



Where Resilience Was Forged:

“A Testament to the Tumaini Legacy”

My name is Christopher Amuyunzu, a proud alumnus of the Tumaini fraternity. I was admitted to Tumaini Children’s Home in October 2006 at the age of six, at a time when the home was still under construction and only the ground floor had been completed.

My early childhood was marked by tragedy and turbulence. My mother passed away when I was just three years old, and my sister and I became entangled in deep family conflict that put our safety at risk. My grandmother, fearing for our lives, sought a safe place for us—somewhere we could live, learn, and simply be children again. Despite her best efforts, the hostility surrounding us grew, leaving her with no choice but to surrender us to an orphanage.

Although my sister and I were later separated due to my HIV status and placed in different homes, we found peace in knowing we were both safe. To me, Tumaini became more than an orphanage—it became home.

A New Beginning

In October 2006, I gained a new family—the Tumaini family. Tumaini offered me education from playgroup, opportunities to interact with other children, and experiences that shaped my childhood. I enjoyed outings to recreational centers such as Go-Kart, Wild Waters, and Voyagers—simple joys that meant everything to a child rebuilding his life.

At Tumaini, I met a woman who became a mother to all of us: the late Mum Joan Smith. May her soul rest in eternal peace. She fed us, cared for us, and reminded us daily that we could dream and live fully, despite our status or circumstances. The staff ensured we took our medication on time, attended all clinic appointments, and maintained good health. Their dedication was an extraordinary display of love and humanity.

A Season of Pain and Strength

In Class 5, I developed a severe skin condition that tested my emotional and physical strength. Life became incredibly difficult. There were moments when the pain felt unbearable—I remember begging the dermatologist to amputate my legs because I felt I could no longer endure it.

But Tumaini did not give up on me. They treated my wounds, washed my wounds, provided medication, comforted me, and continually reminded me that healing was possible. Their support allowed me to survive a season that could easily have broken me.

Throughout my stay, I never lacked food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care, or emotional support. Tumaini provided not just basic needs, but dignity.

Education and Skill Building

Beyond academics, Tumaini equipped us with skills for a sustainable future. I was privileged to learn dressmaking, sewing mats, tailoring trousers, dresses, shirts, and T-shirts. This training was intentional—Tumaini wanted us to leave prepared for life beyond its walls.

With their support, I completed my primary education and later joined secondary school, where I interacted with students from diverse backgrounds and regained a sense of belonging.

At 20 years old, Tumaini formally released me into the world. I was reconnected with my father, but the reception was far from welcoming but he had to live with it. I met a new family with step siblings to whom they call me big brother, while at their place I felt uncomfortable taking medication while hiding since my stepmother did not know my status, and my father was unwilling to disclose it. For my safety, well-being, and privacy, I moved out and rented a place after staying with them for five months.

Surviving and Rising

Before securing formal employment, I relied on the tailoring skills I learned at Tumaini. I shared a small space with a lady who allowed me to sew and earn a little income.

Eventually, I secured a job at Makadara Hospital as a Youth Champion. My performance was strong, and my supervisors quickly recognized my commitment. This opened doors to leading youth programs in Nairobi, representing the hospital in workshops and conferences, and sharing best practices at national and international events.

My work spoke for itself, and soon, organizations began inviting me to support their programs. I appeared on various TV stations to share my story and inspire others. In one of my proudest moments, I was selected to travel to Germany to represent the program and contribute to global discussions—an opportunity I will forever cherish.

Along the way, I pursued further education. I completed a course in Project Management and became a Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) in 2024.

A New Chapter: Family and Purpose

Amid my journey to self-reliance, I found love and started a family. I am now a father to a wonderful son, Castiel Nollan Amuyunzu, aged 1 year and 5 months and a husband to Shanzi Adala. Every time I look at him, I feel grateful for how far I have come.

I never imagined I would reach this point in life. Everything I am today is rooted in the foundation Tumaini gave me.

Gratitude

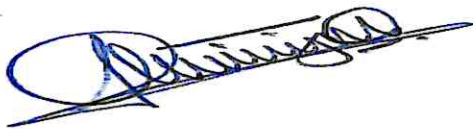
As we celebrate success, it is important to honor where it all began. My deepest gratitude goes to Tumaini Children's Home for accepting me, protecting me, educating me, supporting my health, building my character, and equipping me with life skills.

Link to my citizen interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDcONjlgO4k&authuser=0>

Acknowledgement:

1. Dr. Sur
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