

Mathias Mukasa - Bethany School - Saint Xavier High School

My name is Mathias Mukasa. I got Bethany School. I devote the most time and energy to community service. I serve as an acolyte both at school and at my Church. I serve at church community dinners and entertain the homeless kids with the IHN (Inter Hospitality Network) group. I am bilingual so I help teach kids the Luganda language. I also teach Sunday school.

Internationally, I've volunteered with a group called Hope for Kabingo that is based here in Cincinnati. We traveled to Kabingo in Uganda where I helped in different duties as I was assigned and again I used my Luganda language to an advantage. I was able to interpret for the medical team. I helped pass out multi vitamins and also interpreted for those that worked in the eye glasses area. I was also able to help my mother in the pharmacy. We were able to treat about 2000 people in about two weeks. It was a good feeling at the end of the day. During this trip, I realized how fortunate I am.

For the past four years, I have been saving my money to help pay tuition for a boy in this village whose parents cannot afford the tuition. My sister and I split the cost and we are happy to do that.

Last summer I volunteered at an Orphanage (Sanyu Babies Home) where I helped take care of the babies. I learned how to be patient while feeding the babies. This was definitely a great experience.

An event that has had the greatest influence on my life is a mission trip we took to a small village in Western Uganda through an organization called "Hope for Kabingo". This was a couple years ago when my mother, sister and I traveled to Uganda to visit our family. While there, we set up tents and attended to about 2000 village people. We treated malaria, fever, seizures and other diseases. I personally was responsible for passing out vitamins during the initial stages of the process. When I got caught up at that station, I used my bilingual status to help interpret for the villagers.

I also take part in community service at my school. I have helped the teachers grade papers and also organize their school supplies. I have also affected my school by telling them my story about my mission trip to Uganda. My school was very proud of me! My school also supported Hope for Kabingo by participating in a program called Bricks for a Buck. This program works by allowing a student of the school to donate \$1 to buy a brick which builds the school in Kabingo. Once the money was collected, this money helped to support the building of the school.

I was caught off guard when one of the doctors asked me if I saw any toys at the villagers homes. When I said that I did not, he then asked me if I had any toys at home. I named most of the toys I had. He made sure I knew how lucky I am to even have a toy to play with. From that day on, I was so appreciative of the things I had and stopped taking life for granted.