has also shaped Grace Chapel, which has now sponsored more than 600 students.

“Our people don’t just see faith as something local anymore,” he explains. “They understand the gospel is global and that we’re part of a much bigger story.”

For Mike, the journey has also been personal. Over the years, he and his family have traveled to Rwanda several times.

“My wife and kids came with me on those trips, and those experiences disciplined them in ways I could never replicate with just teaching,” he says. “They still talk about how those trips shaped their faith.”

From the beginning, Grace Chapel was drawn to a vision that felt different.

“This wasn’t just charity. It was partnership,” Mike says. “We were drawn to empowering the local church in Rwanda to lead transformation in their communities.”

What made it different was the sense of shared calling.

“We weren’t coming in with answers,” Mike explains. “We were coming alongside leaders who already knew their communities, who were faithfully serving, and who had a vision for what God could do.”

Over time, that trust deepened. What began through sponsorship grew into something more relational, more enduring.

“It became about walking together,” he says. “Praying for one another. Learning from one another. Being shaped by each other’s faith.”

Across the world in Kayonza, Rwanda, Pastor Sam Gahigana has seen that partnership take root in daily life.

“Since Grace Chapel partnered with Kayonza, we have seen transformation,” he shares. “The students who were sponsored have grown into doctors, accountants, tour guides, and leaders. Some are now even sponsoring their own siblings.”

For Pastor Sam, this is where Grace Chapel’s partnership becomes most meaningful.

“We are seeing a generation raised up,” he says. “Children who were once supported are now supporting others. They are leading in their workplaces, in their families, and in the church.”

That transformation is not only economic. It is spiritual.



PICTURED: Pastor Steven of New Life Bible Church Nyamirama with Grace Chapel Pastor Mike Tatlock.
PICTURED RIGHT: Pastor Sam from New Life Bible Church Kayonza.



“They know Christ. They serve others. And they carry that same love forward,” he says. “This is how the church grows, not just in numbers, but in depth.”

“This partnership with Grace Chapel shows us what Christianity truly is,” Pastor Sam says. “It is love we feel as a community, faithful and lasting for generations.”

One story stands out to him.

“A student began in primary school here,” Pastor Sam explains. “Now he is a medical surgeon, studying a specialty in Kenya and working with the Dream Medical Center. His life shows what is possible.”

In recent years, Grace Chapel's partnership has extended into a new community.

At New Life Bible Church Nyamirama, Pastor Steven is now walking with students and families who are part of Grace Chapel's continued investment in Rwanda. What began in Kayonza is now continuing through a new generation, carrying the same vision of discipleship, education, and local church leadership into new places. For both churches, the impact is seen in the life of the church itself.

“When people are connected to real children and real families, generosity becomes personal,” Mike

says. “Our congregation understands the church is one family across cultures.”

In Rwanda, that sense of family strengthens the church and its mission across communities.

“Because of the love shown through your support, we are able to love our people well,” Pastor Sam says. “We provide education and preach the Word of God. People see both.”

Today, New Life Bible Church Kayonza has grown to nearly 1,500 members, becoming a place where families find hope and belonging.

“Many children who are sponsored bring their families to church,” Pastor Sam shares.

As Africa New Life celebrates 25 years, both pastors look ahead with faith.

“My prayer is that we would see even more leaders rise up from Rwanda,” Mike says.

“Our biggest prayer is to build a bigger church,” Pastor Sam adds. “We are trusting God.”

Together, their story reflects a shared truth: a partnership rooted in Christ, resilient in hope, and rising together.

RISING TOGETHER:

25 Years of Transformation

TIMELINE

2001

- » Founded in Kayonza by Dr. Charles and Florence Mugisha
- » 29 children sponsored, a vision begins

2005

- » Vocational program opens with five women
- » A movement of dignity, skill, and opportunity begins

2008–2009

- » Dream Center opens in Kigali
- » 2,000+ students sponsored
- » Secondary school established

2013–2014

- » 5,000+ students sponsored
- » Africa College of Theology opens
- » Dream Daycare and New Life Christian High School established

2018

- » 9,000+ students sponsored
- » Dream Medical Center Hospital opens

2003–2004

- » First primary school opens
- » New Life Bible Church planted in Kigali
- » Outreach begins for vulnerable children in the city

2006–2007

- » 1,000+ students sponsored
- » Esther College Scholarship Program opens
- » New sponsorship communities and churches begin forming in Kageyo

2010–2012

- » 3,000+ students sponsored
- » New communities open in Kageyo A and Bugesera
- » Dream Beauty Academy and Dream Kids Tutoring Program begin

2015–2017

- » Africa College of Theology graduates its first class
- » New communities open in Rubavu and Kageyo B
- » Legacy Climbs begin, uniting global partners



2020-2021

- » 11,000+ students sponsored
- » 7 million meals provided during COVID-19
- » Karangazi community opens

2023

- » Huye and Nyagatare communities open
- » iLead reaches 76,000 students nationwide

2025

- » New Life Bible Churches remain open amid nationwide closures
- » 2,406 new students sponsored

