



RoSF

NEWSLETTER

3RD EDITION JUNE 2016

FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

By Folorunso Alakija (Mrs)

I am particularly excited about this bi-annual report to our stakeholders, friends and well-wishers. I say this because of the impact we have made since our last publication in December 2015 even as we are consistently enriching the contents and the delivery of our programme framework for a far reaching impact for our beneficiaries.

The period under review started with our Christmas Party which saw over 1000 widows, children and orphans come out en-masse for the celebration. The gathering gives them the opportunity to meet one another and interact joyfully to thank God for the year. The party included fun-filled activities ranging from games, dance and talent hunt competitions to awards presentation to the best graduating students, etc. Each widow received Christmas gifts that comprised of a special Widow's Bible, authored by Dr. Mike Murdock, raw food stuffs, noodles, clothing and household items. 10 students received financial awards and master's degree scholarships for outstanding academic performance. 8 winners emerged from the Talent Hunt competition, all of whom got scholarships to go for specialized training to improve their talents. Each beneficiary has been enrolled in choice music schools, all expenses fully paid by the Foundation.

The Christmas party also featured a mini exhibition of RoSF widows' handiwork from the Enterprise Development Training and Skills Acquisition organized for them in November, 2015. We are therefore encouraged to plan a richer exhibition for 2016.

Early this year, RoSF celebrated the graduation ceremony of six (6) students who benefited from our scholarships scheme from the University of

Lagos, bringing the number of graduated students we have produced, to one hundred and five. Interestingly, one of them is an orphan. This is just the beginning and we are still counting.... Praise the Lord! RoSF has produced several graduates who are working and have become helping hands to their families. Read about their testimonies in this edition. In our next publication, we will share the testimonies of widows who received scholarships from the Foundation and would have graduated from higher institutions including the stories of our orphans who are now married.

According to our normal practice in caring for orphans, RoSF embarked on its annual and traditional visits to six Orphanage Homes spread across the city of Lagos, to cheer and share seasonal love with them. Each home received a cash donation and Christmas cake.

Yaba College of Technology has been a strong partner with RoSF, the Founder and members of the Board of Trustees of the Rose of Sharon Foundation paid a courtesy visit to the Rector of Yaba College of Technology, Dr. (Mrs) Margaret K. Ladipo to appreciate the college's immense support and partnership with the Foundation over the years.

It is our desire to continue to do all within our reach, until every widow has no reason to cry anymore and every orphan has a reason to say, "because of the Rose of Sharon Foundation, I will live my dream." So, together, let us continue to reach out.....and touch!


Founder



RoSF ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY 2015

There is no better way to end the year with the widows and orphans, than to engage them in a lively Christmas party! A time like this provides them with the opportunity to unwind after a year of toiling and hardship, to meet old friends and make new ones, and to enjoy themselves and share the seasonal cheer with others.

As usual, the widows, their children and orphans all dressed in RoSF uniform came out en mass for the Christmas party. The party was even more fun this year, with new, exciting and engaging activities for all, ranging from party games, dancing, talent hunt, comedy, competitions and various other forms of entertainment.

The Founder, Mrs Folorunso Alakija, presented a special Widow's Topical Bible authored by Dr. Mike Murdock, as a Christmas gift to all widows. She urged them to draw closer to God as His is the only one who has the ability to meet all their needs. Other gift items donated by the Trustees of the Foundation such as bags of rice, clothing, household items, indomie etc were distributed among the widows, their children and orphans.



RoSF ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY 2015



RoSF ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY 2015



COURTESY VISIT TO YABA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY (YABATECH) RECTOR

The Founder and members of the Board of Trustees of the Rose of Sharon Foundation paid a visit to the Rector of Yaba College of Technology, Dr. (Mrs) Margaret K. Ladipo to appreciate the college's immense support and partnership with the Foundation over the years. YabaTech has contributed towards the achievement of the RoSF's vision by providing its facilities and personnel for the widows and orphans empowerment at no cost each time they are needed.



