

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue baseball cap and a dark blue t-shirt, is smiling broadly and being embraced from behind by a group of children. The children are wearing blue school uniforms and are also smiling. The background is a warm, orange-toned gradient.

WorldVision

AUTUMN 2003

Treasures of the Heart

Women of Vision are making a difference worldwide. Page 20

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A38WVM

WorldVision

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1

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» ON THE COVER

Kristen Paulson traded art brokering for a fourth-grade classroom after her life was transformed in Nairobi's notorious Soweto slums.
Photograph by Anne Cusic

World Vision, a free quarterly publication, affirms people responding to God's call to care for the poor by providing information, inspiration, and opportunities for action, linking them with children and families in nearly 100 countries where World Vision ministers. In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, this publication costs less than 35 cents a copy to print and mail.

We welcome your comments and/or address changes. Send them to: The Editor, World Vision magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716 or e-mail us: wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

All Bible references are from the New International Version unless indicated otherwise.

Charter Member, Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability
Member, Evangelical Press Association

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Correction: In our report of financial highlights for 2002 [Summer 2003 issue] the colors on our legend were incorrectly represented. In 2002, World Vision raised \$110.8 million in public cash and food; and \$5.1 million in other income. We regret this error.

www.worldvision.org

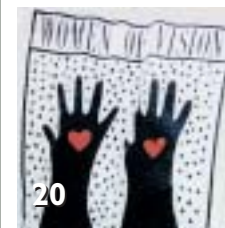


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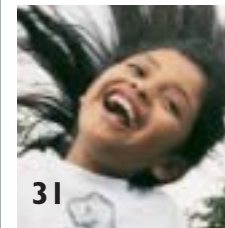
India



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[reader services]

Find out how you can get involved with World Vision

We'd love to share more information with you about our programs and about partnering with World Vision to care for the poor. Check the boxes on the form below, and return it in the envelope provided between pages 16 and 17. For more information, call (888) 85-CHILD, or visit www.worldvision.org.

Share World Vision with your family

- 1 FAMILY SPONSORSHIP** World Vision's newest sponsorship program allows you to break the cycle of poverty by sponsoring an entire family in Ghana, Romania, Sri Lanka, or El Salvador.
- 2 WORLD VISION GIFT CATALOG** On behalf of your loved ones, give unique gifts such as goats, bicycles, or medical supplies to those in need.

Bring World Vision to your church

- 3 30 HOUR FAMINE** Get your youth group or school involved in the fight against world hunger by participating in World Vision's nationwide annual famine event. www.30hourfamine.org
- 4 EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE** Order "Planting Seeds of Hope"—a catalog of books, videos, and publications about urgent global issues.

- 5 LOVE LOAF** Help your congregation learn more about world poverty as they collect offerings for your church and World Vision.
- 6 REACHING OUT TO THE POOR** A World Vision staff person will call you with ways World Vision can help your church reach out to the poor.
- 7 ONE LIFE REVOLUTION** Give your youth group a tangible way to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic by providing practical, life-sustaining items through this catalog.

Expand your world vision

- 8 EMERGENCY RELIEF RESPONSE** Receive e-mail updates on how World Vision is responding to emergency relief situations. *Must provide e-mail address to receive these updates.*
- 9 WOMEN OF VISION** Join a volunteer ministry that serves the poor, learning from and advocating for women in developing countries. www.womenofvision.org

- 10 WORLD VISION'S PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES** Find out what World Vision is doing for U.S. children through tutoring programs, inner-city youth initiatives, and other domestic ministries.
- 11 WORLD VISION ADVOCACY** Learn how to be an advocate for the poor and those in need around the world. Go to www.worldvision.org/globalissues.

Show World Vision to your company

- 12 MATCHING GIFTS** Learn how your employer may match your contribution to World Vision.
- 13 DONATE GIFTS-IN-KIND** Discover how your company can donate new, surplus inventory that can save lives in the United States and overseas.
- 14 DONATE SHIPPING DOLLARS** Funds for shipping gifts-in-kind can leverage the value of sending products overseas.
- 15 CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS** Your company can benefit by supporting World Vision.

Share your resources with World Vision

- 16 GIFT PLANNING** Establish a legacy of hope by including World Vision in your will or learn about other estate-planning options.
- 17 KEY CONTRIBUTORS** Donate your car, boat, real estate, or recreational vehicle to World Vision and receive a tax deduction for your contribution.
- 18 LPGA PLAYING PARTNERS** Support World Vision by supporting your favorite top female golf pro, tackling poverty through her game.
- 19 SCHOOLTOOLS** Practical ways your group can provide essential school supplies to children around the world.

Volunteer through World Vision

- 20 ARTIST ASSOCIATES** Help Christian artists promote child sponsorship by volunteering at a local concert.

Know World Vision's reason for hope

- 21 WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST** Simple steps to a personal and lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.

From the President

Seven Steps to Poverty

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT THINGS to communicate is what it feels like to be poor in the developing world. How can Americans really understand global poverty without actually traveling to see it? Let me try to help you by taking you on a brief, imaginary journey. I will transport you mentally and emotionally simply by taking seven things away from you, one at a time. Ready?

First, I will take away your **clothes**. Don't panic, I won't take them all. You can keep the clothes on your back. Can you imagine wearing the same clothes every single day? You can wash them each night, but you still feel embarrassed. Your children feel the brunt of this humiliation at school.

The rest of your life is still intact, and things are not all that bad. But next I must take away **electricity**. Now you come home to a dark house each night. None of your appliances work: no refrigerator, telephone, dishwasher, television, computer, or stereo. Your showers are cold, and you have to wash your clothes by hand. Your quality of life has dropped precipitously—"inconvenient" is an understatement. But you shouldn't feel too bad; you are still better off than most of the world.

Takeaway No. 3 is really tough: **clean water**. None of your faucets, toilets, or showers work, and the only water source is a stagnant water hole

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me.... — MATTHEW 25:35,36

about a mile away. It takes hours each day to fetch the water your family needs, and because it is teeming with bacteria, you and your children are constantly sick. Forget washing your clothes or even trying to stay clean. Despair and desperation start to set in as you see your children suffering.

I'm afraid I have to take away even more: your **home**. Now you must live in a 20-by-20-foot mud hut with a dirt floor and very little furniture. Your whole family must sleep in one room on the floor. When it rains, the roof leaks and the floor turns muddy. How much more can you take?

Takeaway No. 5 is devastating: **food**. Your children have long ago lost their smiles; now they are hungry with a gnawing pain that won't go away. You find a little food by picking through your neighbors' garbage. It's amazing what people throw away. Already sick from exposure to the



DAVID WARD/WORLD VISION

elements and from drinking dirty water, your children's bodies become severely malnourished and cannot fight off diseases. Your 4-year-old girl seems to be slipping away.

Getting her to the doctor is urgent but, tragically, my No. 6 takeaway is **health care**. To your horror and disbelief, your daughter dies before your very eyes—of diarrhea! You are trapped in a nightmare. How can this be happening? Why has no one stepped in to help? Unbelievably, everyone around you is living as they always did, but no one seems to care or even notice your suffering.

What else could I possibly take away? No. 7 is **hope**. Without these basic necessities of life, you and your children have no hope for the future.

Poverty, for most of us, is distant and remote. But this is the pain that billions on our earth endure each day. Please pray for them and know that World Vision, driven by faith, is urgently coming to their rescue, thanks to people just like you—who do care. ■

Richard Thomas

WORLD VISION READER SERVICES

Clip and return in envelope provided in the center of the magazine.

Please tell me how I can:

Share World Vision with my family

- 1 2

Bring World Vision to my church

- 3 4 5
 6 7

Expand my world vision

- 8 9 10

Show World Vision to my company

- 12 13 14 15

Share my resources with World Vision

- 16 17 18 19

Volunteer through World Vision

- 20

Know World Vision's reason for hope

- 21

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

H8FT0D

News From the Field

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) > Families fleeing tribal violence in the eastern province of Ituri received assistance from World Vision. Conflict between the Lendu majority and Hema minority escalated after Ugandan troops pulled out of the area in early May. The tribes are fighting for control of resource-rich areas of Ituri, especially Bunia town. Tens of thousands of people fled the brutality in Bunia by foot, traversing miles of equatorial jungle to reach relief camps. At a camp in Eringeti, World Vision provided emergency goods for some 5,000 people. An additional 10,000 people in a camp in Komada received supplies as well as water and sanitation care from World Vision.

