

## A Piece of Cake



Take a look at this yummy collection of freshly baked delights.

They were all baked in the same kitchen.

What came before them?

... Ingredients: flour, water, eggs, sugar, butter (or similar), dried fruit, perhaps filling like stewed apple and probably a pinch or two of other bits and pieces (cinnamon, nutmeg...).

What had to happen to get them to this table?

... Preparation, mixing, baking, cooling, wrapping, all processes requiring tools such as mixing bowls, spoons, spatulas, other cutlery, baking tins, ovens, trays, cooling racks, serving plates and probably more and fuel, possibly electricity, possibly gas or even good old fashion logs if a fair dinkum country kitchen was used.

Who had to work to bring them to this table?

... Not the little red hen that's for sure. Someone with 'kitchen knowledge'; a cook who is part artisan, part robot (just do what the recipe says), part mathematician, part chemist who loves measuring, mixing, tasting (just a little taste to see if it's right), estimating, judging, refining, pouring, watching, inhaling, testing, cooling, presenting, washing, cleaning ... and who can read.

And why were they baked? Not, as you might be thinking, for the Monday Meal, or a St. John's Market on Chapel stall or some other good old country fair. These little delights were made in the Catering and Hospitality classroom of Rubaga Youth Development Association (RYDA), Vocational Skills Training Centre, Buloba (outside Kampala), Uganda by OVCs, orphaned or vulnerable children, for a non-formal exam in a modular unit of their training.



These children are actually teenagers (children, by UN definition are 18 years or less). They have come to RYDA with no more than

one bag of personal items to live and train for two years to attain a government trade qualification and when they graduate they will be supported to

find their first employment. From street living to purposeful life.

They are provided with uniforms, curriculum materials, food, accommodation, showers, toilets, intellectual and physical challenge, community ... and perhaps most importantly, a safe place to uncover, enable and extend their potential.

They pay no fees. So where does all this come from?

We could go on looking behind the cakes and ask about the existence of the buildings, the property, the services to the property, the teachers, the ancillary staff, the governance. We could look beyond the cakes to the other classrooms and ask the same range of questions about training in electrical, plumbing, motor vehicle, hairdressing, art & design, brick laying and tailoring, but the answer would still be the same.

It all comes through donors, gifts and grants. St. John's is one of those donors.

Alan, not the Alan you know but Alan a retired RMIT teacher who understands the background challenges in vocational education, visited the RYDA web site at [www.blackdouglas.com.au](http://www.blackdouglas.com.au). The voice message he left for the web manager, in a tone tingling with earnestness and incredulity was: "What good work that is? That's truly God's work. Well done to Geoffrey ... and all who are involved."

He also sent a donation and within a day had told 5 or 6 others about RYDA.

So, St. John's, as individuals and as a congregation, consider yourselves thanked.

- The children's lives before RYDA were certainly not a piece of cake, nor will they always be in the future.
- RYDA's work will *never* be a piece of cake. Supporting RYDA is not a piece of cake either, but if we continue to be part of the team God has inspired with that challenge, many more cakes will be baked.