

Alongside International  
Uganda, Africa  
May 2012

By: Samantha McBride



I would like to thank my parents, boyfriend, and the rest of my family who supported me emotionally, morally, and financially throughout this adventure.

I would also like to express my deepest appreciation and thanks to my Aunt Jenn and Uncle Jeff who not only inspired me go on this life changing trip, but also helped me in my time of need. If it was not for them, I would not have had such an incredible opportunity.

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## INTRODUCTION



Hello! My name is Samantha McBride, and I live in Brantford, Ontario. I am a recent Medix School graduate from the Developmental Service Worker (DSW) program with a passion for travel and helping others. I have wanted to travel to Africa for some years' now, and with being finished school and not working full time yet I told myself, "it's now or never, I have to do this!"

My aunt and uncle, Jenn and Jeff Richards, have been to three different African countries, on six separate trips, in the last four years. They are the ones who have inspired me to start this new chapter in my life. Unfortunately Uncle Jeff won't be coming on this trip, but I couldn't be more excited to go on this adventure with Aunt Jenn.

After a lot of pondering and thinking about how I wanted this report to look, I have decided the best way to organize my thoughts and relay them to you is by keeping a journal while I was in Uganda. So here is a look into my daily journal to give you an idea of what went on in these two short weeks.

## ALONGSIDE INTERNATIONAL

Founded by David and Linda Miclash in 2004, Alongside International is a Christian Humanitarian organization with the purpose of reaching out to people suffering from poverty, despair, illiteracy, hunger and abuse. In the past they have led over 70 teams to bring help healing and hope to people in Kenya, Zambia, Mali, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Peru, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Uganda, Nigeria and First Nations Reserves in Canada. Currently they are partnering with The Evangelizers Team Ministry International in Nigeria, Victory Outreach Ministries in Uganda, and The Association of Independent Churches of Africa in Liberia.

Alongside International is an independent organization that partners with Partners International and Crossroads Missions Ministries. They focus their ministry on constructing clinics, schools, and orphanages, engaging borehole well restorations to provide clean water, mobilize daily medical and eyeglass clinics and participate in community interaction programs. Alongside International also collects food, clothing, shoes, equipment, medical equipment and supplies, school furniture and supplies, bicycles, tools, and building materials to send to countries in order to equip the locals to successfully operate the many projects that Alongside has taken on.

## VICTORY OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Victory Outreach Ministries is run by four pastors who have a huge heart and passion for sharing God's love. Victory Outreach Ministries has over one hundred and fifty local churches in many districts in Uganda.

*"We want to be a ministry that is practically sharing the love of God." – Pastor Milton*



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## MEET THE TEAM

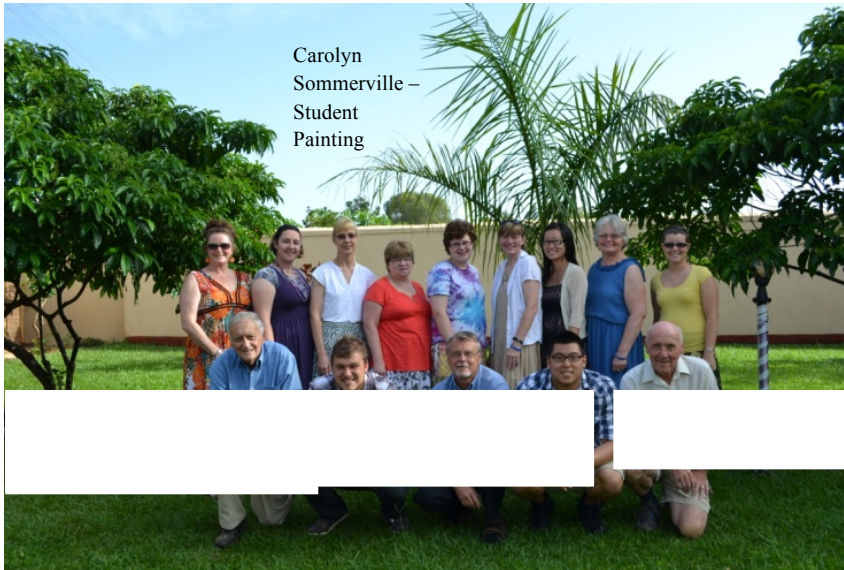
The team this year was made up of 14 Canadians, seven of which had been to Uganda in the year before, and 11 Ugandans. Of the 11 local team members, two worked as doctors, four worked as translators, one was our driver, and the remaining four were the pastors from Victory Outreach Ministries.