Iraq > World Vision delivered aid to families and began rebuilding efforts in Al Rutba, western Iraq—an area hit hard by bombs early in the war. Four thousand families received kits containing blankets, clothing, collapsible water containers, plastic sheeting, and cooking sets. In addition to restocking ransacked schools and restoring electricity to 25,000 residents, World Vision chose the site of a

former Baath Party headquarters to set up a temporary hospital, replacing the one damaged in the bombing. World Vision also works in the northern city of Mosul, where staff originally expected to distribute food to 250,000 people. Once on the ground, however, they realized that food wasn't the most urgent need. Instead, World Vision is providing shelter and other assistance for 2,000 people forced to flee from their homes. After the fall of the Hussein regime, families had taken refuge anywhere they could: in the guardhouse of the local presidential palace and even in a former torture center.

Algeria > Following a devastating earthquake in May, World Vision flew in emergency goods to help survivors. The magnitude 6.7 quake killed more than

2,000 people and injured 10,000. Working with partner agencies in the capital, Algiers, the relief team offloaded 15 metric tons of blankets, cooking sets, plastic sheeting, collapsible water containers, and a 10-ton truck to aid delivery. It was a demonstration of solidarity, says Ton Van Zutphen, World Vision's Middle East relief manager: "We wanted to let the people of Algeria know that we are with them and not forgetting those in pain."

Zimbabwe > World Vision helped restore eyesight to 156 elderly people during a recent weeklong campaign. World Vision provided transportation, accommodations, and food for the patients, who came from all over the Mberengwa district. Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health coordinated ophthalmologists to perform the procedures, mostly treating cataracts and glaucoma. Blindness is common in rural Zimbabwe communities, where even simple ophthalmologic procedures aren't available.

Mexico > Sponsored children hit the airwaves here, as guests on a radio show hosted by a popular Mexican actress, Talina Fernandez. "World Vision has supported me a lot," said sponsored child Lucia Ramirez Martínez, 11. "I know my sponsors; I have their picture, and I love them very much." At the end of the program, Fernandez invited the radio audience to support World Vision in Mexico through sponsorship, volunteer work, and donations.

Philippines > A corporation known for keeping babies healthy is caring for more than 100 Filipino children. Employees at

the Manila office of Johnson & Johnson, the international manufacturer of health care products, are signing up to sponsor children through World Vision Philippines. Their contributions are automatically deducted from their paychecks, saving World Vision the administrative costs. The response has been overwhelming, said Robin Velasco, Johnson & Johnson's human resources manager and a child sponsor himself. "I strongly believe that as employees have good experiences in sponsoring a child," he says, "more willing sponsors will be coming our way."

Ecuador > World Vision Ecuador is celebrating its 25th anniversary with the launch of a commemorative postage stamp designed by a sponsored child, Huayta Sisa Saransing, 12. Ecuador's national post office issued the stamp to recognize World Vision's commitment to 322 impoverished communities across the country. ■

fyi Thanks to U.S. sponsors, 14,611

sponsored children in Peru now have Bibles.

A partnership between World Vision and the International Bible Society enabled distribution of the Bibles, which contained personalized bookplates signed by the children's sponsors.



RICH ROSEBANK/WORLD VISION

» **FAST FACT** Uganda is the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to reverse its own HIV/AIDS epidemic. Thanks to strong prevention measures, Ugandans have dramatically reduced HIV prevalence rates—even in rural areas, which frequently are the last to show signs of relief. (UNAIDS)

Hope Update

Q&A With Dr. C. Everett Koop

> As surgeon general during the Reagan administration, Dr. C. Everett Koop fearlessly spoke out against a little-known disease called HIV/AIDS. Twenty years later, he's still talking.



Q. Is HIV/AIDS really the greatest health crisis of our time?

A. There has never been a disease like AIDS. We've had diseases that have taken a tremendous toll on life. Smallpox, for example, killed 500 million people in the last century. But none of those diseases had the stigma that goes with AIDS—changing the way people support AIDS treatment and how they treat [affected] people.

Q. Why should Christians care about HIV/AIDS?

A. Christians, if they're Bible-believing, will understand that the ethic of the Good Samaritan applies here. Also, we have the admonition in James that true religion is taking care of widows and orphans. With those two together, we can't avoid it.

Q. Is HIV/AIDS the new leprosy?

A. There's a tremendous association of leprosy with AIDS. Our great-grandparents responded to the missionary call to help leprosy. This generation is being called to help AIDS. The hospitals in Africa [where] I used to see leprosy patients 20 years ago are filled with AIDS patients now. What's the same is that both patients are outcasts from society. And in countries that already have prejudice and poverty and [lack of] good health care, that's just one added burden they shouldn't have to bear.

Q. Do you think the tide is starting to turn on the HIV/AIDS crisis?

A. I don't know whether there's a turning of the tide yet. But I do believe there has to be. And that's why what World Vision is doing with its Hope Initiative is so important. It could be the tide-turner. ■



SIMON PETER ESAKU/WORLD VISION

Democratic Republic of Congo: A family uprooted by tribal violence



Iraq

A.SWINBURNE-JONES/WORLD VISION

➔ Glad You Asked

Does World Vision provide for sponsored children who become gravely ill or have special medical conditions?



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Natalia, now cancer-free, and her mother

Yes! Natalia Almada dos Santos is a good example of how your extra gifts to World Vision's Childcare Ministries Fund help children who have special needs beyond what sponsorship covers.

Natalia, 5, lives with her mother and great-grandmother in Brazil. Her mother, Jalida, a janitor in a health clinic, raises Natalia alone on a salary of \$66 a month. Living on \$2 dollars a day was difficult. Then, in April 2001, Natalia became sick.

It started as a cold that hung on. Natalia couldn't breathe through her nose. "She was acting funny," Jalida remembers. "I took her to a doctor in Pão de Açúcar. The more she took medications, the more weight she lost."

Natalia had cancer—a malignant lump in her nose. "I thought she was going to die," Jalida says. "All you hear about cancer—it's bad."

Jalida was stuck. She didn't have the money for medicines and treatments. Then World Vision stepped in. Natalia had been sponsored since she was a 1-year-old. World Vision helped Jalida pay for medicines not covered by the hospital, plus transportation costs and telephone bills.

For five months Natalia fought cancer in a hospital. She underwent chemotherapy, losing more weight and her hair, and developing sores on her lips and chest. A tracheotomy helped her breathe. World Vision staff called Jalida often to provide emotional support.

It took time, but Natalia improved. In July 2002, doctors pronounced her cured. Today the little girl is back with her mother, a normal child with short, thick, dark hair and a taste for popcorn.

Looking ahead to a long life for Natalia, Jalida says, "I want her to be a happy and healthy woman who makes good choices in life."

Through extra gifts to World Vision in the special mailings with stickers, bookmarks, and fun things for your sponsored child, you enable the Childcare Ministries Fund to help children like Natalia. ■

Prayer Point > On Oct. 1, would you join World Vision's 20,000 employees worldwide in spending the first day of our fiscal year in prayer? During the annual Day of Prayer, every World Vision office around the globe prays for God's guidance and wisdom in the coming year. It's also a chance for us to pray for you.



KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

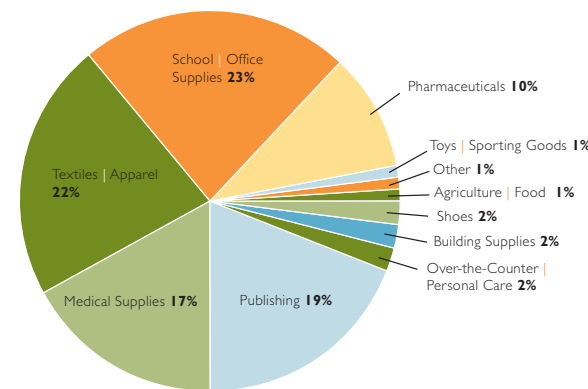
Princess Zulu and President Bush

➔ In the Media

April 30, 2003 > Newspapers around the country—including *USA Today*—ran this picture of President George W. Bush with World Vision's Princess Zulu, an HIV-positive wife and mother from Zambia. The kiss happened at the White House as President Bush confirmed his commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. "When he did that," Princess says, "he was kissing the tears of millions of Africans who suffer from this terrible disease." Princess works with children and families in Zambia who are devastated by the virus.

» FAST FACT In 2002, manufacturers and merchandisers donated \$171 million in first-quality goods that enabled World Vision to serve children and families in 62 countries.

WHAT COMPANIES GIVE



*World Vision's Gifts-in-Kind department

➔ A Sponsor's Story

Like the Oxygen We Breathe > Three years ago, Beth and Rusty Hall wanted to teach their son Taylor, then 8, about tithing. It was a lesson that changed the lives of two families.

Through World Vision, the Halls sponsored a Lebanese boy named Afif, 11, who lived in an orphanage. His father was still living but could not care for Afif or his sister. Every month Taylor gave a portion of his allowance and wrote to Afif.

A year later, the Halls received some unexpected money, and they chose to send a special financial gift to World Vision to be used for their friends. Afif's father used the money to build onto the home the family shares with their grandmother—giving the children a place to stay on weekends.

