

Season 2 | Episode 1

## A Community Approach to Inclusion

Ashley Hall

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FEBRUARY 6, 2020

Crystal Keating:

Welcome to the Joni and Friends Ministry Podcast. I'm Crystal Keating, and I'm so excited to be back with you for season two of the [podcast](#). Another season of bringing you real conversations, real stories about disability, and sharing hope through hardship. Well, today, as we kick off this next season of the show, I am thrilled to be sitting down with a very special guest and ministry partner of Joni And Friends, Ashley Hall. Ashley always had a heart for Africa, even as she worked in special education in Southern California.

But after serving as a Cause 4 Life intern, with Joni And Friends, God called Ashley out of the special education classroom and brought her to a new ministry role in Uganda. She's worked in Uganda now for a number of years, training teachers, church leaders, and other service providers on how to include people with disabilities. And today we're chatting about her life in Uganda and she's sharing some great stories of how God it is transforming hearts across communities and churches, so that all people have their place at the Luke 14 banquet table.

It's my pleasure to welcome our friend and ministry partner, Ashley Hall. As we sit down to talk about her life in Uganda, where she trains teachers, church leaders and service providers on how to include people with disabilities in their church and community. Thanks for joining me on the podcast today, Ashley.

Ashley Hall:

Hi everyone. It's a pleasure to be here.

Crystal Keating:

Well, I have heard so much about you through the years, and so it's awesome to be with you face to face and I know I kind of introduced you a little bit, but I'd love to hear from you about your work as a missionary in the east African country of Uganda.

Ashley Hall:

Yes, I am a missionary to Uganda. I have been doing ministry in Uganda since 2012, and-

Crystal Keating:

Long time.

Ashley Hall:

Officially moved to Uganda in 2014. And it's just been a joy to do disability ministry, training leaders for disability ministry, and it's a privilege and I'm just so grateful that God chose me to do it and he doesn't need us, but he chooses to use us. So, I'm grateful for that.

Crystal Keating:

That is so true. Did you ever think you'd be living in Africa?

Ashley Hall:

I knew I'd be living in Africa at some point. I didn't know when, where, how. I thought maybe I'd retire as a special education teacher. That's what I used to do in Southern California and God called me out of the classroom and to Uganda earlier than I thought.

Crystal Keating:

That's so exciting. Well, it just shows that we can make our plans, but there was a stirring in your heart for something even deeper. And so, I love that you followed God's call on your life and you talked about being a special ed teacher in California, but I think that's when you kind of connected with Joni And Friends, your first experience in Uganda back in 2012 was as a Joni And Friends Cause 4 Life intern, right?

Ashley Hall:

Yes, that's correct.

Crystal Keating:

Okay, cool. Well, we've had so many interns do some just culture transforming work and you are one of them. So, I think your first experience, if I'm not mistaken was doing home visits with the Cause 4 Life intern team, is that right?

Ashley Hall:

Yes, that's correct.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah. What was that like for you?

Ashley Hall:

It was one of the first times that I went into the home of a family impacted by disability, and it was a mother who had two sons with cerebral palsy. They were born with cerebral palsy and I felt like I never fully understood what disability was like in Uganda until I was in the home of the family. And I saw how they struggled, how they lived, what their challenges were like. And it was so challenging and like heartbreaking and gut wrenching, but it was also completely transforming and so joyous at the same time to see how God can come all the way into a small city in Uganda and provide for a mother.

Crystal Keating:

Was she a single mom?

Ashley Hall:

Yes, she's a single mom.

Crystal Keating:

And so, what were some of the challenges that they were facing?

Ashley Hall:

So, her two boys were in regular public school in Uganda and all of the general education teachers that would provide education for her two boys, they really didn't know how to teach students with disabilities. They didn't know how to manage behavior, support in the classroom. And so, there were episodes where the teachers lost their patience or they became abusive, or maybe it wasn't the staff, but maybe it were other students. And because those two boys were devalued because they had a disability, there was no protection over them. And the mom had to eventually pull their children out of several schools and they weren't being educated. And the mom had to make that choice, do I educate my child where they may be abused frequently in school? Or do I pull them home where now they're not having any education. So-

Crystal Keating:

Yeah, the life-changing decision to make, do I protect my child, or do I put them at risk and give them the opportunity to be educated? So, were they being abused because of their disability?