Nancy Desjardins – Housewife  
Eye glass clinic

Yvonne – Small business  
owner  
Triage

Karin Baar- Executive Assistant  
Eye glass clinic

Carolyn  
Sommerville –  
Student  
Painting





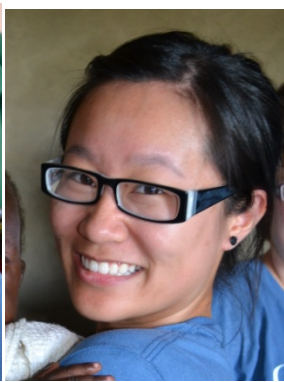
n Richards – Paramedic  
age, pharmacy, and painting



Sara Slater – Student  
Vivian Wong – Nurse  
Pharmacist  
eye glass clinic, and painting

Sam McBride – Developmental  
Richard Ma – Engineering  
Service Worker  
Student/Canadian Armed Forces  
Pharmacist  
Construction, and painting

Jordan Wiens – History and  
Education Student  
Construction, painting, and eye glass  
clinic





*I am so blessed to have been a part of such a wonderful team. God has used each of us to reach out to the people of Uganda, and as a result we have been showered with blessings. I believe our trip was a success in every way. — Nancy Dessruisseau*



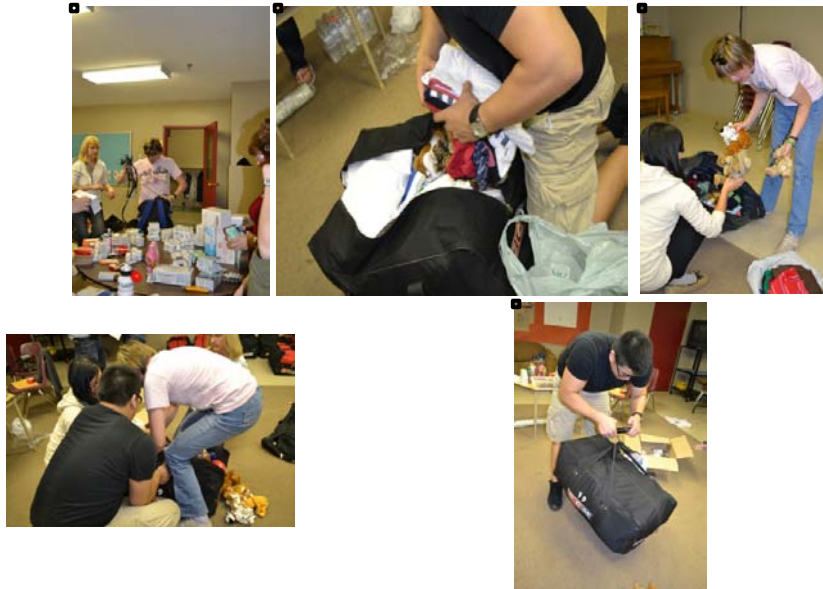
A photograph of four men standing in front of a building at night. From left to right: a man in a checkered shirt and grey trousers, a man in a blue checkered shirt and dark trousers, a man in a white shirt and dark trousers, and a man in a light blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and light blue trousers. The man on the far right is wearing a watch on his left wrist. The building behind them has white-framed windows and a decorative balcony railing. The caption below the photo reads: "Pastor Johnson, Pastor"

Uganda is 242,000 square kilometers in size and sits right on top of the equator on the eastern side of Africa. Uganda has 56 different tribes, with a total population of 28.3 million (2007) people. English is its first official language with Kiswahili being the second, although it is not widely spoken.



## PREPARATIONS

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Believe me, that was not an easy task either. We had to sort all the medicine, condense them into less packaging, decide what we were going to put in each bag, weigh all the bags, – they can't weigh more than 50 pounds – and then try and get all the bags to close!

## A LOOK INTO MY JOURNAL

DAY 1 – MAY 18, 2012

Okay, so I have a bit of a different story than the rest of the team as to how day one played out. I never thought it could have happened to me, but it did; I left my passport at home! So while the rest of the team has landed in Entebbe, Uganda I am still in Canada. I will get on a flight tomorrow night and arrive a day later, and catch up with my team in Lira where our hotel is.

