

# EKISA MINISTRIES



2018 ANNUAL REPORT





## OUR MISSION

To give children with special needs access to support services and opportunities to participate meaningfully in their communities so they can thrive.

## OUR VISION

A loving family for every child in Uganda, despite his or her disability.

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## LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



After seven years in our Residential Care, Rachel was adopted into a loving family in 2018.

*Psalms 118:27: "The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine on us."*

People who have visited Ekisa Ministries often say, "Thank you for the good work you are doing, what you are doing is not easy."

There will always be a long list of challenges we face when working with children with special needs in Uganda, but the joys that come with our work far exceed those challenges. There is joy found in children reaching milestones, joy in children returning home to their families, and joy in parents learning how to advocate for their child for the first time. Above all, there is no greater joy than that which we find in Christ, knowing He is doing powerful work here in Uganda. God's goodness always shines through, no matter the challenges faced.

Ekisa strives to be at the forefront of best practices in orphan care. We aim to fulfill the immediate needs of children while also addressing the underlying problems they are facing. We are creating more opportunities for the fatherless to find families, giving more children access to support services, and are ultimately working to end the stigma these children face. These goals are interwoven into all the work we do and fuel us to continue with what God has called us to.

Ekisa's unwavering goal is for all children to be in families. Ekisa has now placed more children into loving families than the number residing in our home today. We are proud of this progress because we know children belong in families. In 2018, five children left our Residential Care to move into families through short-term foster care, resettlement, and foster-to-adopt families. In 2019, to further our commitment to a family for every child, we are launching the Uganda Foster Care Collective. This will be a network

of organizations committed to expanding opportunities for foster care in Jinja.

Families in our Community Care Program continue to benefit from the services we provide. This past year seven parents were empowered to start businesses of their own, a new satellite therapy location was added, and savings groups were started amongst two of our regional groups. Beyond the 85 families we serve on our program, 68 additional children received therapy or referral services from our staff.

At Ekisa Academy we are looking forward to expanding the school day from a half-day to a full-day. At the same time, we are hoping to help other schools in the area to start special education classrooms. This will provide access and inclusion to more children living with special needs.

The need to care for, provide services to, and educate children and their families is unimaginable. We pray God will provide the resources and individuals for Ekisa Ministries to continue to expand its reach, meet needs, and provide long-term solutions to the issues of disability in Uganda. Thank you to everyone who has played a part in helping Ekisa pursue these goals in 2018. We pray your sense of anticipation will be as great as ours is as we wait to see where God takes us in 2019.

With gratitude,



Jared Scheppmann, *Executive Director*



Our heart at Ekisa is to see children living with special needs celebrated in their own families and communities. Scripture and science affirm this, and tell us children grow best in families. Children need love, a sense of belonging, the experience of a family, and connection to community.

## COMMUNITY CARE

We have found that children living with special needs are most often removed from their families and placed in institutions because of poverty and stigma. Our Community Care Program removes these barriers and helps families gain access to the resources and encouragement they need in order to lovingly raise their child.

We now have many parents who are living examples that families are able to overcome stigma and the unique challenges of raising a child living with special needs when given the right support.

### HOW IT WORKS

**Social Work:** We have 8 full-time social workers who are trained to educate parents on the causes of disability and how to develop a Biblical worldview of their child. Our social workers perform regular home visits and are on call 24/7 to assist families in crisis situations and times of heightened risk. Their counseling support has proven to be the encouragement that parents often need in difficult times.

**Therapy:** Each child in our program has access to free weekly physiotherapy as well as consultations with our speech and occupational therapists. Our therapists help train and equip parents with exercises they can do with their child at home. They also help teach parents how to create assistive devices such as standing frames using only cardboard, paper, and glue.

**Medical Assistance:** We help offset the expensive costs associated with surgeries and medicine, and provide transportation stipends for important medical trips to ensure that every child has access to the high-quality medical care they need and deserve.