2026

- » 25 years of God's faithfulness
- » 19,000+ students sponsored
- » 5,000+ high school graduates
- » 1,000+ university graduates
- » 12 churches and growing
- » 13th community scheduled to open in Nyanza

2019

- » 10,000+ students sponsored
- » Growing number of university and vocational graduates

2022

- » Nyamagabe and Nyamirama communities open
- » iLead Rwanda begins, reaching 21,000 students

2024

- » 30th commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi
- » Alumni step into national influence
- » New community opens in Gashora

JAPHET MAZIMPAKA

TRANSFORMED TO TRANSFORM

Japhet was born in 1994 in Tanzania, in the midst of Rwanda's 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. When his family later returned to Rwanda, they settled in the Eastern Province, in Kayonza District. Life was not easy.

As a young boy, Japhet's days were divided between school and responsibility. Some weeks he attended class only two days. The rest of the time, he cared for cows and helped at home. As the only surviving son, much was expected of him.

Even so, he loved learning.

In Primary 6 (6th grade), he earned top marks in his class. But when national exam results were released, he had failed. For many students, that might have marked the end. For Japhet, it became a turning point.

Around that time, his mother heard about Africa New Life. Japhet remembers traveling to Kigali and meeting a staff member named Eugene, who listened to his story and offered encouragement.

Eugene wrote down his contact information on a small piece of paper. "I carried that paper like my baby," Japhet says. "I was like, I can't lose this."

In 2011, Japhet was sponsored. Through sponsorship, he received education, community, and discipleship. He chose to attend boarding school, where he faced a new

challenge. He did not know English. "I couldn't even say, 'Good morning.' I didn't know English at all."

So, he borrowed a dictionary. Word by word, he copied every entry and example sentence into a notebook, creating his own dictionary. He still keeps it today.

Slowly, his confidence grew. He joined debate clubs, practiced public speaking, and began to find his voice.

He later studied Mass Media and Communications at Mount Kenya University, graduating with a first-class degree in 2021.

During university, classmates noticed his natural humor. "People told me, 'You can become a comedian.' I was like, 'Who is a comedian?'"

Today, Japhet is a radio presenter on Magic FM 90.7, hosting a weekday morning show heard across Rwanda. He also performs clean, socially-aware comedy, using his platform to encourage others.

"I make sure there is a recommendation, a positive change I am trying to trigger in my audience."

In 2026, after seven years at Rwanda Broadcasting Agency, what began as a routine meeting became something more.

Japhet was invited to the Director General's office and received unexpected news: he had been appointed Manager of KC2, one of the national television channels of Rwanda Broadcasting Agency.

KC2 is a youth-focused station dedicated to informing, inspiring, and entertaining the next generation across Rwanda.

The moment carried both weight and gratitude. "I thank God for His favor and everlasting blessings," Japhet says.

When he reflects on his journey, he points to transformation. "Africa New Life saved us. They helped with food, clothes, medical insurance, everything. It is not about kids only, it is about families."

And then he says something that captures the heart of sponsorship:

"I am transformed to transform."





STATISTICS REPORT

2025 IMPACT

EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP



12,326 Students sponsored

693 Students graduated Senior 6 (12th grade)

93.4% Senior 6 students passed national exams

900+ Post-secondary students currently receiving sponsorship support

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



145 Women completed vocational or life skills training

10,023 Child Welfare Officer home visits completed

GROWING FAITH



930 Students made decisions for Christ at camps

1,411 Parents made decisions for Christ through sponsorship programs

600+ Pastors and ministry leaders enrolled at Africa College of Theology

HEALTHY BODY



7,664 Students treated by community nurses

1,439 Babies born at the Dream Medical Center Hospital

5,775,546 Meals served through Food & Care programs

4,945 Food & Soap Packs purchased for families through the Online Store

Rising Together



STATISTICS REPORT

25-YEAR IMPACT



19,652 Students served through educational sponsorship since 2001

5,441 High school and vocational graduates

1,113 Post-secondary graduates equipped for careers and leadership

1,144 Women graduated from New Life Women's Development Programs

10 Churches have partnered with us for 15 or more years

5,500+ Travelers have journeyed to Rwanda with Africa New Life over the past 25 years

447,840+ Patients seen at the Dream Medical Center Hospital

44,226 Online letters have been sent from sponsors to students

200 Young women were accepted into the Esther College Scholarship Program

45,383 Food packs purchased and given to families

228,673 Online Store gifts purchased

7,000+ Babies born at the Dream Medical Center Hospital



*19,000+ students.
25 years.
One faithful mission.*

MARIE ROSE'S STORY

FROM STUDENT TO INSTRUCTOR

When Marie Rose joined the sewing program in 2005, she was the very first student to enroll. Life at that time was extremely difficult.

She and her husband struggled to find steady work, and providing for their children was uncertain. Some days she found small jobs doing manual labor. Other days there was nothing. She often worried about the future and whether her children would have opportunities she did not.