DAY 2 – MAY 19, 2012

I am here...FINALLY! What seemed like a forever long two days of travel was well worth it when I landed in Entebbe and saw David waiting for me. I was very nervous flying alone, especially when I had no idea if David has received all my flight information and who would be there to pick me up. I let out a huge sigh of relief when I saw David sitting there, and then felt all the excitement come back as we drove to our hotel for the night.

The rest of the team had left for Lira this morning, and David and I will make that seven hour drive tomorrow.



### DAY 3 – MAY 20, 2012

While the rest of the team is at church this morning David, Peter our driver, and I are on our way to Lira. Being a seven hour drive, you would think it would get pretty boring to sit in a car for that long, but I was not bored for one second. I was very overwhelmed with all there was to see. We drove through many small villages, and towns, and the big city of Kampala was very exciting. There was people everywhere, people

on bicycles, people in cars, people on motorcycles, and people just standing around. I never expected to see some of the things I did, and I think that is mostly because in Canada we just don't do things the same way. We would never let out children play or walk in the street alone, but here it just seemed normal. It was very interesting to see how they do things on the other side of the world.

When we arrived at the Alpha Resort Hotel in Lira I was welcomed with hugs and huge smiles from the team as well as the hotel staff. They told me all about church and how exciting and different it was from home. I was a little disappointed that I missed it, but I would rather miss one day of church than miss the entire trip. We arrived just before dinner so I had time for a quick tour and to help sort out some meds before we all sat down to eat.

The food was good, potatoes, rice, cabbage, all the bananas you could want, and some weird meat stuff that Jackie called “meat minced” which in Canada we say the other way around. Aunt Jenn was right, the fruit is way better here!

After dinner we met the four pastors from Victory Outreach Ministries that will be with team for the trip. We were all introduced, the pastors welcomed us and went over our jobs for the clinic tomorrow, and David gave us some advice before we started work for the first time. He told us to use our senses while we are at the clinic and interacting with the local people. Now most people can name the five senses – sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. David pointed out another sense that we would be likely to use, and that is our hearts. He also told us all that our purpose was not to serve our selves or the people of Uganda, but to serve God. God has brought us all to the other side of the world – some later than others – to serve him through these people.

### DAY 4 – MAY 21, 2012

Today was our first day at the clinic. By the end of the day we saw 138 people. We started our day with a fairly long and bumpy bus ride down a narrow dirt road into Barlonyo. About an hour later I began to hear all the people who had been here last year start to ooh and awe as we drove past the school and up to the health centre. Last year when they drove up here there was the school and an empty field beside it. Now there is a beautiful new health centre for the village.

After we unloaded the bus David stood in front of all the local people to tell them about the health centre and that it was dedicated to Ruth Sommerville, the wife and mother of Iain and Carolyn. Then all the people started to clap and sing. It was a very special moment for Iain and Carolyn.





Then it was time to “open for business.” I worked in the pharmacy with Ruth, Vivian, and our translator Melba. Aunt Jenn started in triage with Vicki and their translators Angela and Stella, but also came in to help us when she was not busy. She was basically a jack of all trades while at the clinic because she worked on a little bit of everything. Nancy, Karin, and Sara worked in the eye glass clinic with their translator Sue. They said it was a bit slow, and any of the locals they saw had good eyes, but just really wanted a pair of glasses! Jordan also came to help out one day, and the other days he was working on the construction with Richard, Ian, Ted and David, and also on the painting with Carolyn.



*I really enjoyed playing and spending time with the children. I miss the friends I made in Uganda. I want to see how baby Nancy and Sue are doing. I miss Jackie and Isaac as well. I want to know how those two very sick babies are doing. Is the one at the hospital doing better? Did the other one end up going to the hospital? How is the school doing and the children there? My thoughts are still in Uganda as well as here. On my first day back to work I could smell something that reminded me of our home in Uganda. It was weird, but cool at the same time. It also made me miss Uganda more. – Sara Slater*

Nancy also had a very special day today. It is her second time travelling to Uganda and also her second time working with Sue. They had such a special bond last year that Sue named her baby after Nancy. Nancy was so thrilled.

