



A Love That Defies Time



You may be familiar with the phrase *"And now these three remain: Faith, Hope, and Love. But the greatest of these is Love"*, **1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)**. A closer look at what this phrase means reveals a hopeful message about life; Love is everywhere! Look around. We all feel it, rich and poor, healthy and sick, young and old. It is the power behind life, it is life itself. Love defies time and endures forever.

At ROTOM, we talk about love. We believe in Christ-centred love beyond self. We believe that the relationships between ROTOM-supported seniors and their friends or staff have touched and developed rich connections through the power of love. Recognizing this, the ROTOM staff and volunteers work tirelessly to ensure that older persons live dignified and fulfilled lives!

ROTOM grandmothers and grandfathers have many different stories related to how they have experienced love from the ROTOM Staff, Village Volunteers, Field Assistants, and most importantly, their supporting friends. While each story we hear and share with you is unique as the grandmothers and grandfathers who tell it, most stories have the recurring theme of healing and hope. One such story is Adrine's story.

In 2003, Adrine (now 80+ years) like many other grandmothers in her community had lost all hope. Poverty, isolation, disease, and the loss of their children had become a soul-crushing burden upon their shoulders. The ravaging impact of HIV/AIDS

had torn their lives apart and snuffed out all hope. They faced discrimination in the communities they called home, and above all, they had no access to basic needs like health care, water, and food.

Amidst these challenges came ROTOM. Adrine and her friends were introduced to ROTOM and its vision to support vulnerable older persons in Uganda. They started group support meetings, now called "The Seniors' Fellowships". Like any other age group, peer support plays a great role in cushioning the rough bumps in our lives. This is what the support meetings did for them. They found a safe space to share their problems and encourage each other, and together through the support from ROTOM found solutions to some of their problems.

It has now been 19 years since Adrine joined ROTOM and she recalls;

"During those first group support meetings that ROTOM organised, we had many needs. One by one we presented them to ROTOM. And one by one, ROTOM found solutions to these needs. One major need we had back then was health care. The few community health centres had proved over and over again that older persons were not a priority. After queuing for long hours, we were often turned away before we got to see the doctor. Our diagnosis was always "old age" and as a result, we would be normally pushed aside to give room for the younger ones in the queue. Today we have our own ROTOM Health Centres that attend to all our health needs. In our health centres, we no longer have to queue for

long hours nor do we have to give up our turns to younger people without being seen by the doctor.

ROTOM provided and continues to provide food, shelter, water, and many other gifts that have changed my life. I have regularly received soap and Vaseline which have kept me clean and glowing. Most of my friends who were with me from the start have gone home to be with the Lord. But they have passed with such great dignity, and had lived out their last days being loved.

Everyone now wants to associate with my older friends and me. And it's all because of the impact ROTOM has made in our lives. Back then, we always prayed for ROTOM to grow and support more older persons like us. Looking back now, I am continually amazed at how far we have come. I am convinced beyond a doubt that this has all been possible because of LOVE. ROTOM's love for the seniors has made all these beautiful things possible. I felt it back then when no one cared for my friends and me, and I still feel it now. It never grew old or weary and has always been here for us all. If this isn't Love, then I don't know what it is".

Friends, Adrine is just one of the 1500+ older persons who have experienced ROTOM's amazing love over the last 19 years. ROTOM-supported older persons have felt your love through the timely generous donations you give. The connections they form from being part of the ROTOM family carry a special meaning in each of their lives. Your love has enabled them to engage in meaningful activities which have given them a new lease on life. So, thank you!



From the Founder & Executive Director

There's Love in Abundance!

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

It is remarkable to know that each one of us is loved by our heavenly father and that He has given us the ability to love immeasurably. It has been over two years now since Uganda registered its first COVID-19 case. In those early days of 2020, we had no idea of how quickly the world would change and how those changes would affect us all in ways both big and small.

Here at ROTOM, we have sought to adapt and reinvent how to meet the day-to-day needs of all the seniors and children in our care. As we do this, we have seen and experienced abundant love from each one of you. Your understanding, commitment, and continued engagement in our programs and activities have been a great sign of love to our beneficiaries.

We know that COVID-19 has made life a challenge for all and devastating for some, but we thank you for choosing to show love towards the ROTOM seniors and children through your generous donations. Can we solve the issues of poverty in our lifetime? Probably not, but our goal is to ensure that we can make life much easier for our older folks and improve their circumstances in the remaining days of their life.

It is my privilege to work with an amazing staff, volunteers, and a dedicated board of directors. We are all deeply committed to ROTOM's work, and we work each day to ensure that older persons live dignified and fulfilled lives.

This is only possible with your loving support! Thank you for helping us keep ROTOM's vision alive!

With heartfelt gratitude and love,
Kenneth E. Mugayehwenkyi

We Are Together Again!

During the lockdowns across the country in the past two years, the ROTOM seniors' fellowships were put to a halt. Though this was necessary, it took away something the seniors value greatly: fellowshiping together. The loneliness brought on by extended isolation, depression resulting from a friend or loved one's death, fear of becoming infected with the virus, and other factors ravaged many of the seniors' mental health. Even though ROTOM encouraged the seniors to continue fellowship within their homes, the feeling was never the same compared to what they were used to.



This beautiful month of April has seen ROTOM resuming all Seniors' Fellowships in the 56 villages where seniors live. The excitement of being together again has been something truly amazing to witness.

"The seniors' fellowships remind me what love, compassion and community are all about. It's a place I feel loved and cared for. I had missed them very much. I live way up in the mountains and it's very hard for me to move from one place to another. So I had not seen many of my friends in a long time. I am so excited to meet my fellow seniors after a very long time. I look forward to learning new things and experiences from them. That is something I've always enjoyed during the fellowships", shares a joyful **Senior Johnson Benon Kabakiriraho (79 years)** | Nyakitabire Seniors' Fellowship, ROTOM Muhanga.

SUPPORT A ROTOM SENIOR

For only **US \$38, CAD \$35/\$60, €30, £27 or UGX 100,000** a month, you can support a senior in Uganda. Your friendship allows a senior to:

- Hear a clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Participate in regular Christian support fellowships.
- Receive bi-weekly home visits from ROTOM staff and volunteer counselors.
- Receive free regular medical screening and treatment
- Receive support to enable improvement in income and food security
- Access safe and healthy water and housing

Friends receive a photo, update report and letters every year from the senior they support.

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