The family sent pictures to the Halls, who found it "an eye opener" to see the difference between Afif's home and theirs. When the Halls learned that Afif's father was doing the work himself but had run out of money to finish the project, they e-mailed friends and family for help.

Afif's father expressed surprise at receiving enough money to finish the project. He told the Halls that he had doubted the existence of anyone "who would do good for the sake of good." He believed this quality existed only in the movies.

"But I realized I was wrong," he later wrote. "I saw that the world was fine because people like you existed."

"This house will be yours as well," he told the Hall family. "We await your visit someday, hoping it may be soon."

Sponsorship changes many lives. The Hall children are in the process of learning that "when you have, you give." And the love of strangers is reuniting Afif's family.

Afif's father closed a letter to the Halls with these words: "We love you a lot. You are like the oxygen we breathe." ■ — Laura Reinhardt



COURTESY THE HALL FAMILY

➔ In the Spotlight

In the Line of Fire > As a child, Al Dwyer belonged to the World Explorers' Club. Now his job involves not just exploring—but bringing assistance to some of the world's most dangerous places.



World Vision relief expert Al Dwyer

"My first day in Angola I was almost in shock," he says. "I remember thinking, *What have I got myself into?*"

It was hard to stay focused—to devise programs to provide the help Angolans so desperately needed. Despite the shock, however, he was soon saying to himself, *This is probably the most interesting thing I have ever done in my life.*

"Honestly, I felt like I was reborn."

Katia moved to Angola with Al, working as a training officer for World Vision. In 2000, they moved to Florida and Al joined World Vision's Global Rapid Response Team. Since then Al has worked wherever

disasters happen, from earthquakes in India to reconstruction work in Afghanistan.

It's hard for Al's three boys—ages 2, 4, and 6—and his wife, who rarely see him for any length of time. Katia says the boys ask God nightly to protect their father as he helps other people in dangerous places.

Places like East Timor. Al was there in September 1999 as the situation unraveled—distributing food and caring for those who had fled their homes, even as militia groups roamed the tiny state. During the last final crazy days before international aid workers were evacuated, Al was shot at and forced to flee toward a U.N. compound. When a militiaman fired a machine gun in the air, the terrified crowd began scrambling over the barbed-wire fence into the compound.

"I remember seeing kids hanging up there on the wire," Al says. The children suffered razor cuts in the melee.

Al himself became a refugee, trapped with thousands of others for three days without money, food, or spare clothes, and enduring appalling hygiene, while marauding gangs of thugs burned and looted around them.

"It gave me an insight into refugee camps," he says. "Twenty-four hours earlier I had been distributing food. But in the camp I was receiving that same food."



JAMES EAST/WORLD VISION

Finally, he was bundled out of the compound and onto a plane sent in with Australian Special Forces.

When he arrived in Australia, Al grabbed a cheeseburger at McDonald's and called his family to tell them he was safe.

"The thousands of kids I come into contact with at every emergency—they are identical in attitude, needs, energy, and smiles to my boys," he says. "I really know what it means for those children to miss meals, to not have clean water or a safe place to sleep."

It's all in a day's work for Al, whose childhood dreams of world exploration have resulted in a brighter future for the world's children. ■

—James East

In Iraq, Al discusses how to convert a former Baath Party building into a hospital.

➔ That's Entertainment

> World Vision has launched a partnership with Toonacious Family Entertainment. Toonacious is dedicated to providing high-quality entertainment for children that is fun and faith-based. The first animated release, "Love Thy Neighbor," features Lenny, a quiet rabbit, and Sid, a fast-talking mouse—two opposite personalities whose friendship is constantly reshaped and challenged by the kinds of circumstances children understand. Lenny and Sid serve as animated ambassadors for World Vision as well, with "Love Thy Neighbor" featuring an invitation by Jodi Benson (singing voice of The Little Mermaid) to sponsor children through World Vision. You can find "Love Thy Neighbor" at Christian bookstores nationwide.



» **FAST FACT** In 2002, World Vision disbursed \$36.4 million in micro-loans to 157,000 small-business owners around the world.

➔ Bigger and Better

30 Hour Famine Study Tour > The 30 Hour Famine Study Tour isn't just for teens anymore. Now, youth leaders will accompany their youth group members and World Vision staff as they witness hunger relief efforts overseas. More students and youth pastors can share the crushing reality of poverty with their congregations and classrooms—and motivate them to get involved.

Starting this year, two groups of 10 are heading to Quiquijana, Peru, to visit sponsored children and their families and work alongside World Vision staff.

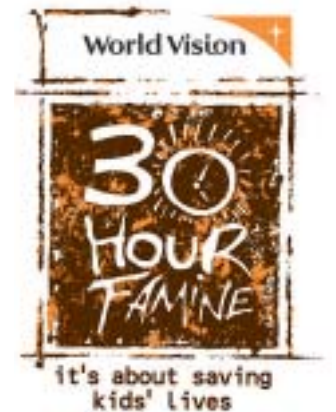
Teens and youth leaders will assist in farming projects, light construction, and painting, and will help children write letters to their sponsors.

The trips kick off Aug. 16, with the first of the two groups traveling to Peru. The second trip leaves Aug. 25. Students and youth pastors come from nearly every corner of the United States, from Washington state to Connecticut.

Every teen was required to raise at least \$500 through the 30 Hour Famine and to cover a portion of the trip's cost. They also answered a series of questions about what the Famine has meant to their groups.

"The 30 Hour Famine is easily the most meaningful event our youth ministry participates in," youth leader Andrew Heffner wrote. "We have been blessed over and over again by this dynamic weekend. Each year the journey into poverty for our group becomes a little more real."

Making world hunger real and relevant is the goal of the 30 Hour Famine. If you want to get involved, go to: www.30hourfamine.org or call 1-800-7FAMINE. Next year's national dates are Feb. 27-28, but you can do it any time! ■



➔ U.S. Scene

Hope for HIV/AIDS Spreads Nationwide

World Vision events around the country call attention to the pandemic.

Seattle/Tacoma > Pastors Armed for Action

World Vision invited more than 90 influential members of Puget Sound communities—church leaders—to the organization's Federal Way, Wash., headquarters to hear some sobering news: Eight thousand people a day are dying of HIV/AIDS around the globe. In Africa,

the loss of farmers has contributed to the current crippling food crisis.

"In 100 years, historians will look back at the 21st century through the lens of HIV/AIDS," World Vision President Rich Stearns told the pastors, "and ask, 'Where was the Church?'"

The presentation wasn't all bad news. Rich discussed a "window of hope" for African youth ages 5 to 15. Young people can remain AIDS-free if they learn and live by biblical values of abstinence and marital faithfulness.

Princess Kasune Zulu, an HIV-positive mother from

Zambia, provided inspiration through her story of speaking out about the disease despite intense stigma. She encouraged the pastors to do the same. "The Church is a watchtower," she said. "It has an obligation to warn its people about a disease that is preventable."

After hearing from Rich, Princess, and two medical experts, the pastors received resources to help them present HIV/AIDS information to their congregations. (For a copy of this pastors' toolkit, please go to www.worldvision.org/hope.) World Vision also invited pastors to travel to Africa to see the needs firsthand.

"This is something that was needed," said Carol Danner, wife of Senior Pastor Rick Danner of New Light Christian Church in Seattle. "As Princess Kasune Zulu said, knowledge is power. We're definitely interested in taking back information to our church."



Resources for churches

New York > Church Sponsors Children in Kenya

The global HIV/AIDS pandemic is overwhelming. But members of one church in New York City decided they could still do something significant. Through child sponsorship, Grace Church of Brooklyn is caring for the children of an entire African village.

It began back in December 2002. Grace Church mobilized around HIV/AIDS in Africa—and World Vision's efforts to fight the pandemic—during a special event called Hope Sunday. Leading up to that day, fliers and weekly announcements raised awareness of the overwhelming needs of families struggling with HIV/AIDS. Then on Hope Sunday, a PowerPoint presentation flashed faces of needy children. Pastor Ken Griep emphasized sponsorship as a calling to care for the widows and orphans, as James 1:27 exhorts. By the end of the day, all 75 children affected by HIV/AIDS in Mwingi, Kenya, were sponsored.

Months later, the church still buzzes with excitement. "Every Sunday, somebody will come to me all excited that they got a letter [from their sponsored child]," says Letitia Maxwell, volunteer coordinator for Hope Sunday. In addition to writing letters and praying, sponsors from Grace Church talk of traveling to Kenya to meet the children.

For Lecia Griep, a church staff member, the point is putting faith into action. "What we actually believe," she says, "is not worth much if we are not willing to have compassion on these people who are in such need and pain."