The men started work on the ionizing system today. They started by laying the bricks for the platform that the water tank will sit on. They crushed some of the bricks to fill in the base and then poured the cement on top. Inside the health centre they started to install the pipes for the system as well. David, Iain, and Ted also worked real hard... at standing around!





DAY 5 – MAY 22, 2012

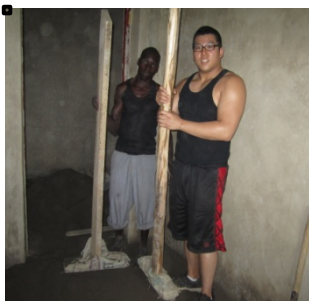
Today after arriving at the health centre David invited those of us who hadn't been to Uganda before to go for a walk down to the watering hole. On our way there we saw many goats, and people working in their fields. We also got to have a look at their huts up close as we were passing by. Before arriving at the watering hole we came to the bore hole well that they put in last year when the team was here. Jordan even filled a lady's water jug for her while we were there.



The watering hole was a lot smaller than I imagined it to be, and there was a film covering the top of the water. David told us that before the bore hole well was installed the locals would both drink and bathe from this water because that is all they had. At home we hear about how unsafe their drinking water is, and how sick they can get from it, but it never really sunk in for me until I actually saw for myself the water they used. They are fortunate enough in Barlonyo to have a few borehole wells, but in other parts of the country they are still drinking the same water that they bathe in. It is just devastating to see.



In the clinic today we saw about 160 people, most of them being children as they were free. This is the first year that the clinic is charging a fee of 2000 shillings for the adults to receive care. The fee of 2000 shillings roughly works out to be one Canadian dollar but to the locals it is a lot of money. Seeing how sick some of those babies were really broke my heart. I was glad they were able to get the care they so badly needed.



Outside the construction crew poured the cement floors in the rooms that still needed it and they ran wires on the ceiling to eventually hook up the solar panels. Carolyn worked all day at sanding down the walls with rocks so that they will be smooth enough to paint tomorrow.



She is such a hard worker; I know that I couldn't stand in the hot sun all day like she did. I'm sure it's pretty boring too.

After lunch the team walked over to the school to hand out pencils and other school supplies to the children. They were all so excited to see all of the things we brought for them. We gave each child three pencils, and the rest will be given to Victory Outreach Ministries to hold onto until they are needed. The children were so happy to get those pencils, a few of them came over to the clinic later on and they were still holding onto their pencils. It was so rewarding to see their smiles and to know that those supplies are appreciated.



DAY 6 – MAY 23, 2012

Today started out pretty rough for a lot of us. We were all feeling kind of sick from the food. We only saw about 107 people today, however, I am kind of thankful it was a slow day at the clinic so we could rest a bit in between patients, but it would have been nice to help more people.

The boys got the water tanks installed today and partly filled with water, while Carolyn and her painting crew got the whole outside of the building primed today.



*I am feeling very privileged that I was able to go to Uganda to serve God's precious people in Barlonyo. Life is hard there, they face daily struggles and challenges even for the most simple of tasks that we take for granted here. Yet, I notice their smiles and their gratefulness to our team. We cannot change the whole world, but we are given opportunities to make a difference in even one person's life, and for that, I am ever so thankful to god. – Karin Baar*



DAY 7 – MAY 24, 2012

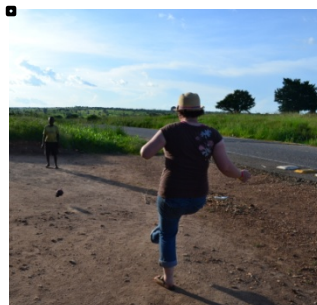
Today was our break day at Murchison Falls National Park. It was amazing to see all the animals in the wild. The giraffes were absolutely beautiful and the elephants were just huge. It is not like any experience you would get from a zoo at home.



The highlight of my day was not seeing all the animals and the beautiful scenery though. It was when our bus broke down. Now you probably think I am crazy, but this experience made my whole trip perfect. I also think Nancy might agree.

When David told us to use our hearts as another sense, boy was he ever right. I never thought I would feel it the way I did today. We were driving home from the safari when the clutch broke on our bus. At first I had the normal reaction that most people would. I thought to myself “great, we are going to be stuck here for hours with nothing to do.” But I was completely wrong. As I was sitting on the bus I looked out the window and saw some kids staring back at me from across the road. Little did I know I was about to feel so much love when I met one of them.