**Business Training & Investment:** We have a full-time Empowerment Coordinator who leads a business training course for select parents. After graduating, these parents are eligible to receive a start-up loan to launch their own small business.



### JERUSHA'S STORY

Jerusha is six years old and has microcephaly, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy. In 2018 Ekisa made it possible for her to have a gastrostomy feeding tube (G-tube) placed. A G-tube helps deliver nutrition directly to the stomach. Jerusha desperately needed a G-tube because she had been struggling with severe malnutrition and aspiration pneumonia. Thanks to your generous support, Ekisa was able to cover the cost of her surgery as well as the cost of transporting Jerusha and her mom to western Uganda for the procedure. After a successful surgery, they both returned to Jinja and stayed in our emergency housing for close monitoring.

Today Jerusha is thriving at home with her mother and grandmother. Her health has greatly improved and she is now within the normal weight range for her age! She no longer struggles to eat and breathe, and her improved health has allowed her to come back to school at Ekisa Academy. Jerusha enjoys attending Orange Class where she is learning how to interact with the environment around her. Her mother, Phiona, joined Ekisa's team as a mama in our Residential Care Program. We couldn't think of a more perfect person for this job. Because of her own daughter's healing journey and the love that was shown to her family, Phiona now wants to pay it forward and show love to other children in need. Phiona is able to offer compassion and unconditional love to the children in our care, and we are so grateful for that. We love this family and we love seeing them flourish!

328

home visits by social workers

85

families supported in 52 communities

transportation for

139

medical trips covered

7

families received business training and start-up loans

29

assistive devices distributed





## RESIDENTIAL CARE

In 2018 we provided a transitional home to 21 children living with special needs. Our team of 22 mamas provided 24/7 care and unconditional love to each child. This past year our social workers succeeded abundantly in placing five of these children in loving families through resettlement, foster care, or adoption. We rejoice in God's faithfulness—as His word says in Psalm 68:6, He “sets the lonely in families.”

The remaining 16 children in our care are a unique and precious child made in the image of God, and we will not rest until each one of them has a family to love and care for them!

**ONE**  
international adoption

**TWO**  
children resettled

**THREE**  
children placed in families

**TWELVE**  
new sponsors for children

NANCY'S STORY

Nancy was referred to Ekisa in 2014 after her parents had abandoned her and left her with her grandmother who was unable to provide adequate care. Upon meeting for the first time, our social workers knew Nancy's life was at-risk—she was severely malnourished and needed immediate attention. While our team always strives to keep children at home with their families, our social workers knew they needed to admit Nancy into our Residential Care for temporary care and rehabilitation. Nancy's grandmother clearly loved her, and so the ultimate goal was to resettle her when it was safe to do so.

Over time, Nancy gained weight and made improvements in physiotherapy.

She made incredible progress as she went from scooting to learning how to walk with support, and went from avoiding eye contact with people to learning how to engage with the world around her. We know Nancy to be a beautiful young girl with the biggest smile and laugh. She loves music and dancing, and shows affection and love to those who have earned her trust.

In December, after four years in our care, our social work team unanimously agreed it was time for Nancy to go home. Her grandmother had completed visits to Ekisa to spend time with Nancy, and trial home visits had gone exceedingly well. It was clear that her grandmother was ready, and so was she!





*“Some of the most wonderful people are the ones who don’t fit into boxes.”*

## EKISA ACADEMY

47

students enrolled

16

students are learning how to make clear yes/no signals

4

students started reading

9

students learned how to use the Picture Exchange Communication system to express their wants and needs

An estimated 90% of the 100 million children living with disabilities in developing countries do not go to school. Since 2015, we have been overcoming this barrier by offering a high-quality, specialized Christian education at Ekisa Academy. Ekisa Academy follows a holistic approach to special education, offering physiotherapy, speech and occupational therapy, multi-sensory teaching, training in daily life skills, and lesson plans tailored to each child’s skill level. This program allows parents to work and rest while their children are at school, and sends a message to the wider community that children living with disabilities are worthy of being educated, celebrated, and invested in.