JONATHAN MILLER/WORLD VISION

Chicago > Hope Tour Touts Urgency of HIV/AIDS

WorldVision leaders and celebrity guests traveled across the country earlier this year, reaching grass-roots groups in 15 cities with urgent information about HIV/AIDS. The first stop of the Hope Tour in April: Chicago.

Bruce Wilkinson, best-selling author of *The Prayer of Jabez*, joined Rich Stearns and Princess Kasune Zulu to address a group of 400 people in Oakbrook, Ill. Bruce shared how he stepped out of his comfort zone to begin a new career focused on HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa. "Probably like you, I didn't want to deal with this issue of AIDS," he said, "because I was thinking, *If they didn't do what they did, they wouldn't have it.*"

Meeting innocent women and children affected by the disease changed his mind.

Rich Stearns urged the gathering to get involved in turning the tide of the deadly pandemic that has already killed the parents of 14 million children around the world. He cited several ways to help "disarm the world of HIV/AIDS," including sponsoring children in HIV/AIDS-affected countries or supporting WorldVision's Hope Initiative—programs providing care, prevention, and education.

"I didn't know the scope of the problem of HIV/AIDS," said Shayne Moore of Wheaton. "I want my kids to know this is going on too. I don't want people to say to me 30 years from now, 'You mean your generation didn't do anything about it?'"

—by Jennifer Lytle in Seattle, Amy Weaver in New York, and Jonathan Miller in Chicago

Kindergarteners from Chicago's Tabernacle Christian School perform at a Hope Tour event.

➔ Get Involved

Kits Equip Kids for Learning > As the new academic year approaches, students will soon head to stores to load up with school supplies. It's not so easy for children in some countries to do the same. That's why World Vision created **SchoolTools**—providing valuable school materials so that all children, regardless of where they live, can advance their education.

Children around the world lack school supplies for various reasons. For some, it's poverty—after buying food, there's no money left in the family budget for school materials. Some live in countries recovering from natural disasters or wars, where even basic necessities are scarce. And children in communities hard-hit by HIV/AIDS might be on their own after their parents have died, struggling simply to survive.

Orphans in the Cheppema Children's Home outside Nairobi, Kenya, recently received 100 school kits from World Vision. The gifts produced both smiles and tears. "Many of the children cried," said Dean Salisbury, World Vision's gifts-in-kind operations manager, "because no one had ever given them anything so nice before."

You can help. Check out our Web site (www.worldvision.org/schooltools) for specific instructions and supply needs. Then, get together with a group—perhaps your church's Vacation Bible School, youth group, or Sunday school—to assemble the kits, including a personal card. Send the kits to the World Vision International Distribution Center in Pennsylvania, and World Vision will ship the kits to needy children in 21 countries.

For more information on getting involved, check our Web site or call toll-free (888) 511-6492.





In the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, sub-Saharan Africa still dominates in severity. But tragedy looms in other regions, particularly in Asia, where the disease is exploding through densely populated countries. India claims the most cases of people living with HIV/AIDS outside of sub-Saharan Africa.

THE TV SCREEN GIVES OFF A WAN GLOW IN THE SUNLESS room where Neeta,* 29, spends her days. Lying prone on a thin mat on the floor, the HIV-positive widow subsists on little more than tea and can barely summon the strength to bathe. Neeta's whole world is reduced to this dingy, 3-by-12-foot rented house in the slums of Mumbai, India. Watching her favorite channel has become more than a pastime—it's her lifeline.

Her mother, Meera, gladly provides it. "I love my daughter very much, and I cannot see her in tension all the time," says

BY JANE SUTTON-REDNER
with reporting by Raju Bhagwat,
Rupak Johnson, and Lily Venkatarangam

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CALEB MPAMEI



embracing the SCORNEd

**In India, World Vision embraces victims of the so-called
"women's disease"— HIV/AIDS — with God's love.**

Meera, 47. “She coughs, vomits, moans, and groans. She needed something to divert her attention away from her pain and agony. I knew she loves watching TV.”

The monthly TV payments burden Meera, who works from dawn till dusk to support her family. But it’s the only way she can provide a little happiness for her daughter, who has lost so much.

Neeta is among an increasing number of Indian wives who contracted HIV/AIDS from their husbands. Nearly 4 million people in India live with HIV/AIDS, a figure that rivals some of the worst-affected sub-Saharan African countries. Some sources predict that India could see more than 20 million people infected by the end of the decade. Transmission trends have moved beyond high-risk groups into the mainstream population. Statistics from antenatal clinics, where pregnant women’s blood is tested, tell the story of the rising rate of HIV infections—not among sex workers, but ordinary housewives.

These women invariably outlive their spouses, causing them to bear the stigma of what’s now called, in some parts of India, “the women’s disease”—an isolating existence. But in two of India’s largest cities, HIV-positive women and their families need not suffer alone. World Vision staff reach out with medicine and practical care, demonstrating through their compassion the loving God who is always there.

MUMBAI: A CARING NETWORK

IN INDIA, CULTURAL GENDER ROLES CONDONE MEN’S SEXUAL promiscuity, yet wives cannot refuse their husbands even if they know the men are indulging in high-risk behavior. Ravi, a bus driver in Mumbai, used to frequent prostitutes with five friends. In 1995, they submitted to a blood test together and found that they all tested HIV-positive. Today, Ravi and just one other man are still alive. And his wife, Kala, is sick. “I am responsible for contracting my innocent wife with HIV,” he says candidly.

Whatever tolerance a man might expect for his HIV status does not extend to a woman. “Women are discriminated against generally in a political society like India, and more so if the woman is found [to be] HIV-positive,” explains Heather Ferreira of World Vision’s HIV/AIDS program in Mumbai. “After the death of the HIV-positive husband, the widow faces an uphill task to carry on with her life and her children. Many women are thrown out of their marital homes.”

A widow’s own family might also pull away—but not Meera. She lavishes love on Neeta, her only daughter, as she has always done. After her husband left her for another woman, Meera scraped and sacrificed to educate Neeta and to see her married—the ultimate goal for Indian women. Two years after the wedding, Neeta’s husband, Dutta, started falling sick frequently.

Dutta was secretive about his medical records, raising Meera’s suspicion. “Though I am not well-educated to understand these things,” she says, “I had a feeling that this disease comes from some bad doing.” When Neeta’s health began to fail in May 2001, Meera took her for a blood test and received the horrifying news that she was HIV-positive.

Dutta died in February 2002. Sickly Neeta agreed to let a



brother-in-law raise her son, Kaustubh, now 2 and a half. Mother and daughter struggled to survive alone—until the day they encountered some unexpected advice at a bus stop.

“A gentleman standing next to me saw Neeta’s poor health and must have understood the cause,” Meera recalls. “He said,

Neelam, an HIV-positive World Vision volunteer (above), talks tenderly to a fellow sufferer. It’s a bad day for Kala (below, left) when her husband, Ravi—the family’s main wage earner—feels sick.

“There is an organization called World Vision [nearby]. You take your daughter there. They will help you by giving medicines and other things.”

The chance meeting connected the women with World Vision’s Network of Care program in Mumbai slum communities, where sponsorship projects have benefited poor children and families since the 1980s. Now in its fifth year, Network of Care provides HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, health care (through a drop-in center), and support groups for HIV-positive people. Staff also buy food and reimburse medical bills for patients who are too sick to work.

Primary beneficiaries are women like Neeta who have no other place to turn. Heather Ferreira notes that of the 600-plus cases the center has handled, only two women were proven to have contracted HIV outside of marriage.

World Vision also trains HIV-positive counselors to check

The Hope Initiative

Caring for Sponsored Children

Nine-year-old Dhanam, a sponsored child in Madurai, southern India, points to the plastic bracelets and the hair band she wears. They are gifts from her mother, who died last summer of AIDS. “I was my mother’s pet,” she says.

Dhanam, who never knew her father, now lives with her great-aunt, Meenatchi. The elderly woman struggles to support Dhanam in her one-room, thatched home—especially after inheriting debt from the girl’s mother.

Fortunately, World Vision sponsorship helps. Staff at the Usilampatti project helped Meenatchi start a candy-selling business to pay down the debt. And World Vision will send Dhanam, who has tested negative for HIV, to a girl’s boarding school, assuring her a good education.

“I am not worried about Dhanam’s future, as World Vision is there to take care of her,” Meenatchi says. “I can now live in peace.”

As in many World Vision sponsorship projects across India, Usilampatti staff have intensified efforts to care for HIV/AIDS-affected families and their children. The disease threatens World Vision’s decades-old development work in these communities: Leaders

and teachers fall sick; parents can’t work; children drop out of school to help support the family—and all that sponsorship has accomplished in nurturing children’s potential is left to languish.

HIV/AIDS programs don’t just help the dying but fight for the living: the next generation. Children benefit from age-appropriate, values-based HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs conducted in all World Vision projects in India—and across the globe.