Some of us got off the bus to stretch and use the bathroom, and Nancy being the kind of person she is, started singing for the children. Naturally others, including myself, joined her in singing. Now of course a bunch of white people singing on the street in a tiny village in Uganda is probably not a normal thing, and as a result before long we had a whole crowd of children and adults coming around to listen to us sing, play catch and just interact with each other.

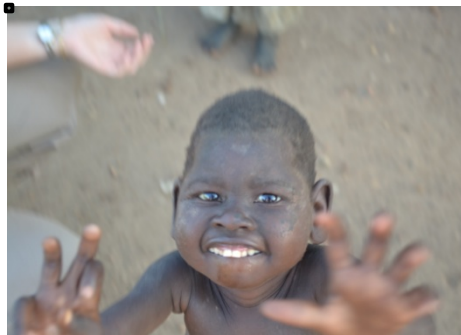


Nancy had a very special moment when a drunken man walking down the road came over to see what we were doing. Nancy opened her heart to this man and started talking to him and asking him about his family and telling him about God. Not long into their



conversation the man fell to his knees and asked Nancy to help him accept Christ into his life. Nancy was so happy to hear that this man wanted a better life and wanted to have a relationship with God.

It was about this time that my heart started to beat a little faster as well. A little girl came running from behind a building with her arms wide open and the biggest smile on her face. However, what really caught my eye was that she had a mental disability. Being a developmental service worker I have a real soft spot for people with disabilities to begin with, but when I saw this little girl I was so full of joy and love for her that all I could do was smile.



A little boy who we assumed to be her brother kept coming and taking her back where no one could see her, as many times as we told him we didn't mind her being with us, he would still come and take her away. In places like this people are not educated about

disabilities and illnesses; they just know they are different. They try to hide the mentally handicapped and keep them out of the public. This little girl was so happy just to be around us, and to play like everyone else, she didn't care that she was different.



*I am a much braver person after coming on this trip. I had to get on the plane by myself not knowing if David and the rest of the team had received my flight information, and who was going to be at the airport to meet me when I landed in Entebbe. There was a moment the night before my plane took off where I said to myself "I'll just go on the next trip" because I did not want to get on that plane and travel alone, but I did it! – Sam McBride*



After meeting this little girl and having her touch my heart I was ok with our bus breaking down. I was actually kind of happy that we were stranded in this little village with no way to get home until someone three hours away came to get us. If our bus had not broken down, I would never have had this amazing opportunity to meet this little girl. This opportunity made my entire trip worth it. If all I came to do was to meet that little girl then I would have gone home happy.



DAY 8 – MAY 25, 2012

Iain went to speak at the school for the second time today. On Wednesday when he went he said his slide presentation was not working so he just had to gesture and draw pictures for them, but today they got it working! He said they talked about the earth and its uniqueness to all the other planets. They talked about water, and he told him that it is why the earth is so unique. Tomorrow they will discuss light and the solar system. Ian said it has taken time to get the students to open up and ask questions, but by the end of the day they were all curious to know more.



Today was a pretty normal day on site. Although the turnout was the smallest yet, at 103 people, I think a lot was accomplished. The local men started to fill in the veranda with bricks and started digging the trench around the building to lay the paver bricks around. Inside they started priming the walls, although I think Jordan and Carolyn got more paint on themselves than the walls!



DAY 9 – MAY 26, 2012

Today was another slow day at the clinic, we saw 101 people but there was a lot of work done on the construction of the building again today. They started to lay the pavers around the veranda and they finished cementing the wall on the one section of the veranda as well.

David got up on the roof to help install the solar panels and Ted finished off the wire connections for the control panel of the ionizing system. On Monday they will install the battery and start testing the water!



DAY 10 – MAY 27, 2012

Today we went to church in Barlonyo at the school. I missed church last week so this was new for me. It was just like everyone said about last week, when they went to church. The singing was very fun and energetic. They danced and had a drum and shaker too. I found it tricky at times to follow the sermon though because of their accents. Once I finally realized what they had said five minutes ago then I had to try to catch myself up again.

Church here is very different than my church at home. I was raised in an Anglican church so I am used to routine and saying/doing the same things every week, but here and at my aunt's church someone just preaches to you the whole time. It is all very different to me.