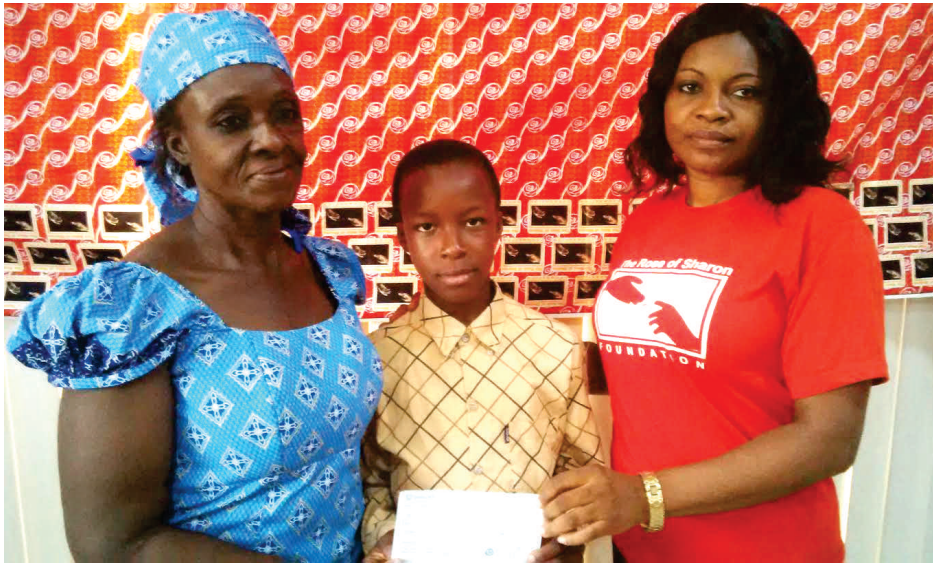
FINANCIAL AWARDS AND MASTERS DEGREE SCHOLARSHIP FOR BEST PERFORMING GRADUATES

During the Christmas party, the Foundation found it necessary to acknowledge RoSF Scholarship beneficiaries who had shown exemplary performance in their academic pursuits. The Founder presented cash awards and Masters Degree scholarships to students with outstanding academic performance. She urged the award recipients to remain focused in their life pursuits and be good ambassadors of the Foundation, while she encouraged other students to pay more attention and work harder in school.



TALENT HUNT WINNERS

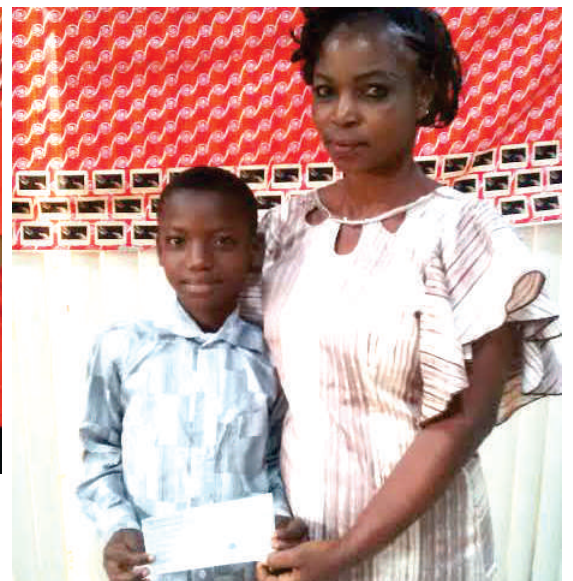
Eight (8) winners emerged from the Talent Hunt. The Founder awarded them scholarships to pursue and develop their talents in the areas of choice which includes, dancing, singing, fashion, music etc. All beneficiaries have been enrolled in some of the best Music and Fashion schools in Lagos, all expenses fully paid by the Foundation.



Master Donald Ekuku & his Mum, Mrs. Abisola Ekuku



The family of Tayo-Kehinde (Mayowa, Taiwo and Kehinde) & their Mother



Master Tobi Yekini & his Mum



Master Joshua Akaba & his mother Mrs. Akaba



Mr Olawale Bankole and his Mum

GRADUATION CEREMONY OF ROSF STUDENTS:



From 2008, the RoSF has awarded scholarships to 1,366 students so far, comprising widows, their children and orphans. These scholarships start from nursery/primary school level through university. Till date, a total of 99 students have graduated from various higher institutions across the country. In the month of March 2016, six (6) new graduates from the University of Lagos, were added to our list of graduates, making it a total of one hundred and five (105). This is just the beginning and we are still counting..... Praise the Lord!

