Uganda became our first Core Program in 2009. Following the October Stakeholder Conference in Kampala that year, a strategic plan was formulated to ensure commitment and support from the Uganda Heart Institute (UHI) leadership, the Ugandan Government and the pediatric cardiac team at the UHI. Subsequently, the Gift of Life Uganda Foundation was created to support the development of a sustainable pediatric cardiac program at UHI.

Since 2009, the Ugandan Pediatric Cardiac team has cared for 680 children. Funding has been provided by GOL programs, like-minded partners and Rotary Clubs and Districts around the world. Over $2 million USD has been invested to support: (1) training of the Ugandan pediatric cardiac team; (2) acquisition of essential equipment; and (3) supplementing of supplies and medications.

Our consortium is comprised of 3 dedicated teams who have conducted 21 training visits to UHI. Dr. Craig Sable leads the team from Children’s National Medical Center, Professor Vibeke Hjortdal heads up the Chain of Hope effort and pediatric cardiac surgeon Dr. Mark Turrentine has provided leadership to the healthcare professionals from Riley Children’s Hospital during their six training visits. Additionally, World Children’s Initiative (WCI) has provided oversight and training to the catheterization program at UHI.

Our goal in 2016 is to: (1) provide ongoing training to the pediatric cardiac team at UHI, focusing on the needs of the aftercare team; and (2) help the UHI team to provide care to 150 children (100 surgeries and 50 catheterizations).