Ashley Hall:

Yeah. And they had severe cerebral palsy, so they couldn't defend themselves. It wasn't like they could block some physical contact. And so, yeah, I mean listening to the mom's story, it just sounded like the staff and the students of several of the schools just didn't have value for children with disabilities. And because they had disabilities, they were targets for abuse.

Crystal Keating:

Wow. So, I know that you also visited other families. And I think one that really stuck out in my mind was your visit with Alice. Can you talk a little bit about her?

Ashley Hall:

Alice is amazing. She's a mom to five children. She's a single mom.

Crystal Keating:

Okay, wow.

Ashley Hall:

And she gave birth to a child with down syndrome and his name is Innocent. And as Innocent grew bigger, the extended family realized Innocent had special needs. And Alice was given an ultimatum, either she abandoned or killed Innocent-

Crystal Keating:

No.

Ashley Hall:

So, she could stay within the family. Or she had to take Innocent and go and leave the family and exclude herself completely because Alice's immediate and extended family did not accept disability. And so, Alice refused the ultimatum. So, she took all of her children and is now living in a little small hut in the northern part of Uganda by herself, raising Innocent, raising all her children. And it's a struggle for her, but she does know the Lord, and she was able to come to a Joni And Friends Beyond Suffering conference and a Luke 14 Banquet. And I think really empowered her to continue to care for her children, especially Innocent.

Crystal Keating:

Well, I want to go back to why their family really wanted to exclude her because of her son. What are some of the beliefs that Ugandans may hold about disability.

Ashley Hall:

In Uganda there's several beliefs, but I would say the most common ones are one, someone with a disability is cursed by God. I would say, secondly, they're viewed as cursed or they're bewitched or someone placed some sort of curse on that child and the mother. I would say another very common belief is someone in the family or a family member or an ancestor sinned, and so God is bringing punishment. So, for this mom, for Alice, her husband wanted her to kill Innocent because of the idea of being cursed. Yeah. I mean, I would also say too, the fear of family is the stigma that comes from the community.

Crystal Keating:

Okay.

Ashley Hall:

So, it's the shame that's put on the family like, wow, God's really against you. And then there's just this major amount of stigma that the families face, and they're ostracized, and they're outcasts, and they're repelled and they're not accepted. And I know that was something Alice shared that she said her husband did not want to endure that and didn't want to bring shame on the family name.

Crystal Keating:

I know that it happens all over the world, but to hear of particular stories of real families who are having to make the choice between life or death, it makes the work that you're doing that much more palpable. And when I think about children or maybe even adults that are locked away or hidden from society, or abused and neglected, I just wonder how those beliefs impact the church. I mean how does the church think about disability? Has the society kind of influenced that what's that pull in your eyes?



Ashley Hall:

Yeah, I would say the Christian Church in Uganda has some similar beliefs to, I would say the regular society in Uganda, but something that I think is distinguished with the church in Uganda is that they feel that people with disabilities lack the faith to be healed. And you see a lot of what we would consider is like prosperity gospel. It's like, God has nothing but good for you. And so, disability is just not considered good. And so clearly if you're truly living out the Christian faith, and if you seek healing and you have the faith, you will be healed. And so therefore if you've not been healed, you lack the faith. And you will also hear even people with disabilities who have integrated into the church, even though they may be a part of the church, they're still told that they're sinning-

Crystal Keating:

Wow.

Ashley Hall:

Or someone in their family has been sending and it's why they're not healed. And so, it still goes back to someone has sinned or they're sinning. And again, it's tied, disability is tied to or linked to spiritual things.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah. Well, that has to make your work with the church just incredibly important. It sounds like the culture's beliefs about disability and suffering continues to influence the church. So, as you work to transform the hearts of those who follow Jesus Christ, what role do the scriptures play in helping the church understand that the basics, what we would say is the basics, we're all made in the image of God, regardless of ability. And that suffering is actually a normal part of life. I mean, who says that? And maybe rarely, maybe suffering is a punishment caused by sin, but that's not necessarily the norm. What role does educating the church with a robust theology of suffering have on those who follow Christ?