### JOSHUA’S STORY

Joshua has been attending Ekisa Academy since our school first opened. After four years of perseverance and dedication, he has graduated from Orange Class, our sensory-based curriculum, to Green Class, our academic curriculum. This is a huge victory for both him and our teachers!

When Joshua first came to school he was often in his own world. He has very limited vision and at the time did not like interacting with people. He often showed repetitive behaviors that did not have much purpose.

Today he is able to respond to his name and will turn toward sounds and respond to touch. He is more engaged

with his teachers and the world around him. He now makes intentional movements such as purposefully touching or grasping objects like musical instruments, and will seek out toys and activities that allow him to control his environment. He has improved his communication skills, has a larger range of vocalizations, and can try to imitate sounds he hears.

As a student in Green Class, we look forward to seeing Joshua gain basic communication skills as he learns how to make clear yes/no signals. We are excited to see him develop this skill as well as others through play based learning and a wide range of fun and engaging activities!







Blue Class at Ekisa Academy's annual Christmas nativity play.





*“I have loved you with an everlasting love”  
Jeremiah 31:1*

## NIGHT TO SHINE

Night to Shine is always one of our favorite nights of the year! It is a time to remind each child that their Father in heaven delights in them, and that they are made in the image of God. This year we had the vision of extending the invitation to this special night to more than just the children and families we serve. We invited over 50 children being served by other special needs organizations in our community, giving each of these children their first experience attending prom and getting to walk down the red carpet being cheered on and celebrated by their peers! Our staff went above and beyond planning this year’s prom; they

truly wanted it to be a night each guest would never forget. For the first time, we served cotton candy, cupcakes and popcorn, and guests were inspired by a performance on stage by a famous local dancer who is disabled. Before the dance party kicked off, every child was crowned by one of the Amazima students in our Buddy Program. At the end of the night, each guest went home with a framed picture of their family, something that is always treasured here in Uganda. We are incredibly thankful for the Tim Tebow Foundation who help make this night possible year after year. It is always a sweet glimpse of heaven on earth.





# 2018 MINISTRY ACHIEVEMENTS



## DONATIONS UP BY 26%

Giving totaled more than \$329,000—a 26% increase from FY 2017.



## NEW VIDEO RELEASED

We released our first-ever video about the story of a family in our Community Care Program on November 17th. 18 people hosted viewing parties in 3 countries.



## MORE CHILDREN IN FAMILIES

For the first time since 2012, the number of children in our Residential Care home is down to 16.



## BETTER TOGETHER

In 2018 we saw the power of partnering with likeminded ministries to further advance the mission of God. We grew our Buddy Program with Amazima Ministries and partnered with Home Sweet Home for vocational training opportunities for our older children on their farm.



## 350% INCREASE IN SPONSORSHIP

We made significant progress in increasing the number of sponsors to support our Residential Care and Community Care programs. Thank you to the 32 sponsors who faithfully donate each month to support the children and families we serve!





## STORY FROM A DONOR

“My wife Angie and I had the opportunity to meet Jared and Stefani Scheppmann while living in Uganda fostering to adopt. As we learned about Ekisa Ministries we just knew we had to visit their office to learn more. On our visit we learned of their mission to ‘not only care for these children with special needs but also to equip their families to take them back and raise them in their home.’ The mission was being carried out during our visit as we met many wonderful caretakers of these beautiful children. We are so grateful that God has allowed us to learn of this special ministry and to be able to support them both financially and through prayer!”