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| 1] Bada Adefunke Alice - (Marine Biology) | 2] Akinsanya Seun Deborah (Orphan) - (Business Administration) |
| 3] Banjo Matthew Oluwaseun - (Mathematics) | 4] Dehinsilu Olabode Jeremiah - (Philosophy) |
| 5] Matthew Oluwaseun Modupe
- (Early Childhood Education) | 6] Omiji Adamson - (Business Administration) |



MINI EXHIBITION OF ROSF WIDOWS' HANDIWORK

The Christmas party also featured a mini exhibition of RoSF widows' handiwork from the Enterprise Development Training and Skills Acquisition organized for them in November, 2015. The Foundation is planning for a more elaborate Enterprise Development Training and Skills Acquisition for the widows in October this year, followed by a larger exhibition of their products in December. This is one of the best ways to ensure steady source of income for the widows.



ORPHANAGE HOME VISITS

As part of our vision to care for orphans, RoSF carries out annual visits to six Orphanage Homes spread across the city of Lagos each Christmas to share the seasonal love with them.

Last year, these Homes were visited by the members of the Board of Trustees and Staff with cash donation and cakes.

- Living Fountain Orphanage

- Lagos State Motherless Babies Home
- Peculiar Saints Orphanage Home
- Little Saints Orphanage
- The Heritage Homes Orphanage
- The Nigerian Red Cross Society Motherless and Abandoned Babies Home



TESTIMONIES FROM GRADUATES NOW WORKING OR MARRIED

Moji Alaba: My Experience At Rose Of Sharon Foundation

I remember 5 years ago when my mum came and told me about ROSF, saying that the foundation assists widows. She told me how I won't have to worry about my school fees being paid as I had just received admission into University of Lagos then. I was so happy that this wonderful foundation was going to help lift the burden off my mother. Throughout my years with ROSF they have helped my family and I especially to cope with life without having to worry.

My experience with ROSF has been so wonderful and i'm happy to say that i'm a graduate of University of Lagos through the help of God through this wonderful foundation. I hope this foundation continues to touch lives as it did mine and i also pray for the management of Rose of Sharon Foundation that God may continue to bless and use them graciously to touch lives. Thank You & God Bless

Eze Onyema Augustine's Experience

I am from Imo State and i was born into a family of five children (three boys and two girls). I am the second child in my family with a lovely mother and a wonderful father. I was in Senior Secondary School One when i lost my Dad after a brief illness in 2000. My Mum continued from where my late father stopped and struggled to make sure that she took care of us. Then, my senior brother, my sister and I were attending Command Day Secondary School, Ojo Cantonment while my other siblings were very young. She sold cooked rice and stew, pure water and soft drinks on the street to make sure that the three of us completed our stay at Command Day Secondary school. She tried her best for us but things went terribly wrong. She had a serious accident while she was returning to Lagos from the east and broke her spinal cord in year 2007. She suffered several pains and injuries on her body for months until she died in 2008. I looked left, right, ahead and behind- it was as if the world had ended for me because that same year i was aspiring to get into the university. I lost all hope until the one i called "God Sent" (Mrs Folorunso Alakija) came into my life - a woman who allowed God to use her to wipe away my tears.

Mummy Alakija heard our story through our Venerable in church (Ven. K.K Agu) and she took it upon herself to take care of everyone of us by renting a new apartment for us, bringing foodstuff to us every month and training everyone us to higher institutions. She is the reason why am a graduate today. I graduated from Lagos State University, Ojo, I did my NYSC at Osun State and I'm currently working with Modern Business Machines (Nig) Limited. Mummy, I really appreciate your unfailing attention to me and I am very fortunate to have you donate your time for people like me. On behalf of the Ezeala Family, I express heartfelt thanks for all you did for us ma. Thank you.