Ashley Hall:

I mean, I have been so grateful to be used in that capacity to teach on a theology of suffering. And I love to link what I would like to say at Genesis to Revelation on disability and show them a theme through the beginning to the end of the Bible about what God's plan is for disability. And to be honest, many pastors, church leaders, or just heavy church attenders, the body of Christ. They'll tell me, they've never heard such a teaching before.

Crystal Keating:

Wow.



Ashley Hall:

They're amped up and ready to start ministering to those with disabilities and to welcome people with disabilities. Maybe into the church, but also into maybe some community activities that the church does as well. So, you see a lot of eyes opened in Uganda. I think that's been one of my mountain peak moments in Uganda is seeing nationals of Uganda come to embrace what the word of God says. You can look at Moses is a great example. If you read an Exodus, Moses has a speech impairment and I love to teach about how God uses someone like Moses, who has a disability. And what that tells us is if God used Moses, God could have chose the most eloquent, educated, affluent person that people would have followed back in that time. But he chose Moses who had a speech impairment. And what that tells us is God will use the weak to guide and lead people. Therefore, God uses people with disabilities for ministry.

Crystal Keating:

Amen.

Ashley Hall:

And I think that just using that as an example, I think resonates very much with the community and pastors and church leaders. And I love talking about Luke 14, particularly Luke 14 mandate, which is Luke 14, verses 12 through 24. I think that's one of the, actually the most eye-opening pieces of scripture for society to not just befriend people with disabilities.

That's the first step we see that in verses 12, 13, 14. When we talk about inviting people to our table, inviting people to our table for the banquet is a representation of inviting people who are seen as weaker than us into our own personal space. Eating at a banquet is a time of communion and companionship and comradery, just like we like to eat with our friends-

Crystal Keating:

Sure.

Ashley Hall:

Eat dinner with our family. So, it's a representation of you only eat with the people you're closest with, and those should be people with disabilities and families impacted by disabilities. But if you read further into Luke 14, you also see that there a mandate for the church. And it says there are no excuses, saying you were married, saying you had to go take care of oxen. If you look at what it says, there's no excuse. Even for the church of why we should not just be welcoming people with disabilities, but giving them a place that they should already have in the church.

Crystal Keating:

So, it's radical. I mean, these are people who are familiar with the scripture. Maybe they're looking at Moses and maybe they're looking at Jesus, but not being attentive to the ways that all throughout scripture suffering is mentioned and people who have disabling conditions, they're there, they're present and God is using the weak things to shame the wise. Because what do we know? I think one of your favorite verses and Joni's too, is that God's power shows up best in weakness and the body is incomplete without the indispensable parts, which are the weaker parts as Paul says. So that's awesome to hear. People are becoming free; their eyes are open to the greater picture that God has.



So, I love that. Well, I kind of want to go back to the educational piece. What are some of the common dilemmas found in the Ugandan educational system, even in the churches and communities that express the palpable realities of families and persons with disability? I mean, you saw a hole.

Ashley Hall:

Yeah, I would say some of the common dilemmas, there are three big ones and two of them are, I think what most people think about for a developing nation. I would say there's a lack of infrastructure and there's lack of leadership. You need leaders to carry out and develop and maintain infrastructure. So, I think infrastructure and leaders go together. So, things like having accessibility just for people with disabilities. Maybe it's not physical disabilities, maybe it's intellectual disabilities or autism, or disabilities that are not obvious to the eye. And so that could be like having human rights and being able to use their rights as citizens and not experiencing discrimination. Those injustices, oppression or just being completely excluded from society.