World Vision’s Hope Initiative allocates a certain percentage of sponsorship funds to HIV/AIDS care, advocacy, and prevention efforts worldwide. For countries with HIV prevalence rates above 5 percent, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage is 15 percent; in India, it’s 10 percent. World Vision staff in every country receive HIV/AIDS training for responding to affected families and promoting awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS to all in project areas.

The Hope Initiative allows World Vision to live out God’s call in James 1:27 to care for widows and orphans. “The ultimate hope we can offer as Christians is Jesus Christ, manifested through our staff working in the field through loving and compassionate ministry,” says Vijay Edward, HIV/AIDS specialist for World Vision India. ■



Dhanam



on patients at home. Every few days, a cheerful woman named Neelam appears at Neeta's door, bringing advice and companionship, sometimes a bag of groceries, and always encouragement.

On a recent visit, Meera tells Neelam that Neeta can't keep food down. Neelam—whom Neeta calls *Taai*, or Sister—advises Neeta to eat slowly, drink lots of water, and move around more to aid digestion. "Look at me: I take proper food," she says, "and that's why I'm in good shape."

Neelam's smile brightens Neeta's dark days. The work is also good for Neelam, 30, who has plenty in common with widows like Neeta. She knows well the feelings of betrayal and the heartache of loss—but she's learned how to overcome the hopelessness. Neelam lost her husband to AIDS in 1997 and then her daughter to stomach problems in 2001. Resolving to go on living if just for her son's sake, she researched HIV/AIDS facilities and found World Vision. The accepting, nurturing staff felt like a new family to her. And by listening to the plight of other patients, "My own problems seemed less important."

As an HIV/AIDS counselor, Neelam earns \$1.50 a day from World Vision plus food and medical expense reimbursements. Most importantly, she receives a kind of comfort with eternal benefits. "World Vision staff daily sit for prayer. They sing songs and share God's words from the Bible," Neelam says. She often joins in, and now she finds that Jesus' name brings her solace. "I pray to take strength from Jesus. He only will tell me how to live with AIDS."

CHENNAI: A HEALING TOUCH

FAITH PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN THE WAY PEOPLE DEAL WITH AIDS' death sentence, says Dr. Punitha Victor, the medical officer at World Vision Chennai Integrated HIV/AIDS Center (CIHAC). For four years, World Vision has been caring for destitute women and children here in the city where India's first AIDS case appeared in 1986.

"When I talk to patients, I invariably present God to them," Dr. Punitha says. "They are hopeless and helpless. Their only hope is in God. I believe God has placed me here for this purpose."

In her daily work at World Vision's drop-in center, Dr. Punitha, who studied psychiatry, deals with both the physical



and emotional. "Most often, the patients' fear is that they would be left alone with nobody."

For many, the fear is well-founded. Madavi, 38, was little more than a heap of bones when World Vision staff found her. She had been infected with HIV by her truck-driver husband, who died in 1999. Her parents feared that even casual contact spreads AIDS, so they left her to languish outside their home. Every

Akash (above and upper left) recovers from tuberculosis at World Vision's Chennai center, where he and his mother, Vasantha, found help. Dr. Punitha Victor (at left) says her work leaves her "physically tired but spiritually satisfied."

once in awhile they would open the door a crack and set out a plate of food. When they saw Dr. Punitha touch Madavi, they gasped in shock.

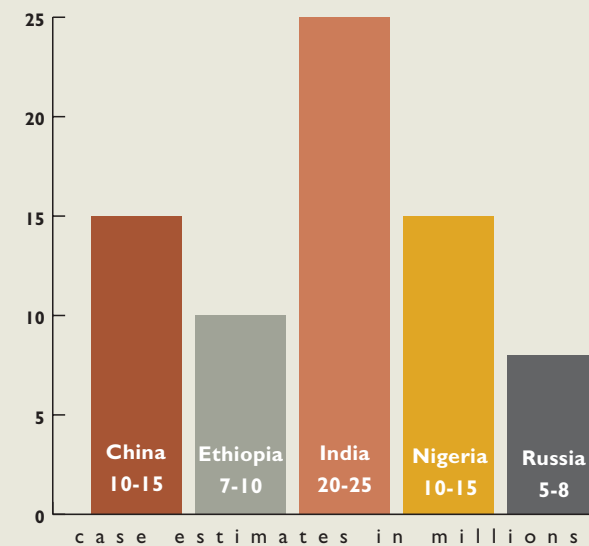
At World Vision's Chennai care home, Madavi received extraordinary care. Staff saw her through heart surgery, started her on drug therapy that returned some of her vitality, cared for her two children, and even helped her reconcile with her father. The loving treatment is standard for a facility established in memory of Mother Teresa. But it's expensive: Care for one person at the home for one year costs about \$2,000. The payoff is longer life—invaluable for women and the children they will too soon leave behind.

Six-year-old Akash appeared at World Vision's center ravaged by tuberculosis, one of the harshest diseases that preys on HIV-weakened immune systems. The boy weighed just 15 pounds and was so frail he couldn't even stand. His mother, Vasantha, admitted she spent precious time and too much

HIV/AIDS' "Next Wave"

HIV/AIDS has hit sub-Saharan Africa hardest so far. But experts are concerned about the "next wave"—five populous countries that collectively account for 40 percent of the world's population. All are in early- to mid-stages of HIV/AIDS epidemics, but sustained action has not yet been taken to curb the disease's spread. Among these nations, India is predicted to have the highest number of HIV/AIDS cases by 2010.

HIV/AIDS Cases Estimates for 2010



Source: National Intelligence Council/CIA, September 2002

money seeking treatment for Akash from "quack" healers. She dared not take him to qualified doctors, fearing they wouldn't treat her HIV-positive son.

Dr. Punitha started Akash immediately on anti-TB drugs. As a result of a protein-rich diet, he has gained four pounds in a month. Gently patting his cheek, housemother Subhadra Devi says, "He has put on some flesh now." Akash loves to scribble on pads of paper as he has seen the doctors do. Vasantha looks forward to the day that he will walk and even go to school.

Vasantha allows herself to hope for the first time since her husband, Mani, died in 1998, a month after Akash's first birthday. Back then, she tried to end her life by eating poison, but her parents intervened. Now determined to survive, Vasantha traces her change in attitude to her first visit to World Vision's center and glimpsing Dr. Punitha's bracelet decorated with a cross. "When I saw that," she says, "I had a strange feeling that God brought me to the right place."

And he has. World Vision staff, equipped by faith, rescue women and children from the pain of isolation and prolong their lives with the most important medicine of all: hope. ■

* All the names of HIV-positive people have been changed to protect their identities.

treasures of the heart



COURTESY GAIL FISHER



Special, ongoing relationships are part of what brought Suzanne Paulson (center, in glasses) back to Soweto year after year after year.

COURTESY WOMEN OF VISION ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER

*American women are investing their treasures
in other women and children around the world.*

B Y N A T H A L I E O V E R L A N D

SUZANNE PAULSON DIDN'T BUDGE.

"I was praying I wouldn't have to get out of the van," she recalls of her first trip to the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. "When we stopped and others got out, I just sat there. I was the last one out."

Little did Suzanne know that, by day's end, she would unearth priceless treasures in this wasteland of broken dreams—treasures that would change her heart forever.

Even before the van doors opened, the stench of waste assaulted her. Ramshackle huts leaning desperately against one another spoke of consuming poverty. Grimy children in tattered dress swarmed dusty streets that doubled as their playground.

All of it stood as a stark contrast to the comfortable life Suzanne had carved out in her artsy, California oceanside community. Simply put, she was stunned as she witnessed the byproducts of poverty: filth, decay, deprivation.



Stepping from the safety of the van, Suzanne haltingly crossed into the crowd. Soon two local women emerged to usher her through the throng. She couldn't know it at the time, but these women, Christine and Jane, would become lasting friends.

Home to thousands—many who migrated to Kenya's capital city in search of work—the Soweto slum teems with families who have few possessions and even fewer options. "I came away from that first visit seeing so much poverty—and so much joy because these people had faith," Suzanne, 66, says as tears fill her eyes. "I realized then that I was the one who felt poor—in spirit."

In the dozen years that have passed since Suzanne's first visit, this mother of three still returns to those slums at least every two years, to spend time with the Soweto women. The trans-Atlantic bonds between these women are evident even in Suzanne's Laguna Beach home.



Suzanne and Kristen Paulson (right) are the first mother-daughter team to

lead a Women of Vision chapter.

Suzanne (below) embraces new

friends in Kenya. International souvenirs

photographed by Rebecca Oehler.

Arranged among the avant-garde art she and her husband, Ted, collect are the exotic beaded necklaces of Kenya's Maasai tribe. The merging of California contemporary and Kenya traditional reflects the metamorphosis that has taken place first in Suzanne's life, and subsequently in the life of her daughter, Kristen Paulson.