- PAUL AND ANGIE STRINGFELLOW



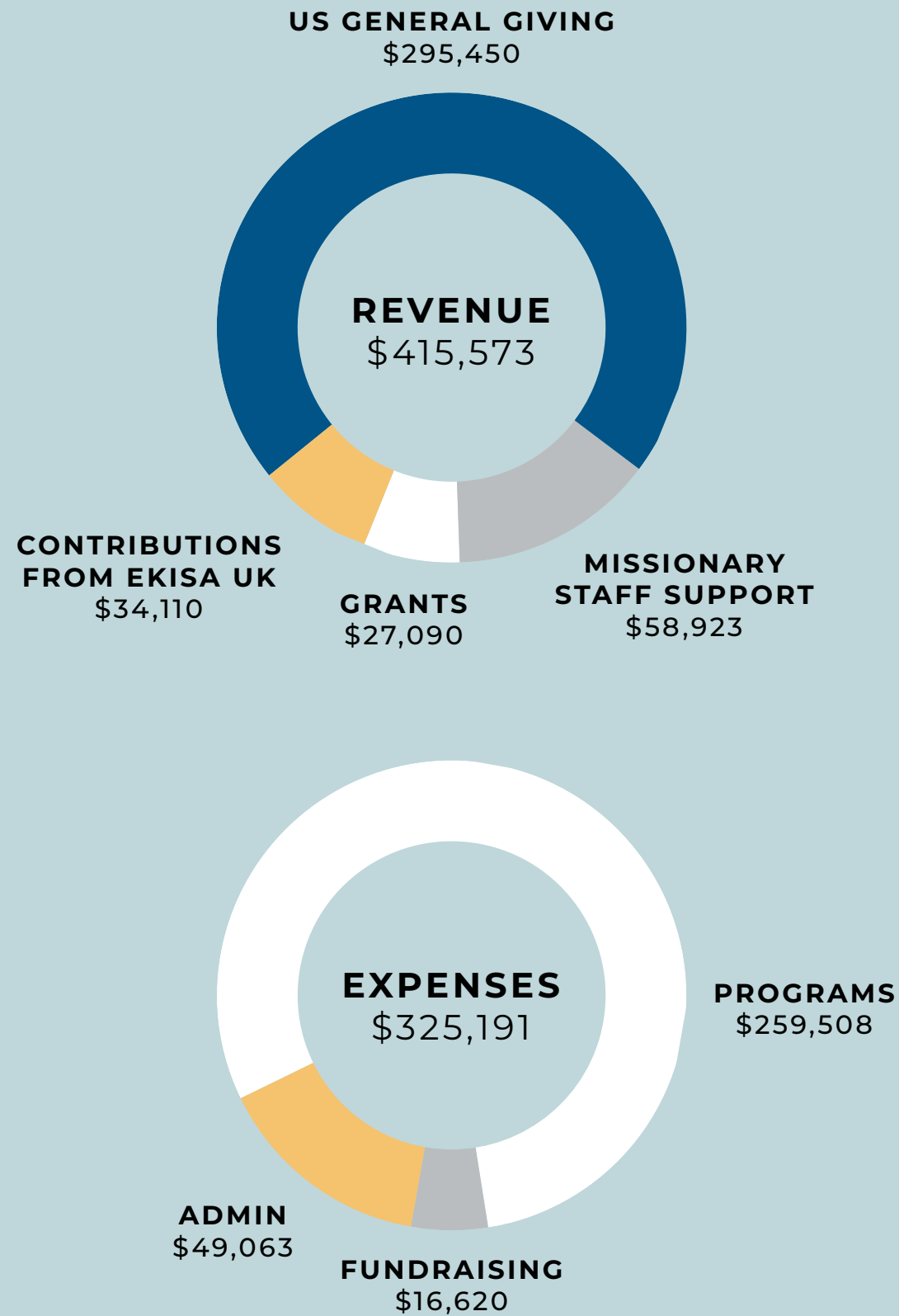
“After graduating from college, I knew there was nowhere else I would rather spend a few months than in Uganda volunteering with Ekisa Ministries. Since the first time I walked through the gate at Ekisa, I have learned so much. I believe it is a privilege to be immersed in another culture and to experience the ways of life on a different side of the world. The kids, mamas, teachers, social workers, and other team members at Ekisa are such beautiful people and it was an honor to serve alongside them as a special education volunteer at Ekisa Academy. I think we all have a great deal to learn from one another and that is what made my experience so special. The work Ekisa is doing to serve kids living with special needs in Uganda is incredible to witness and a joy to take part in.”

