

SARAH KISITU KASULE'S JOURNEY

Kasule a special needs education specialist, a parent and the proprietor of a school for children with autism is a mother of four boys. Her firstborn, 17 years old, lives with autism. "By the time he was about two-and-a-half, he was hyperactive, jumping around constantly and was not speaking."

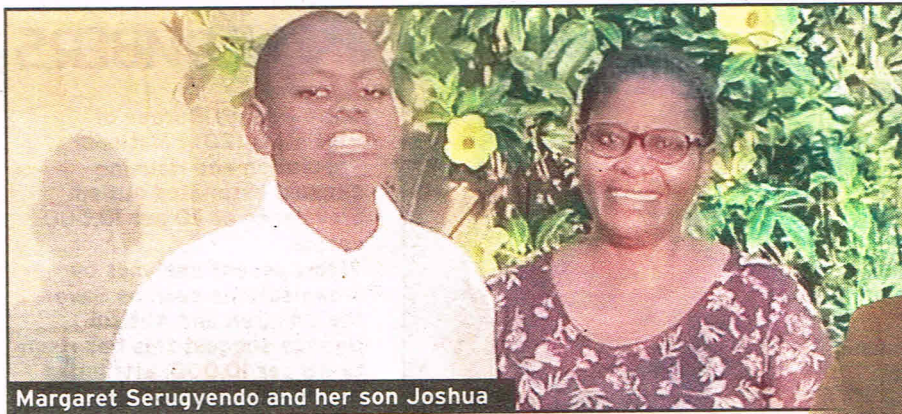
Concerned friends advised Kisitu to take her son to a paediatrician for assessment, however, she says, the paediatrician had little knowledge of autism.

The following day Kisitu sought out a neurologist who referred her to Mulago for intervention and therapy. Determined to understand the condition, she did extensive research on the Internet.

When he was three, Kisitu's son was enrolled in school. After only three weeks she was asked to take him away claiming he was 'unmanageable'. The same situation occurred at another school.

Out of 15 children with special needs at that school, Kisitu's son was the only one with severe autism. He struggled to sit still, could not

TWO MOTHERS' JOURNEYS



Margaret Serugyendo and her son Joshua

communicate verbally and was frequently overwhelmed.

One day the school van dropped him home in distress. He was crying uncontrollably and had wet his trousers.

As a non-verbal child he could not explain what had happened. Kisitu later understood that other children had been touching him.

"That was the day I decided to teach my child myself."

That decision led to the birth of Teen and Tots Neuro Development Centre, a school for children with autism.

SERUGYENDO'S JOURNEY

Margaret Hope Serugyendo lives in Kijabijjo Nakweero in

Wakiso district. Her son Joshua is 13 years old. She and her husband lived in Kenya where Joshua was born. Like Kisitu she noticed delayed speech, limited social interaction and repetitive behaviours.

Despite Kenya's more developed infrastructure, Serugyendo found that adequate support was difficult to access. "I called 30 organisations I found online looking for education and health support for children with autism," she says. "Most of them were not operating in Kenya."

When the family relocated to Uganda, schools did not accept Joshua due to his sensory sensitivities and repetitive behaviours. Eventually Serugyendo resigned from her job to "home-school him.



Sarah Kasule, a special needs education specialist and proprietor of a school for children with autism