

Spreading Kindness: Nurse Richard

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It's true, first impressions are important! Here at CURE Uganda, we are blessed with someone who works hard at giving patients and their families an amazing first impression – nurse Richard Nabende. Prior to COVID-19 protocols, as the Outpatients Department Coordinator, Richard was the first person from the medical team that patients and their families met at CURE Uganda.

Richard has been at CURE for over a year and sees his job as an important ministry. He recognizes that families are usually worried and overwhelmed by the time they get to the hospital and are scared about what's next. Richard views each patient interaction as a true divine appointment, and a chance to encourage them and calm their fears. The Outpatients Department (OPD) generally sees 90-100 patients each week, which means **Richard is responsible for welcoming more than 4,500 patients and their families to CURE Uganda each year!**

Richard's experience uniquely prepared him for his work at CURE Uganda. At his previous job, nurses were underpaid and lacked the resources they needed to care for patients. As a result, motivation was low and staff frustration was high. Patients were not treated with the kindness they deserved. However, Richard did not let the situation change his demeanor. He behaved with integrity and kindness, no matter what. After working diligently, he became the Charge Nurse of the clinic and encouraged the other nurses to treat patients as if they were their family. He decided that instead of complaining or giving up, he would work hard and be faithful. God blessed his efforts! Eventually, people in the area were no longer referring patients to the clinic or a specific doctor, but Richard directly! **Word spread about the kindness with which he treated patients, and many people came to the clinic to ask for him specifically.** After making the most out of a difficult situation and serving God faithfully, He led Richard to a new job at CURE Uganda. His story reminds us of the story of Joseph, who suffered and worked with integrity for a long time before seeing God's plan for him fulfilled.

When he came to CURE Uganda, Richard was appreciative of the warm welcome he received. Richard said, **"The environment was encouraging, and the people were approachable. I received hospitality, a warm welcome, and felt at home. At CURE Uganda, I felt like I was a part of the team from the first day."** Richard has gone on to extend this warm welcome to everyone he meets at CURE Uganda, including a recent group of visitors from Woodmen Valley Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



Richard meeting with Woodmen Valley Church members.

During his time at CURE Uganda, Richard has had the chance to improve his skills. After working in other settings where nurses often didn't have the equipment they needed to provide care, he is able to learn the best standards of care with working and available equipment. He's participated in orientation, observed nurses in various departments, and has appreciated the chance to take training classes, such as Basic Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support. **After a year at CURE Uganda, he says that his "skills have increased, not even just doubling but tripling and above!"** Since CURE is a children's hospital, he has developed in his ability to assess pediatric patients and increased his skills in handling young children and understanding their needs.

In addition to working hard in the OPD, Richard also takes turns leading the devotional time at the end of morning rounds and occasionally preaches during the afternoon ward worship services. Recently, during a ward worship service, he was encouraging the mothers that God is with them during the storms they face. Knowing the storms he has faced in his own life, he was speaking from personal experience about the faithfulness of God during life's trials and hard seasons.

Watching Richard in action, especially with a new patient and their family, you can see how he uses his mix of humor, cheerfulness, compassion, and nursing skills to evaluate patient needs while at the same time helping their mother or father feel welcome and comforted. It's a marvelous mix of gifts and skills that God has given him to bless the many people who come to CURE Uganda.

Enoch, who helps manage patient intake at the OPD, has worked with Richard for about a year, and they've become close friends. They both can be pretty goofy, so that means the OPD gets the benefit of their silliness and laughter! When speaking about Richard **Enoch shared, "I've learned a lot from him. He's a straightforward guy. He doesn't beat around the bush!"** He also told us that when he was sick and needed to take some time off work, Richard stepped up to help him. "Richard stood up and said 'I will be here' and worked hard to cover all the patients."

Enoch also explained that he's learned a lot from seeing Richard in action. **"He loves his job, he's passionate. He's moved me more than I expected, by seeing his interaction with the patients, and their closeness."** In addition to the kindness he shows patients, Richard is really proactive. "When he sees things that are not attended to, he always moves to act," says Enoch. Lastly, Enoch told us that **Richard "keeps his word, and loves God."** Pretty great praise from a co-worker and friend!

Scripture exhorts us that "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men," (Colossians 3:23 ESV), and Richard absolutely lives out this verse. His relationship with God and desire to serve Him results in faithfulness, hard work, hospitality, and kindness that flows out from his heart and blesses the patients, their families, and the staff of CURE Uganda. Thank you, Richard!



**Please note that all pictures were taken prior to COVID-19 protocols and global spread to Uganda. For information on how our hospitals are coping with the COVID pandemic, [click here](#).*