Maybe it's just lack of acceptance into school systems or employment. I mean, those are all major dilemmas that you see in a country like Uganda. But I would say aside from infrastructure and maybe lack of leadership is attitudinal barriers. Because Uganda has very developed laws for persons with disabilities. And so, you ask yourself, well, if they have so much laws in place and policies in place, then why is this still continuing? Well, it takes leaders and it takes common people and stakeholders to enforce those laws and perhaps there's some attitudinal issues that prevent people with disabilities from being completely accepted and included in society and the church.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah. That's really interesting because you're not just addressing the physical barriers of education and leadership. You're really addressing the attitudinal and the relational barriers that people are facing.

Ashley Hall:

Yes, exactly. And I feel like because Ugandans are more relationally driven than they are results driven, you would think that the relational piece would not be such a barrier, but it is the biggest barrier. And if you ask the disability community, what is your biggest barrier? Many of them will say, "Yeah, infrastructure, not having equal rights. I can't get a job. So, I'm discriminated against. Or, "I can't even wheel my chair up through a local hospital."

Crystal Keating:

Wow.

Ashley Hall:

Or, "I can't go into a local police post to report my crime because there's no ramp." And those are all very true things.

Crystal Keating:

Sure.



Ashley Hall:

And they will say that. But they'll also say that their biggest barrier is the way they're treated. The way they're treated by others and there's still a very strong attitudinal barrier towards them and women and children are the most vulnerable to being completely excluded from society.

Crystal Keating:

Wow, it goes so deep. Well, what was it about really transforming the education system as a way to advocate for the rights and well-beings of people with disabilities that led you to stay in Uganda?

Ashley Hall:

I felt very called to using the educational system as a platform to minister to service providers, for one, because of my experience with Janet, the mom who talked about her two boys who were abused. For me, what I heard her saying was if the teachers had better training, maybe that wouldn't have happened. And maybe it's not just training, maybe it's them being challenged on their poor choices and how they're treating someone. And me as a fellow special educator, I can to speak into their space because I do the same thing they do. And sometimes it takes someone to come alongside you and mentor you and to give you a different viewpoint.

Crystal Keating:

Yes.

Ashley Hall:

A different perspective on what disability is that was the hope as I carried on, was to speak as an educator, to other educators and to bring transformation into their lives and speak from a biblical place about what God asks us to do as service providers, especially because Uganda practices, what they call inclusion. So, inclusion is mandated in their laws and that's how students with disabilities receive education. So, they're integrated straight into the general education system, which means a lot of the teachers who are general education teachers, they don't have enough training on how to provide education to students with disabilities in the classroom.

And so that's a big emphasis with teachers. You can't escape this, you can't escape teaching students with disabilities because it's the law. So how can we move forward with this where more children with disabilities in Uganda are coming in.

Crystal Keating:

Absolutely.

Ashley Hall:

Coming into the classrooms because it's the law. And we need to uphold the law. 90% of children with disabilities in developing nations, don't attend school even if it's written in the laws that they have free education. And that's a big change that I want to see in Uganda. And it's why I really targeted the education system because teachers have some of the most access to the disability community, more than the church does oftentimes, more than hospital staff. It's the teachers.



Crystal Keating:

That is interesting. How have you been received? And let me just say it bluntly as a Caucasian woman from the states.

Ashley Hall:

Yeah so, I feel... For one, Ugandans are very friendly, very welcoming. They're used to an ex-pat community, a small ex-pat community is there, it's a growing ex-pat missionary community. And when you talk to Ugandans about disability, they will tell you that they need deep improvement on working with people with disabilities, whether it's through education, recreation, they'll say, "Thanks for the good help."

Crystal Keating:

Wow.

Ashley Hall:

Ugandans are so open when you tell them what you're doing there, they'll say, "We need so much help in this area." And I think for me, it's why my focus is equipping Ugandans for disability ministry.

Crystal Keating:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Okay. Now, when you say disability ministry, how would you define that?

Ashley Hall:

Joni Eareckson Tada says this-

Crystal Keating:

She's a good one to quote.

Ashley Hall:

She's the best to quote. Joni Eareckson Tada says, "Disability ministry is not disability ministry until the disabled are ministering." And I use that all the time in my trainings, conferences, one-on-one mentoring, discipling. And so that can mean training leaders on how to reach people with disabilities. But making that statement that true disability ministry is when your fellow peers who have disabilities are walking alongside you and having the same opportunities as a Christian. And that means they're serving in their church, serving in their communities, discipling and mentoring people. To me, that's disability ministry.