- LINDSEY BRANNEN

## STORY FROM A VOLUNTEER



# 2018 FINANCIALS



## U.S. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

<b>SUPPORT + REVENUE</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>
CONTRIBUTIONS	337,076	226,835
RESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS	-	6,000
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT + REVENUE</b>	<b>337,076</b>	<b>232,835</b>
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<b>FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>
PROGRAM SERVICES	242,985	243,019
RESTRICTED PROGRAM SERVICES	-	6,000
GENERAL + ADMINISTRATIVE	35,648	26,785
FUNDRAISING	10,762	3,865
<b>TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>289,395</b>	<b>279,669</b>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	47,681	-46,834
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	64,524	111,358
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>112,205</b>	<b>64,524</b>



## 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### MARK ARMSTRONG, MA

Board Member  
 Vice President of Insurance Services (retired),  
*Valmark Securities*

### PRINCILLA CRANE, RN

Board Member  
 Active mother, wife, mentor and friend

### ROBIN JOYCE

Board Member  
 Director of Institutional Advancement,  
*Faith Lutheran Christian School*

### JEREMY MACK

Board Chairman  
 Founding Pastor,  
*Solomon's Porch Christian Community*

### MATT MOONEY, JD

Board Vice President  
 Executive Director,  
*99 Balloons*

### WILL ROGERS, BSBA FINANCE & REAL ESTATE

Board Treasurer  
 Senior Accounting Manager,  
*Diamond Resorts*

### JARED SCHEPPMANN, MBA

Board Member  
 Executive Director,  
*Ekisa Ministries*

## SENIOR STAFF

**JARED SCHEPPMANN**, Executive Director  
**EMILY HENDERSON**, Child Development Director  
**CHRISTINE CHABATA**, Nursing Director  
**KRISTIN KLEIN**, Communications Director  
**SAMUEL SSEMMWANGA**, Business Manager  
**LYNET KAZIMURA**, Social Work Manager  
**PETER BUSSEY**, Education Manager  
**BRIAN BWIRE**, Therapy Manager  
**CHRISTINE TINO**, Home Manager



continues to allow the ministry to take strides forward year after year as we build institutional wisdom across the breadth of our ministry. Their commitment to “best practices” allows for frequent evaluation of our ministry programs and goals, driving us to constantly look for ways to improve the services we provide. One example is our Community Care Program which provides an array of services to children with special needs that do not live in our home and may not attend our school.

On behalf of the Ekisa family, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, and your prayerfully given financial resources. Without your love and generosity, we could not provide a loving home, facilitate adoption and foster care, educate, and provide community support to the more than 169 children with special needs the Lord has given us the privilege to serve on a daily basis. Nor could we employ the more than fifty Ugandan employees that include social workers, house moms, and cooks.

We are so very proud of our in-country leadership as well. The stability and integrity with which they live their lives and carry out the ministry is such an incredible testimony to our Lord, and it has allowed Ekisa to make a big difference in the lives of the people they serve. Their leadership and training of our staff by word and example

A portion of the credit for this stability, integrity, and innovation also goes to you, our faithful supporters. Your consistent commitment to the vision of Ekisa has allowed us to find, hire and retain the very best in their respective fields, giving us the ability to not just provide care, but to do so with excellence. As we continue to strive to remove the stigma of special needs in Uganda, grow our foster care network, see more children in loving families, and provide a greater level of community care, we pray that you will continue on this journey with us as a partner in all that we do. On behalf of the Ekisa family, thank you, and may the Lord richly bless you in all things.

In Christ,

Jeremy Mack, Board Chairman





*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for  
at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we  
do not give up”  
Galatians 6:9*