GOD BLESS MUMMY FOLORUNSHO ALAKIJA, GOD BLESS ROSE OF SHARON FOUNDATION

Miss Bamigboye Omolara's Testimony

Sometimes in life we face situations where we feel all hope is lost. I got to that point until I came in contact with Rose of Sharon Foundation. My experience with Rose Of Sharon Foundation has been awesome and is a success story. I met Mrs. Gladys Ifeozo a member of this foundation January 2011, who was sent to carry out a report about my family and how they can be of help. We lost the breadwinner of the home (My Father) 1st September, 2009. He died suddenly in my second year in school (ND2); it was a painful and heartbreaking moment for the family because we believed our future was shattered, but meeting this foundation made me change my outlook in life, my goals for the future, and most importantly myself confidence. Going back for HND- to the final level, Rose of Sharon Foundation contributed immensely to my success in life without receiving a dime from me or any of my family members and for many years. This has been very worthwhile for me and my sister who was also offered scholarship.

Today, Rose of Sharon Foundation has put a smile on the faces of everyone in my family and many thousands of people out there, today. I am a graduate of Mass Communication from The Polytechnic, Ibadan with an outstanding result. Also, in December 2015, Rose of Sharon foundation organized an award program in which I was awarded a sum of N100, 000 (One Hundred Thousand Naira) cash as the best graduating student in HND. Presently I work in a bank and my career has started well thanks to this foundation. God bless us all.

Rose OF Sharon Foundation indeed is a lifesaver.

**RoSF COURTESY VISIT TO OUR NEW MATRON
MRS. AMBODE: 1ST LADY OF LAGOS**



EXCERPTS FROM INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY PRESS BRIEFING FACTS & FIGURES: 2016 IN FOCUS

International Widows Day is backed by the United Nations (UN) to address the poverty and injustice faced by millions of widows and their dependents'. RoSF took the lead by making sure this marginalized group's plight is brought to the centre stage and attention is given to various issues they face in our society; it also seeks to bring succor and positive change to all concerned.

Recap of 2015 International Widows Day:

Last year, we had a Stakeholders Forum, where some practical and actionable recommendations to end discrimination and violent practices against widows were proffered. This we believe must have helped to facilitate the passage of the new bill into law by both the House of Representatives and National Assembly. The bill has been passed but we have not yet seen its effect.

The 2015 Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (Explanatory Memorandum) states in Article 15:

- "A person who subjects a widow to harmful traditional practices commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, to a fine not exceeding N500,000, or both."
- "A person who attempts to commit the act of violence provided for in subsection (1) of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year, or a fine not exceeding N200,000, or both."
- "A person who incites, aids, abets, or counsels another person to commit the act of violence as provided in subsection (1) of this section commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or to a fine not exceeding N200,000, or both."
- "A person who receives or assists another who, to his or her knowledge, committed the offence provided for in subsection (1) of this section is an accessory after the fact and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or to a fine not exceeding N100,000, or both."

We are yet to see this....

2016 International Widows Day in Focus: Each year,

RoSF works with State Governments, the Federal Government, their agencies, CSOs, NGOs, and private sectors to ensure every widow's right is upheld in our society, as the theme of this year implies: Widows Economic Empowerment and Political Participation: A call to Action.

International Widows Day falls within RoSF Advocacy Programme (RAP); this year, RoSF is bringing together notable voices in a Panel of Discussants to advocate for more economic empowerment and political participation for widows who wish to run for political office.

We will also have a Medical enlightenment campaign which includes a Health talk on Depression and Free Medical Consultation and checks with free drugs to address different illnesses for widows and their children. We have a good number of volunteer Medical Doctors and Nurses who will attend to them. RoSF has produced 104 graduates till date, and we are still counting.....

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT WIDOWS WORLDWIDE

- 245 million widows and over 500 million children suffer in silence worldwide
- Over 115 million widows live in poverty, struggling to survive
- Many of these women and their children are malnourished, exposed to disease, and subjected to extreme forms of deprivation
- Widowed women experience targeted murder, rape, prostitution, forced marriage, property theft, eviction, social isolation, and physical abuse
- 1.5 million Widows' children in the world die before their fifth birthday
- Children of widows face horrors such as child marriage, illiteracy, loss of schooling, forced labour, human trafficking, homelessness and sexual abuse
- HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and poverty are amongst the most prolific causes of widowhood
- Persecution and abuse against widows and their children is not a crisis limited to the developing world; large groups of widows can also be found in Europe, including Russia and Central Asia

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