Crystal Keating:

Amen.



Ashley Hall:

When that is happening, however God asks you to make that happen and how he uses you is one thing. But the end goal is seeing people with disabilities, not just reach their potential, but they're equal. They're equal to me. And they're being given the same opportunities.

Crystal Keating:

You're pretty much setting forth a vision for the possibilities of what people with disabilities are able to do in the church. Instead of just saying, be moved with compassion like Jesus was and serve them. Although that's a part, you're going far beyond that to say, we need to be discipling people and people include people with disabilities, so that they can in turn disciple others and be a light and use their spiritual gifts in the church and be a part of the community. That's powerful. So, I'm really curious about, you mentioned before, you talked about Luke 14 Banquets and your trainings. What are some of those outreaches and teachings look like for you?

Ashley Hall:

A lot of my trainings are very relevant to what my audience is. So sometimes my audience is teachers and administrators and maybe some occupational therapists, physical therapists. So, you're kind of looking at an education system and some of those trainings are very applicable to special education or just regular educational topics, but it always teach from a Christian worldview and I'm always bringing in the gospel and always bringing in, disability ministry is not disability ministry until the disabled are ministering. I'm always incorporating that. But sometimes my trainings and conferences are parents, caretakers, whole groups of families, church leaders, pastors, or maybe church members who volunteer heavily in their church, really going deep into the scriptures and talking to them about what does the Luke 14 mandate say? And giving them also, maybe not just teaching them, but also a lot of hands-on activity. So that might look like we do a three-hour session on how do you incorporate students with disabilities or people with disabilities in just sports activities. So, here's how you do that.

Crystal Keating:

How do you do that? Give me an example.

Ashley Hall:

So, we just make local material and we buy local, like a net, make a net, put some wood around it and dig it into the ground and make a very short volleyball net. And everyone plays volleyball on their bottom.

Crystal Keating:

Everybody?

Ashley Hall:

Everybody does. Yep. And it's like, there's no reason why we can't do this.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah.



Ashley Hall:

And maybe it's playing soccer, which we call football and Uganda. And we do disability assimilation, like blindfolding. And some people can't use... Maybe they can use only one foot. Some people have to play by being guided by a partner, just all of those different avenues. And we try to incorporate every disability possible. So, they feel equipped.

Crystal Keating:

That's great.

Ashley Hall:

This is how we would do this.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah.

Ashley Hall:

It's very relevant for nationals that they could easily do that. And they feel empowered to carry that on when they go back to their home environment. So sometimes yeah, the trainings are very hands-on, and I think that pastors and church leaders, they have the best time.

Crystal Keating:

I bet.

Ashley Hall:

They're like a kid in candy a store. They do, they have a blast.

Crystal Keating:

Talk about the Luke 14 Banquets. That's also hands-on.

Ashley Hall:

Yeah. And so, another component that we use to train church leaders and pastors and families, and maybe some other service providers is conducting a Luke 14 Banquet. And we use the verses from Luke 14, 12 through 24. And it talks about how we bring in the lame, the blind, the crippled, and so on and so forth. And we talk about that, and we read the verses. And so, we say we are carrying out a biblical mandate. And so, for, I think every country and every place in the United States, it might look very different.

Crystal Keating:

Sure.

Ashley Hall:

But if it were relevant to Uganda, we do a lot of sports and we allow families to come and participate, people with disabilities are obviously there. And it's a time for the families to be just families and for the children, including the siblings to just have a good time.



Crystal Keating:

So, families impacted by disability all coming together.

Ashley Hall:

Yeah. Families impacted by disabilities, all coming together. We also try to be relevant and do stuff for women and making necklaces together and just talking together. We do a time of worship where we have singing and dancing, very relevant to Ugandan culture. And of course, there's a time where we eat. We love to eat in Uganda, especially meat, any kind of meat, chicken, beef, it doesn't matter. You have meat, the people will come. So, we always make sure-

Crystal Keating:

Sign me up.