*The Good Samaritan story has three categories; the first being 'what is yours is mine if I can steal it,' the second being 'what is mine is mine,' and the third being 'what is mine is yours if you need it.' A good portion of our world is stuck in category two with some also in category one. We are in category three. We have given up comfort and luxury to be here for the people of Barlonyo in their time of need. – Iain Sommerville*

`After church we went into Barlonyo to see the memorial for all the innocent Ugandans and soldiers that were killed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in 2004. The rebels would come into the villages and rape and kill at random to try and get the government to pay attention to their wants and needs. So the government formed camps for all the local people and surrounded them with soldiers to protect the people from the LRA. However, there were not enough guards to defend the camps and innocent people ended up being killed.

The plaque on the memorial site says that 121 Ugandans were killed, but all the locals told us it was over 300 people killed.



DAY 11 – MAY 28, 2012

Today was our last working day at the health centre. There were a lot of people waiting for us when we got there in the morning. It was so nice to see more people than usual; however we were short one doctor so unfortunately we probably would not be able to care for everyone. Doctor Paul had the hardest job that day. He had to go out to the waiting room and decide which people were the sickest and need our help the most, and the rest would have to wait and see if we had time to see them or not. It was a very emotional day for a lot of the team because we really hated to turn people away. Ruth also got very upset when she saw a baby that had a very bad burn on her bum. Ruth said she felt very inadequate when we were searching in our dressing bag



and didn't have much to cover the burn. At the end of our day we ended up taking the baby to a hospital so that she could get the care she so badly needed.

Nancy, Karin, and Sara were very happy that the eye glass clinic was busier today than any other day. It is free to everyone so they didn't have to turn anyone away.



The construction crew got all of the blue paint finished today; it looks awesome. The ionizing system was also finished today. Ted and Iain were so happy and excited when Iain flipped the switch and turned it on. It was so great to see the system in action and to know that there will be clean and safe water for the people at the clinic.



DAY 12 – MAY 29, 2012

Today was the commissioning ceremony for the health centre. It was a long service, mostly because half of the time we had no idea what the locals were saying, but we all enjoyed when the school children got up and danced for us a few times during the service. Iain gave a wonderful speech and then he and Carolyn hung the plaque in memory of Ruth. It was very emotional when the ribbon was cut and all the locals were singing and dancing their way through the building. Iain was also given a chicken as a gift from a Lady in the village.



After the commissioning there was music playing and we were all dancing together until it was time for us to go. As it was our last day we got big hugs and well wishes for safe travel home. It was a little bitter sweet to say good-bye.





## FINAL THOUGHTS

This trip was more than I ever thought it would be. To be honest I am not sure what I expected to begin with. I had the pictures in my mind that you see of the sad children on television when they are trying to get you to donate, and I have to say, it really is not like that at all. While their situation is far worse than ours, they do not show it on their face. Just about every person we met while in Uganda always had a big smile on their face and was always so happy to have us there. This trip has brought me closer to Christ, and has made me more aware of the little things in life that we all could live without. This trip has changed my life, and I cannot wait to go back!

The trip to Uganda was an amazing and eye-opening experience. It really showed me how much we actually have and that we truly do live in affluence and abundance in Canada. It's also important to realize and remember that Jesus wants us to be his hands and feet in the world, and that also means to serve the poor and give away some of our wealth in order to help those who need it more. For us it meant to give up some comforts for a couple of weeks, but to the people in Barlonyo, it really could mean the difference between life and death. It really felt good to be a part of the construction of the health center in Barlonyo. I would definitely encourage and challenge others to take part in a developmental outreach in the future and help make a difference in the lives of those in need. – Jordan Wiens

Uganda was a life changing experience. I am truly blessed! This trip has really changed my perspective on the way I live, and has opened my heart to how much can really be done by one person or even a small team who are willing to give what they were blessed with to help those who haven't been blessed in the same way. This trip was a challenge as well in terms of being out of my comfort zone and away from my family and friends. It was also a challenge to see many people suffering and to see how difficult it was for the people in Barlonyo to receive the basic necessities of life, and not be able to do more. I am however joyful that I was able to be part of this team in doing what could be done for this village. Would I do it again? Most likely I would, because the benefits truly outweighed the hardships. My prayers and thoughts continue to go out to the people in Uganda, and I find joy in knowing that one day we will be together in heaven. – Vivian Wong







