

# December

2013 edition



## The first ABIDE girls have graduated!

**"You have heard me teach** things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. **Now teach these truths** to other trustworthy people who will be able to **pass them on to others."**

2 Timothy 2:2

Well, December 8th has come and gone. The pioneers of the ABIDE girls program have graduated, and moved on to the next step of their lives. Let me back up...

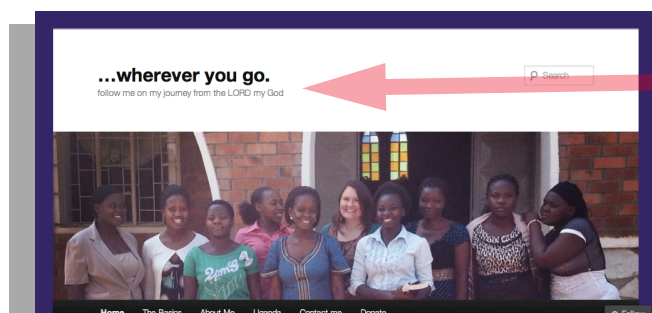
The last week of the program is a bit of a blur. We conducted final review sessions for

all of the classes. The students took exams, then we graded them. They said goodbye to host families and neighbors, in whom they had invested over the past few months. We kept checking the bank account, and kept finding it empty...so we prayed, adjusted plans, prayed some more, and just had faith that somehow we would have the resources we needed to put together a nice graduation ceremony.

I still don't really know how it happened, but God provided! We had enough food for all the guests (family, Juna Amagara staff and students, alumni, community members, and more), which is a key component for any Ugandan party. When I saw the tents being delivered and set up on the compound, I thought *well, we don't have any money to pay them for this...but I'm not going to say anything; we will just see what happens!* Also, we decided we couldn't buy decora-

tions, but flowers from a wedding some of us attended and/or helped at the day before were donated to our event. The creative solutions God arranged continued to amaze me as they just fell into place. Even the weather was perfect for the outdoor event...the previous evening it had rained, but it was a beautiful sunny day that Sunday.

We were blessed to have the Executive Director of JAM, and his wife (Dr. Rev. Ben & Lilian Tumuheirwe) present at the event: they sang, danced, and gave speeches. Matt Kehn, the ABIDE Director, encouraged the students as well. We gave out certificates and other gifts, then cut the cakes that the girls had baked. We were also blessed with an inspiring speech from our Guest of Honor (Mabel Twinamasiko), who began a similar program for girls several years ago, inspired by the impact ABIDE had on her son. All in all, it was a day filled with God's blessings.



Please check out my website: [golisaobrien.com](http://golisaobrien.com). Take a look around the different pages to find out a little bit more about me and Uganda.

Don't forget to **Follow** me as well so that you are kept up-to-date when I post blogs.

I try to post stories and pictures at least once a week.





## What's been happening since graduation...

After graduation, the ABIDE staff were given a break for three and a half weeks...Well, sort of...After one week passed, we had a couple days of meetings to evaluate the girls' program. Yet, for me, the break was so full!

Following graduation, a good friend of mine came to visit me for two weeks. That's right, she decided to take her vacation time and spend a chunk of December in the sunshine of Uganda, rather than the snow of Illinois. (You are welcome to come visit me too if you want!) Two Ugandan friends joined us for a little adventure during her first week here. I took advantage of having a visitor as my excuse to be a bit of a tourist. We went to a beautiful area in the northern part of the country called Marchison Falls, filled with beautiful wildlife. It is super exciting to see animals like giraffes in their natural environment, gracefully running through the forest. But what was also so fun, was seeing Ugandans, even those who live and work in the park, just as excited about seeing the elephants, crocodiles, hippos, warthogs, monkeys, and more. At one point our guide had us walking through the forest (okay, more than one time), and I found myself acting as a product of three older brothers: I was asking questions about the animal tracks and dung we were passing along the way. We were sharing a path usually traversed by all of these animals, with a real possibility of encountering a lion...which we didn't! Phew!

Another part of our adventure was passing through the city of Jinja. Here we went to see the Nile (although some "falls" or rapids

are not there anymore because of dams put in for electric power), as well as stop in to see Amazima Ministries. Maybe some of you have read a book called *Kisses from Katie*, about a young American woman and her life and ministry in Uganda. Well, in 2013, two of our male students were from her program, and in 2014 we will have 1 male and 1 female student from Amazima. Katie wasn't there when we visited, but it was good to see the location and meet one of our ABIDE students before she reports for classes.

Another stop was even further east in Mbale, to attend a wedding. This wedding was a very significant one for the ABIDE family. An ABIDE alumnus from the boys' program in 2013 married one of the recent girl graduates. It was exciting to attend the first wedding of its kind!

Finally, I was able to bring my friend home for a week, so she could meet some of my friends and coworkers. She helped me move out of the ABIDE house and into a nearby apartment. We hosted a Christmas party for some friends in the area. Additionally, she was with me when I finally saw zebras! (Check out my video on my website if you don't know the significance of this! It's on the *basics* tab.) I also made sure to send her home with some African crafts to sell at Sozo Market, a shop recently opened to raise funds for ministries like ABIDE. Check it out: [rescued4life.wix.com](http://rescued4life.wix.com)

After my friend left, I spent Christmas with the children at JAM's children's home, and New Year's with a friend in Kampala. Before I knew it, it was time for staff meetings again! Please take a look at the prayer requests to the right as we begin a new program this January.

Thanks for all your prayers and support!  
~Lisa O'Brien

## WAYS TO PRAY:

1. Pray for the recent ABIDE graduates (& all 80+ alumni): they would continue to grow & apply what they've learned wherever they are now (school, work, home, etc.). Many have a desire to continue their education, but don't have the means to do so.
2. Pray for ABIDE staff as we work with the largest number of invited students in the history of the program. Pray for dependence upon God's strength & wisdom as we desire to be Christ-like examples to the students.
3. Pray for the incoming students for the 2014 program, that God would use ABIDE to transform them in Christian faith, character, and leadership.
4. Pray for me as my role is slightly different for this program. I am no longer living on campus with the students. Pray that I will be able to rest more, yet be intentional about investing in the lives of students while living off-site. Also, Joseline (House Administrator) is on maternity leave, and I am the Acting Administrator until she returns; pray for me as my responsibilities increase.
5. Pray for the financial provision of the program. Our needs have grown significantly, but our bank account hasn't! (To contribute, follow instructions below, but choose ABIDE instead of Missionary Support.)

Thank you SO much  
to you who have prayed, given support,  
or are continuing to give monthly!  
God is using YOU to make  
this ministry possible!



**To get involved, send support to:**

Juna Amagara Ministries  
ATTN: Lisa O'Brien Support  
P.O. Box 2384  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138-2384  
OR  
[www.amagara.org](http://www.amagara.org)  
(donations, missionary support)