Ashley Hall:

We have good meal. We come together, we share the good news of Jesus, especially to the parents who are oftentimes just kept away.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah.

Ashley Hall:

And even to the people with disabilities who may be hearing the good news of Jesus for the first time, because they're kept away. We always have people who have attended trainings, use the Luke 14 Banquet as an avenue to get hands on training. So, they're there volunteering. Pastors-

Crystal Keating:

Good.

Ashley Hall:

Church leaders, locals, Cause 4 Life interns. And it's just another way though, to train up leaders and they can come to a Luke 14 Banquet and see the logistical side of it and how easy it would be for them to carry that on in their church.

Crystal Keating:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Ashley Hall:

And that is actually the goal of a Luke 14 Banquet is to involve the churches and to get them to carry that on as well. So that's kind of the thinking behind it as well.



Crystal Keating:

That's exciting. That sounds like a lot of fun. And it's the perfect opportunity for people to let down their barriers and say, hey, you are welcome here. And we're going to show you that you are, so I love that. Well, what kind of other opportunities have presented themselves to you as you work as a missionary and educator and Uganda.

Ashley Hall:

Many opportunities, I would say some of my highlights living in Uganda and doing missions has been being a part of a university and being able to start the first Christian based bachelor program in special education and disability studies at a local Christian University.

Crystal Keating:

Awesome.

Ashley Hall:

Little outside of Kampala, and just seeing now we've had two graduating classes come out of that program now and seeing nationals equipped to go out and start their own disability ministries, serve in the church, serve in the community, serve in education systems. And they're doing that. These young adults, they're out there and they're carrying it on and they are spurred on to carry out the Luke 14 mandate, I would say.

And that's been a big focus of mine is reaching young adults or maybe young professionals who need a lot of guidance in that way. And I would say that has been some of my highlight in ministry is being able to come alongside young adults, especially young adults with, or without disabilities, but who feel called to pursue a profession in the disability field. I would say, yeah, those have been some major highlights. I've been able to serve with Joni And Friends for over 10 years and have led I think seven Cause 4 Life trips and Uganda alone. And it has been a privilege and a joy. Again, I love working with young adults. I was once a young adult I'm in my mid-thirties, some people would still consider me a young adult, but I love 20-year-old age group. I love seeing them in the stage that I was once in and just seeing their challenges that they face. I would say those have been some of my big highlights, serving, doing missions in Uganda.

Crystal Keating:

Well, you're raising up the next generation of leaders who are going to be in the communities and the churches and the schools. And when you look back on your life, I know you're only in your mid-thirties, but when you look back, does it just blow your mind, all that God is doing?

Ashley Hall:

It really does. God is so good. He just keeps me in awe.

Crystal Keating:

How do you stay spiritually fed?



Ashley Hall:

Being in the word every day, having accountability with mentors, in being able to talk about what I'm going through, really what I'm going through out on the mission field. That's a big part of saying spiritually fed, because I feel like if you're not willing to deal with sin in your life, that hinders you and you can't get free.

Crystal Keating:

Yep.

Ashley Hall:

And so being spiritually fed is being able to be open to what the Lord has for you each day. So, accountability is a big one and regular church attendance, having a church community, body of Christ. Even in Uganda, those are some of the main ways that I stay spiritually fed.

Crystal Keating:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, God has obviously given you a passion for his name and for the people of Uganda. And I think who better to lead the 20-year-olds because you've been there. You've been that young student and you've lived a life of faith. And so, you have so much to offer, what a gift you are to Joni And Friends, and to Cause 4 Life, and to all that's happening in Uganda. So, you must have met so many amazing students through the years, especially you talk about the university that you started the disability program with, any students or stories come to mind that just think, man, God has done amazing things through this particular student or in this situation?

Ashley Hall:

There have been many, many stories of students, both American students who have come as interns. And then obviously Ugandan nationals or East African nationals. There's one particularly student that his testimony and his life story has just resonated with me for so long and his name is Jude. And Jude was born with a physical disability and it's obvious to the eye when you see his physical disability. And so, when he was a young boy, his father rejected him and it was the same story like Alice and Innocent, the mom was given an ultimatum. And so, the mom abandoned Jude and he was left to be raised by grandparents. And so, he struggled with rejection, being ostracized, stigmatized by society. And he was told horrible things, like he would never amount to anything, dogs were better off than he was.

