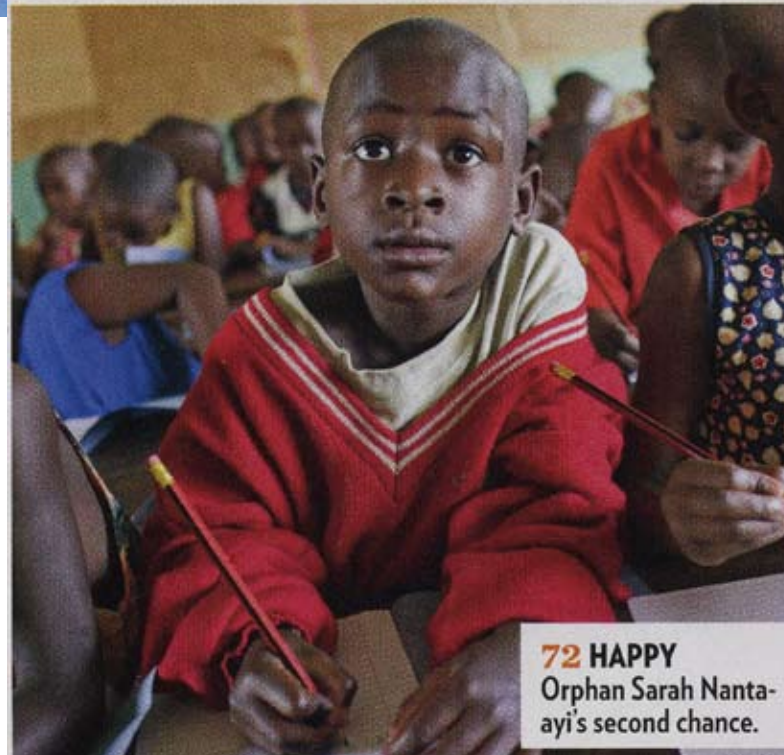


DECEMBER 17, 2007

# People

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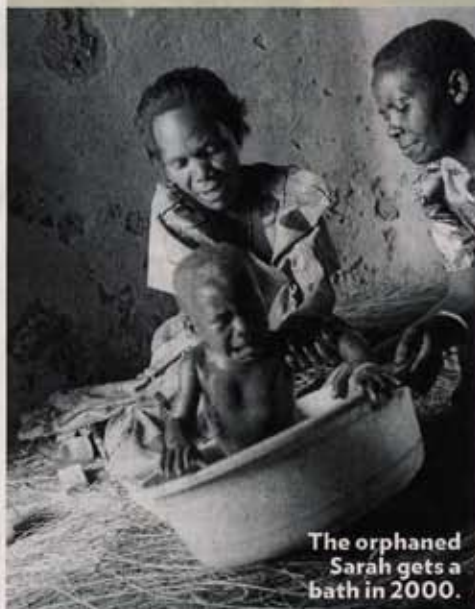


**72 HAPPY**  
Orphan Sarah Nantaayi's second chance.

People Magazine's December 17, 2007 issue contains a four page article about AIDS orphan Sarah Nantaayi and her 7 year relationship with Stephen Shames

SHE WAS A FEISTY ORPHAN LIVING IN A UGANDAN VILLAGE WITH LITTLE FOOD AND LESS HOPE. BUT TODAY, 8-YEAR-OLD SARAH NANTAAYI HAS A SPOT IN A TOP SCHOOL AND A SHOT AT A FUTURE, THANKS TO AN AMERICAN WHO HELPED FEED HER FAMILY—AND HER HUNGRY MIND

PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY STEPHEN SHAMES  
TEXT BY PETE NORMAN



The orphaned Sarah gets a bath in 2000.



## BIG DREAMS

"I want to be a teacher when I get older. I want to learn," says Sarah (left, with friend Shirat Nabukenya in Kampala, Uganda). That was inconceivable seven years ago: Sarah's parents, farmers in a village named Kalungi, had died of AIDS, leaving five children with no support. Villagers named the oldest, then 12, head of the family. Neighbors pitched in, and the kids learned to grow pumpkins and plantains. But survival was a struggle.

# EDUCATING SARAH



Sarah with her "moms" (in 2006). Right, she reads as brother Joseph looks on from outside.

## ◀ A NEW FAMILY

In 2003—three years after he had first photographed Sarah and her siblings for an essay on AIDS in Uganda—U.S. photojournalist Stephen Shames returned to their village. Struck by their tenacity ("It took us half an hour to walk to get water and an hour to get back because the drums were so heavy," says Sarah's sister Sanyu, now 13), Shames decided education was their best ticket out of poverty. With his own money, he found "mothers" to care for Sarah and a handful of orphans in a house in Uganda's capital, 120 miles from her village.



## BUZZ TIME ▶

Being groomed for the future, Sarah (in 2005) warily peers in the mirror while getting a haircut typical of Ugandan children. Shames' plan was for her to attend an elite boarding school. But first, in preparation, Sarah moved to Kampala, learned English, visited doctors (malaria is a problem in the region) and was outfitted with clothes and supplies.



## STAR QUALITY ▶

Soon to start third grade at Budo Junior School, Sarah today revels in the role of "Dorm Mom," helping to look after more than 60 students on the 30-acre campus. "I like best the school motto: So little done, so much to be done," she says. Just how far she and her sister Sanyu (who also attends the school) go depends on how hard they push themselves, says Budo Junior principal William Kayango. "The children here are destined to be the cream of Uganda—politicians, doctors. They are getting hope where there was no hope and a future where there was no future."



"I'm so lucky," says Sarah (with pals at school).

## A FACE HE COULDN'T FORGET

"She's a great kid," says Chicago-raised photographer Stephen Shames of Sarah Nantaayi, the youngest of 78 children in Uganda he currently supports, with the goal of getting each one an education. "When I think of what she has already gone through in life," says Shames, 60, who is divorced with a grown son, "just to see her happy makes it all worthwhile." ([www.stephenshames.org](http://www.stephenshames.org))



Sarah and best friend Shirat in new school uniforms in 2006.

Shames and Sarah in Kampala.