Without stable work or practical skills, life felt fragile. But when she heard about the sewing program at the New Life Family Center, she decided to take a step of faith.

The program she entered was started by Pastor Florence Mugisha, cofounder of Africa New Life, who believed in equipping women with both skills and faith. Through the New Life Family Center, Florence created a place where women could rebuild their lives with dignity, purpose, and hope.

“On the first day, I felt hopeful,” Marie Rose remembers. “I believed this program could change my life.”

The early days were not easy. There were few sewing materials, and learning a new skill required patience. Still, Marie Rose kept going. The moment she completed her first ready-to-wear garment became a turning point.

“The day I learned how to make clothing, I felt energized,” she says. “It helped me realize that I could change my life.”

Through the program, Marie Rose gained more than vocational skills. She also experienced spiritual encouragement and began to see her life differently.

“This program changed me spiritually and emotionally,” she explains. “Through the program I came to know God, and I learned that He changes the lives of people.”

After completing the program, Marie Rose began working on her own, using her skills to support her family. Over time, the leaders saw the transformation in her life and invited her to return as an instructor.



PICTURED: Pastor Florence Mugisha, cofounder of Africa New Life and founder of the women's programs, with Marie Rose, who now teaches what she once learned.

For Marie Rose, moving from student to teacher was a powerful moment. “It shows me that the Word of God changes lives in tangible ways,” she says.

Today, she teaches women who face challenges similar to the ones she once experienced. When she looks at her students, she sees reflections of her own story.

“When I see these women, it reminds me of the faithfulness of God,” she says. “The way my life has changed gives me hope that their lives will change too.”

Marie Rose now provides for her household, and her children have been inspired by her journey, with some studying fashion and design.

Because someone once believed in her, Marie Rose now helps other women discover the same hope. “Because someone believed in me,” she says, “I am now able to instruct other women.”

As Africa New Life celebrates 25 years of ministry, Marie Rose sees her story woven into its journey. “This organization is like a family,” she says. “We come, we stay, and we continue serving.”

Her hope is that many more women will experience the same transformation.

“When you help a woman,” she says, “you help a whole family.”



SHEILAH'S STORY

HOPE THAT CHANGES A GENERATION

Sheilah Umubyeyi was born in Rwanda in 1996 into a family shaped by tradition and resilience. Her mother was Catholic and her father was Muslim, but Sheilah's faith was more cultural than personal.

That changed in high school. Surrounded by Christian classmates at boarding school, Sheilah encountered faith in a new way. "I felt a sense of peace," she says. "Like, I know this is my religion."

In her first year, she gave her life to Christ and was baptized days later, becoming the first Christian in her family. At first, her decision felt unfamiliar to her family. But over time, her family saw the change in her life. Today, they are all Christians. Faith gave Sheilah a foundation, but life soon tested it.

Near the end of high school, her father became seriously ill.

As the family's breadwinner, his sickness changed everything. With four children at home, survival became the priority. "I started working in a bakery as a waiter," she says. "I was 18 then. We had to figure things out!"

Sheilah and her older sister worked to support their family and keep their younger brothers in school. Her dream of attending university became distant.

In 2016, Sheilah joined a New Life Bible Church youth group, where she found a community of young believers committed to following Christ. "By having good community and Christian friends, that really helped me a lot," she says. Through that community, she was encouraged to apply for the Esther College Scholarship Program (ECSP). She hesitated, unsure how she could pursue university while supporting her family, but she applied. "I was picked," she says.

The ECSP provided discipleship, mentorship, and practical support, including a stipend that allowed her to continue her education while helping at home. Sheilah studied international business and trade, attending a university that once felt out of reach. During her internship, she worked at the Dream Medical Center. After graduation, she joined an organization training teachers in rural communities. At the same time, another passion was growing.

During COVID, Sheilah began helping friends plan weddings. What started as an act of service became something more. "I opened a company called Bliss Gathering," she says. Today, she plans major weddings and national events across Rwanda.

But for Sheilah, the impact goes deeper than career success. It is about mindset. "In the village, they think a degree is just paper," she says. "Because they believe girls are headed to marriage."

Through the program, that belief was challenged. Education became preparation for leadership and a life of purpose. "You have to pursue your dreams. You have to have a life of your own."

Now, as Africa New Life celebrates 25 years, Sheilah reflects on what the ministry has brought to Rwanda. "Hope," she says. "You know there is hope and support."

Without that hope, she says, "I'd probably be working somewhere, with zero dreams of going to school." Instead, she is a university graduate, a business owner, and a woman of faith.

Sheilah's story is a reminder that when hope is planted, a life rises.

ONCE SPONSORED. NOW SPONSORING.

“I am living proof that sponsorship can change the course of a family’s life and break the cycle of poverty. Today, I have the joy of helping change that story for someone else.”

– *Christian Bahire, now pursuing his master’s degree at James Madison University, with Jean Claude, the student he now sponsors.*



THE NEXT

25 STARTS WITH YOU

Your faithful support
widens the circle.

Welcomes
waiting students.

Strengthens
new families.

Lifts entire
communities.

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