Today this mother-daughter team heads the Orange County (Calif.) Women of Vision chapter, the group that introduced Suzanne to Soweto. A volunteer ministry of World Vision, Women of Vision is devoted to serving poor women and children locally and internationally. This grass-roots group brings together more than 800 women who share a passion to participate in the transformation of women who are poor—and in the process be transformed themselves.

"We provide a vehicle to women who are called to serve the poor in the name of Christ," says Penny Wood, Women of Vision national director, who equips and inspires 14 Women of Vision chapters from her bustling Orange County office. "Women of Vision is a community of women who, through their ongoing work, present living proof of a loving God to a watching and needy world.

"We're about relationships. We continue our involvement with women and children all over the world who know we're there for them in prayer and in raising awareness and resources."

Women of Vision members have crawled beneath the streets of Mongolia's capital, into the tunnels where homeless children find refuge from the frigid northern winters. These women have rocked infants growing up in Romania's orphanages. They've also worked to help mothers so that they aren't compelled to leave their children long term at state-run facilities.

They have assisted young women surviving on the streets of Mexico City, Zambian women struggling to raise healthy children without adequate resources, and Honduran women whose poverty is tethered to illiteracy.

Closer to home, these passionate volunteers embrace homeless women, children who lack simple items such as school supplies, and young women in need of mentors. They help build houses in poor communities, teach the undereducated to read, and advocate on behalf of women in need.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



COURTESY GAIL FISHER

Where Women of Vision Work

Women of Vision chapters work in 18 countries around the world and volunteer time at dozens of local projects that benefit the poor here in the United States. They hold regular meetings to educate chapter members and others on the struggles of impoverished women and children around the world; advocate on their behalf; raise funds to support World Vision projects that benefit hurting families in developing nations through personal giving, and conduct special events or benefits that raise funds for selected projects.

Each Women of Vision chapter selects the projects it will support. Together, these chapters fund more than 50 projects, raising money by hosting a multitude of annual events. Women of Vision members also sponsor children through World Vision. Earlier this year, they initiated sponsorship drives in their local churches to encourage more individuals to change the lives of children in need.



KARI COSTANZA/WORLD VISION

In Miami Valley, Ohio, a college campus is home to one of the newest Women of Vision chapters. A Hispanic chapter is also taking shape. And sister organizations are sprouting in Mexico, Canada, and Bermuda. As the number of women committed to this ministry grows, so do the testimonies of lives changed not only among the poor, but among the Women of Vision women as well.

Suzanne and her daughter, Kristen, are living testimonies to transformation. No stranger to travel, Suzanne has employed her far-reaching experience in art to lead art tours throughout the world. She also traveled in Kenya on safari in 1987. When faced with the chance to revisit Kenya in 1991, this time with Women of Vision, Suzanne remembers her mixed motives: "wanting to see if I'd love the people as much as I loved the animals."



Cheryl Touryan (Women of Vision's Evergreen, Colo., chapter) builds rapport with Alina—a child living in an orphanage in Cluj, Romania.



Orange County Women of Vision

(right) assist in constructing a house

for a needy family living just south of

the California-Mexico border. And

Long Island chapter member Tracy

Scutari (below) plays with children

attending a post-9/11 gift distribution

in New York City.



COURTESY WOMEN OF VISION ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER

Yet no celebrated gallery or renaissance museum would touch Suzanne as much as the artless slums of Soweto. There, God presented her with a gift she would especially treasure two years later when her cherished, art-filled home was reduced to ashes.

In a matter of minutes, the house where she and Ted had lived for more than a dozen years was destroyed in a firestorm fueled by the Santa Ana winds. Yet Suzanne's initial shock at losing her possessions soon melted into peace. As she thought of how her Kenyan friends live joyfully, not knowing if there will be enough to eat the next day, she knew the fire could not rob her of joy either.

"I went back to Soweto in 1994—after the fire—and I told the women there that they were the ones who had made the fire OK," Suzanne says. "I thanked them for showing me you don't need a lot of material things to be happy."

In 1994, Suzanne took her daughter, Kristen, with her to Kenya. By this time, Suzanne was a veteran of the Soweto slums, having returned each year since 1991 to spend time with the people and visit her friends Christine and Jane, who had stepped forward to guide her during her first visit.

This time, it was Kristen's turn to stay firmly planted in the car for a few extra minutes. After stepping out, she waylaid her discomfort by blowing bubbles for the gathering children.

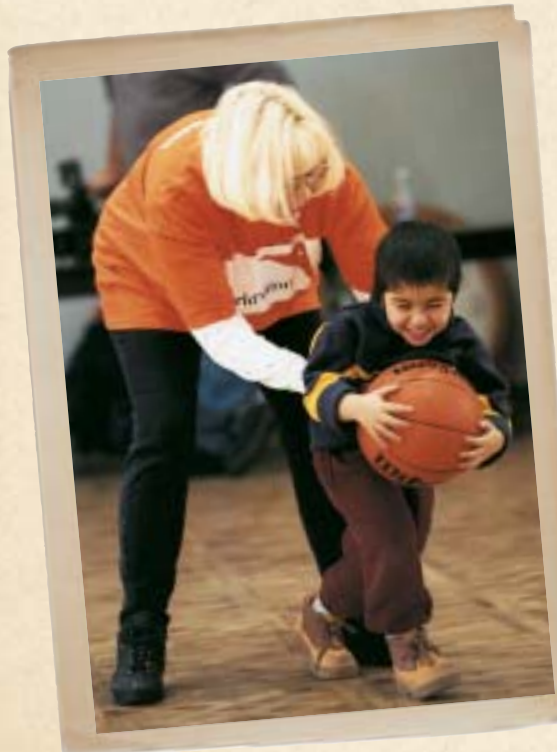
"I will always remember that I looked into this little girl's face, and she was so happy and laughing," Kristen, 44, says of the moment her own transformation took root. "Later I'd see that even though these people have nothing, they have so much faith and joy. They would give us their last egg with the faith that their needs would be met the next day."

The visit to Kenya ended in days, but Kristen's seismic life shift was just beginning. She returned to San Francisco, where she had successfully followed her mother's career path in art. But within a year, Kristen exchanged the boardroom for the classroom as she traded her work as an art consultant for another art: teaching elementary students.

"There is so much need in the world," she says, "I couldn't walk into boardrooms any more and say they needed a painting that cost \$100,000."

These days, Kristen weaves international threads into her tapestry of

continued on page 26



JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

A Vision for Romania

Touching mothers and children by John Schenk

Every one of the 10 upturned faces in the room belongs to a person truly, madly, and deeply in love with 28-year-old Laura Hemes.

Of course, at age 5, everyone loves their teacher, especially when she is pretty, charming, and bubbling with life. But Laura is much more than that. She is a bright star in their otherwise bleak existence. Life in the poor and struggling Romanian village of Boju has indeed changed since the birth of the day-care center funded by Women of Vision.

For two years, Laura and the center have injected new exhilaration into these children's lives.

A type of celebration erupts each day as they enter their kaleidoscopic classroom.

Laura has become a trusted confidante and counselor to the parents as well, despite the fact that she is young, single, and not originally from a farming family like them. Laura moved to the village with her parents after they lost jobs in the nearby city of Cluj. Her charges' parents are subsistence farmers who work long hours in the fields. Most of what they grow or raise goes straight to their own tables.

"Life is very simple here," says Maria Calugar, 41, principal of the elementary school that houses the day-care center. "Parents work all day. In the evening when the children are full of life and questions, their parents are too tired and just want to get the kids off to bed, to have an hour of peace."

Before the center opened, children usually were locked in their houses for most of the day while their parents worked. The fathers and mothers were not insensitive; they just didn't have other safe options.

This dilemma touched the hearts of Women of Vision members in Denver, who visited Romania in the mid-1990s. Searching for a solution, they enthusiastically agreed to raise the funds necessary to fuel the day-care center. Linda Smith, co-chair of the Evergreen/Denver Women of Vision chapter, says these centers provide an opportunity to touch mothers as well as children.

One of those mothers is 31-year-old Ioana Cimpeach, who recounts how her daughter was an introverted, isolated child

because other kids mocked her paralyzed left arm, the result of a botched vaccination. "When Diana got sick," her mother says, "I prayed to God to let her live, that I could have her with me healthy or not. She lived, but we thought she'd never attend school."

Eight-year-old Diana went through the day-care center under Laura's tutelage and now is at the top of her elementary-school class.

When children were first placed in Laura's care two years ago, they had no idea how to play with each other and became dead quiet with wariness when a stranger walked in the room. "They were self-contained," explains the principal. "They would grab toys and go off in a corner alone. Now they share, they trust, and they enjoy each other."