Crystal Keating:

Wow.

Ashley Hall:

And now here he is a student who has just recently graduated from Africa Renewal University with a bachelor's in special education, disability studies. And he has gone on to host multiple Luke 14 Banquets at his church. He was also a former Cause 4 Life intern in Uganda.

Crystal Keating:

Wow.



Ashley Hall:

He has just blown us away. And now that he's a professional no longer in school studying, he has created and is a head of a disability ministry in his church and in his community, he just carries out what he learned during his Cause 4 Life internship and all of the things that he got to experience at Africa Renewal University. And he's just a stellar student and really knows what it's like to be ignored in society and casted out. And he knows how to reach the unreached in his community. And he knows the importance of what it is to be in the church and to have that community because he didn't have it. And he's doing amazing things in Uganda.

Crystal Keating:

It must be so exciting to see God transforming and renewing hearts, you are on the front lines of all that. And I think the video you talked about with Jude is actually going to be on our podcast page. So, listeners, if you want to take a look at Jude and see his amazing testimony, go to [JoniAndFriends.org/podcast](http://JoniAndFriends.org/podcast) and see all that God is doing through Jude. Well, there's just so many more questions I want to ask you, but our time is nearly up. Ashley, when you look ahead to the future, what are your hopes and dreams and prayers for Uganda in the next 10 years?

Ashley Hall:

My hopes and my dreams and my prayers is I want to see more, especially more young adults, but in large the society of Uganda, more accepting to people with disabilities. And I want to see, especially the younger generation challenged, convicted, and on fire for disability ministry in their churches, in their homes, in their communities. And I just want to see a movement in disability ministry in Uganda where it's not just professionals, especially older professionals doing the work. I want to see a younger generation on fire for the vulnerable, and the least in the unreached. And I believe God can do that.

And I want to see the church, not just have disability ministries, and I know that's such a needed thing for families and people with disabilities, but I want to see that lived out, that people with disabilities in Uganda are just blowing Uganda away with their giftings and abilities because they're serving in the church, and they're discipling and mentoring and being used by God too. And that the church would open their doors and give them that space to do that. Those are some of my... I could go on. I have about 30 of them, but those are some of my big ones.

Crystal Keating:

Well, what an inspiration and encouragement you are. Ashley, thank you so much for your time on our podcast today. I am deeply moved by all that God is doing as you follow after him. So, God bless you. God bless your work in Uganda. Thank you so much for your time today.

Ashley Hall:

Thank you too, bless you.

Crystal Keating:

What an inspiring conversation. God has given Ashley a deep passion for equipping and mentoring young professionals for disability ministry. And in a place where there are common challenges for people with special needs because of infrastructure and cultural beliefs about disability and suffering, God is using her to help transform hearts. If you're like Ashley and have a heart to serve people impacted by disability, we have a tangible way for you to answer God's call in Luke 14. Through our Cause 4 Life internship program, we're training the next generation in disability ministry.

We have a number of hands-on training opportunities for you to grow your skills as a leader and an advocate people with special needs, because all people have a place at the banquet table and a place in the church. Go to [JoniAndFriends.org/podcast](https://JoniAndFriends.org/podcast) for more information about Cause 4 Life internships and apply for an internship today. And be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you won't miss our next conversation with a very special couple Greg and Gina Hubert. As we near Valentine's day, hear how this couple has stayed strong, keeping their love alive while caring for their three sons with autism. You won't want to miss this conversation. I'm Crystal Keating, if you have any comments, visit [JoniAndFriends.org/podcast](https://JoniAndFriends.org/podcast) to send me a message. Thank you for listening to the Joni And Friends Ministry Podcast.

Episode link: [A Community Approach to Inclusion | Joni & Friends \(joniandfriends.org\)](https://JoniAndFriends.org/podcast)

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