In some cases, the behavioral transformations are nothing short of miraculous, Laura says. Two mentally handicapped children now talk instead of just pointing at things.



JOHN SCHENK/WORLD VISION

Here in Boju, the center is both day care and kindergarten—allowing parents to work without worry and preparing children to walk confidently into first grade. They even participate in field trips.

When parents first learned that a day-care center was coming, they joined forces to help turn a large, shabby classroom in the village's old schoolhouse into a joyous refuge. They painted and helped install new windows. Nothing was too much, says Laura, whose trust with these parents has grown to the point that she regularly visits their homes to talk about child rearing.

"We regard ourselves as very fortunate to have this relationship with World Vision," the principal adds. "Otherwise, there would be nothing in this room."

Life is also easier for the Boju women because of the love extended by Denver's Women of Vision. Yet for Linda Smith of Denver, the credit goes beyond her Women of Vision chapter. "God is the one working out his potential in women and their children," Linda says. "It's all about getting the focus off ourselves and hearing God's call in our lives. It changes us for the better." ■

John Schenk has been a World Vision communications officer since 1986.

A Vision for Mongolia

A Light in the Darkness by Justin Douglass

The 10-year-old sleeps each night in the tunnels that pipe hot water into Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar. Each evening as daylight wanes, he returns to his makeshift home. There he struggles to liberate the cumbersome cover from its man-hole, descends a ladder into darkness, lies down on a piece of cardboard, and waits for sleep to overtake him.

Each morning the boy, Uuganbaatar, wakes to a new day of hunger, filth, and little hope for a better life.

While Uuganbaatar is poor, homeless, and underfed, there is one thing he is not: alone. Thousands of children crowd this city's dirt passageways, the pipes radiating enough heat to keep them from freezing during Mongolia's sub-zero winters. As many as 15 children live in a section of tunnel as small as 5 square yards. To fill empty stomachs, most of them steal or scrounge in dumpsters—or simply don't eat.

Poverty, abuse, and abandonment have sent legions of children to the streets here. They grow up uneducated, lacking the skills needed to move beyond poverty. To help these children find pathways to more wholesome lives, World Vision invites them into Light House Centers—eight shelters that offer unconditional love

and the hope needed to start over. When children enter the Light House doors, they receive food, clothing, bathing facilities, medical assistance, counseling, and schooling.

These Light Houses exist in part because of the dedication of Women of Vision's Columbia/Willamette, Ore., chapter. In addition to raising funds, several of these Portland-area women have visited Mongolia's capital city. Women of Vision's Shari Pinson joined the homeless children in crafts and spent time with them on computers purchased by the group. The lives of these children touched Shari so deeply that she now shares their stories at local schools and with various adult groups back home.

"The experience in Mongolia has become instrumental to what I do," Shari says. "I have a heart, a vision, that others will know the need and know they can help too. There's a whole world out there that needs hope. There's so much potential for all of us to make a difference."

Thanks to Shari and others who make the Light House Centers possible, the future is so much brighter for children like Uuganbaatar. ■

Justin Douglass is a communicator with World Vision Mongolia.



JUSTIN DOUGLASS/WORD VISION



COURTESY GAIL FISHER

ones who will make a difference in the future," she explains. "I want them to be ready to make choices based not only on their world, but on what's outside their world as well."

Clearly charmed by their enthusiastic teacher, Kristen's students are getting the message. "People need to learn that other people in the world don't have as much," Phoebe says. "And they deserve as much as anybody else." For his part, Josh is willing to share some of his food with hungry people. And Caroline plans to work at a homeless shelter when she grows up.

Between them, Kristen and Suzanne sponsor six children, all in Kenya. Christine—one of the two women who welcomed Suzanne on her first trip—named her daughter after Suzanne. Jane gave birth to a son in 1993 and named him "Paulson." Another Soweto friend, Anna, named a son "Moses Paulson."

Suzanne, who sponsors all three children, proudly flips to their photos, which she keeps in her expansive stack of albums devoted to her Kenyan friends. Suzanne was devastated when she learned that Christine had died from malaria and typhoid two days before Suzanne's 1999 visit.

Like pilgrims, either Kristen or Suzanne has returned to Kenya nearly every year since their lives were riveted by the reality—and complexities—of poverty. They also have visited their chapter's projects in Peru, the Middle East, and Mexico.

Poverty, they now realize, comes in many forms. Kristen came face-to-face with her own *spiritual* poverty during her first trip to East Africa and has since been drawn to a new and vibrant faith in God. Suzanne experienced firsthand the loss of her most prized material possessions when her home was destroyed, thus realizing where *her* true wealth actually lies.

Nurturing women and children in need isn't glamorous work. It requires dedication, focus, and even a little sweat. Yet it's a small investment that returns vast treasure to women—affluent as well as poor—around the world. Suzanne and Kristen have discovered that hidden treasure. Their hearts will never be the same.

"How did my life change?" Kristen asks. "My mother took me to Africa to break my heart. She succeeded, and I can't thank her enough." ■

Nathalie Overland is a World Vision staff writer.



Building relationships with local women is a priority for Women of Vision, wherever they go. "It's not just about traveling," Kristen Paulson explains, "but about a commitment to people." Orange County Women of Vision (left) pray with women of Kenya's Maasai people group.



Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Kenya (right) are cheered on by visiting Women of Vision.

fourth-grade lessons. One day, her students shared their views on the rights of ownership and the responsibility to share. Then the 10-year-olds moved seamlessly into a math project. Using scales, every student diligently measured out 2 ounces of rice—the only food that 800,000 of the world's children have to eat in a day. Each student left class with the small bag of rice in hand, to share with friends and family what they had learned.

When Kristen changed career tracks, she had prayed that God would place her in one of Orange County's poorer schools. Instead, she was hired at Arroyo Elementary in North Tustin's comfortable Red Hill neighborhood.

Named Arroyo Elementary's Teacher of the Year for 2001-2002, Kristin knows that God has placed her in a crucial spot. "These kids have a good chance of being the



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Fatherhood, Finance, and Faith

WorldVision sponsorship helped Juan Elias prepare for a career—and become a better parent. *by Mónica Olivares*

JUAN ELIAS RODRIGUEZ KNOWS what it's like to have an absent parent. Poverty forced his father, Ofronio, to seek work in the United States, leaving his family behind in El Salvador. Ofronio missed the five crucial years when Juan Elias changed from boy to man. Now a father himself, Juan Elias wants to be a good one. He has built a successful career that means he'll never have to leave his 4-year-old daughter, Rebecca.

Thirty-two-year-old Juan Elias works as an auditor for the finance ministry of El Salvador's government, meeting with bank chairmen and visiting new businesses. He has provided a comfortable, three-bedroom home for his family in Ciudad Merliot, a city outside the capital, San Salvador. It's the life he dreamed of as a farm boy. But without World Vision sponsorship, it wouldn't have been possible.

"I was raised in the countryside, helping my father in agriculture, and I helped my mother with household chores," Juan Elias says of his impoverished childhood in rural Nueva Concepcion, Chalatenango. "I had many

dreams and aspirations, but I was afraid they would never come true."

Ofronio and his wife, Celestina, brought in about \$35 a month raising corn, beans, rice, and millet—a meager salary for supporting five children. Just when the family budget was so tight that his parents couldn't afford the shoes, uniform, and supplies he needed for school, 10-year-old Juan Elias became sponsored through World Vision. The assistance kept him in class—and kept him healthy. He received regular medical and dental care, vaccinations, and nutritious food.

"I remember when I went to the project office to write letters and Christmas cards to my sponsor," Juan Elias says. "I was happy to write to him, because in that way I had contact with him." Although Juan Elias doesn't remember his American sponsor's name, he says, "I still keep him in my mind and ask God to reward him for the assistance he gave me."

World Vision's aid extended beyond this one young boy in Nueva Concepcion. Staff improved the community's schools, adding six more classrooms so that education from elementary through high school was locally available. Staff helped construct apiaries and communal farms for families to raise additional income.

WorldVision also established a small pharmacy that offered medicine at low prices. And

Family security has always been important to Juan Elias Rodriguez, pictured with his wife, Sandra, and their daughter, Rebecca.



MÓNICA OLIVARES/WORLD VISION (2)



to help young people prepare for jobs, there were classes in sewing and other trades.

Celestina recalls World Vision's impact. "Most of the families were very poor," she explains. "The benefits were not only economic but also moral, because we felt supported, and this encouraged us."

Even with all the community improvements, Juan Elias' father believed there were better opportunities in the United States. In 1986, when Juan Elias was 15, Ofronio traveled there, eventually finding work at a vegetable-packing company and a furniture factory.

A few months later, El Salvador's civil war came close to home. Juan Elias' older brother, a soldier in the army, was shot and killed. Juan Elias was away at a church activity that day. He came home to the sight of a coffin.

The tragedy hit the family hard, especially with Ofronio's absence. But some good came out of it for Juan Elias. "My faith in the Lord grew," he says, "because I knew he was going to help us overcome this, and it was so."

Thanks to his sponsor, Juan Elias completed high school. He earned a scholarship to study accounting at the University of El Salvador, juggling classes and working as a government auditor—the beginning point of the job he continues today. He graduated in 1997, and later, a job-related scholarship enabled him to return to university to obtain a finance degree.

"God has answered all my needs and has blessed me in all areas of my life," Juan Elias says. His wife, Sandra, runs a computing



Juan Elias hopes to establish his own financial auditing firm.

business from home, contributing to the \$2,000 monthly income. And their larger family is reunited. Ofronio returned to El Salvador in 1991, and now he and Celestina live less than 10 miles away.

"My parents have a small retail store," Juan Elias says, "and I have a good job that permits me to help them economically."

Now that his family enjoys security, Juan Elias hopes little Rebecca will appreciate their struggle—and he knows the perfect way. "I want Rebecca to sponsor boys and girls and be a blessing to others as my sponsor and World Vision were to me many years ago," he says.

Of all the life experiences Juan Elias can pass to his daughter, this lesson in compassion may be the most important. ■

Mónica Olivares is a communications officer for World Vision in El Salvador.



Help children in need so they can learn

As you shop for school supplies for your children this fall, remember that millions of children around the world can't get a good education because they lack the necessary supplies.

By assembling and sending in a SchoolTools kit (as shown above) for children in need, you'll be participating in a hands-on, practical way of sharing Christ's love.

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God's Main Work

GOD KNOWS WE ARE CHILDREN, which is why the Bible so often draws on that human parallel. At the same time, God yearns for us to grow toward the parent stage of sacrificial love, which most accurately reflects God's own nature. We draw near to God in likeness when we give ourselves away.

Even without birth-children, we can gain some sense of loving others unconditionally, as God loves us. When my wife ran a senior citizens' program in Chicago, I used to answer people who asked how many children we had: "Dozens, but they're mostly twice our age."

For many seniors in public housing and flophouse hotels, Janet served a parental role, battling welfare agencies, Medicaid, hospital workers, and the public housing authority on their behalf. She became an advocate, which in its Latin root means one who gives a voice to those who have none.

When Sarah had her electricity, gas, and phone cut off through a misunderstanding, Janet became her fiery advocate, advancing payment and shaming the utilities for acting so ruthlessly at the expense of a confused senior citizen. When Hank lost his leg to diabetes and gangrene, Janet stayed by his side, explaining why he still felt his "phantom limb" and teaching him to walk without crutches. When Zelda lost circulation in her



despite the personal toll on her, Janet seemed to benefit as much as the seniors did.

The missionary-martyr Jim Elliot once observed that many Christians are so intent on doing something for God that they forget God's main work is to make something of them. I saw that principle lived out in my wife.

As she showered her own skills and compassion on people judged undeserving by most of society, she grew stronger in the ways that matter most.

In a fundamental human paradox, the more a person reaches out beyond herself, the more she is enriched and deepened, and the more she grows in likeness to God. On the other hand, the more a person "incurves," to use Luther's word, the less human she becomes.

Our need to give is as great as anyone's need to receive. ■

Used by permission. Philip Yancey, Reaching for the Invisible God (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), chap. 19.

Philip Yancey is a journalist and writer who writes a featured column for Christianity Today. He has authored more than a dozen books, including Reaching for the Invisible God.

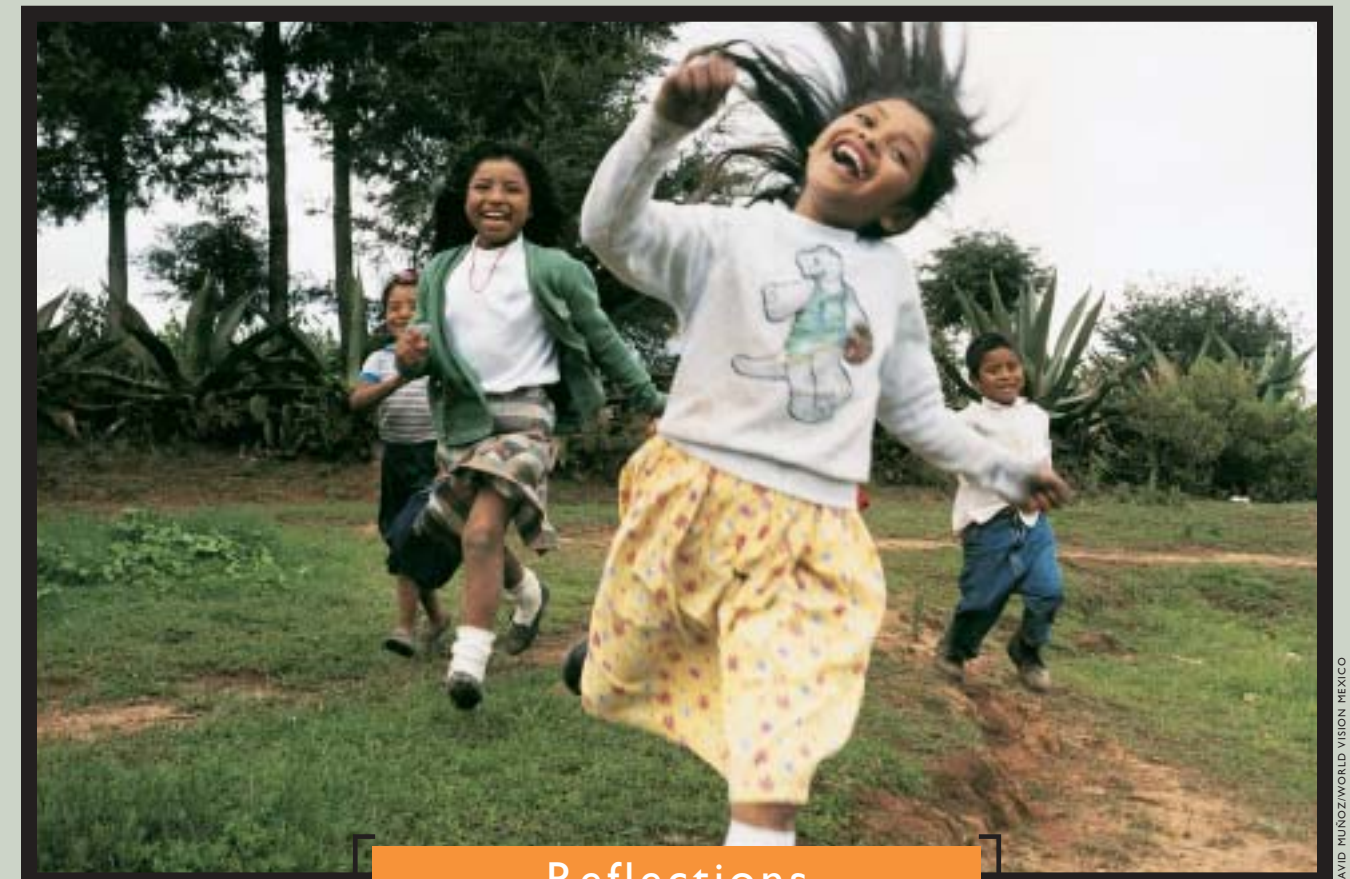
We draw near to God in likeness when we give ourselves away.

feet, Janet sat by her hospital bed massaging them and drew up a chart to make sure the negligent nurses turned her frequently enough to prevent bedsores.

Janet did these things not because the seniors had somehow earned her care, but because she believed that every neglected senior citizen in Chicago was loved by God, yet might only sense that love through the hands of one of God's servants.

One day Janet came across this quote: "The poor express their gratitude not by saying thanks but by asking for more." She had just spent an exhausting day and felt besieged by whiny, insistent demands for ever more help. That quote proved oddly comforting.

A curious thing happened during my wife's time at the senior citizens' center. Watching her and the others involved in outreach to the poor, I saw the personal sacrifice involved. Social workers get little pay for their long hours and receive few accolades. It surprised me, though, that



Reflections

M E X I C O

Cecilia Sanchez, 11, and her cousins are beyond excited. They're running and laughing with joy. "I see my mom happy, and I am happy too," says Cecilia [in front]. On this day, World Vision Mexico built Cecilia's mother, a widow, a brand-new house. World Vision Mexico sponsors 2,000 children in their community of Mazahuas de Choteje, two hours northeast of Mexico City. It gets very cold there: below zero between September and February every year. The family's old adobe house also had trouble withstanding the heavy rains. But on this night, all five will sleep warm and dry in a house made of bricks and cement with a cement floor.



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World Vision Inc.
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