

# WorldVision

AUTUMN 2004

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC FLOOD

## lives saved, lives lost



# the heart of God: what does it look like?

The heart of God. We hear a lot about it. We seek after it. But what does it *look* like?

For millions of boys and girls sponsored through World Vision, God's heart looks a lot like . . . **you!** It's Christians responding to Jesus' call to love one another with actions and in truth. It's people like you reaching out to make sure children and their families have access to things like clean water, nutritious food, health care, education, and a chance to experience God's love.

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*"World Vision has demonstrated the heart of God for children around the world. By meeting these desperate needs, they have impacted millions for His Kingdom. I am so proud to be associated with World Vision."*

—Kathy Troccoli

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World Vision



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## » ON THE COVER

A volunteer helps sponsored child Jesús Benito Cuevas Florian, 11, wade across floodwaters in the Dominican Republic.

Photograph by Jon Warren

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.

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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 (866) 962-4453, or visit [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org).

### Share World Vision with your family

- 1 FAMILY SPONSORSHIP** This 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 A CHILD IS WAITING** Show your church family how they can make a difference through child sponsorship.
- 4 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](http://www.30hourfamine.org)

- 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 E-MAIL UPDATES** Receive the latest news on World Vision's work throughout the world. *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](http://www.womenofvision.org)

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- 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](http://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 CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS** Your company can benefit by supporting World Vision.

### Share your resources with World Vision

- 14 GIFT PLANNING** Establish a legacy of hope by including World Vision in your will or learn about other estate-planning options.
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  - 16 SCHOOLTOOLS** Practical ways your group can provide essential school supplies to children around the world.
- Volunteer through World Vision**
- 17 ARTIST ASSOCIATES** Help Christian artists promote child sponsorship by volunteering at a local concert.

### Know World Vision's reason for hope

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

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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  
 11

Show World Vision to my company

- 12       13

Share my resources with World Vision

- 14       15       16

Volunteer through World Vision

- 17

Know World Vision's reason for hope

- 18

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# Discover something new!



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

## Make the most of your resources

Faithful donors like you often tell us they would like to *do more* to help save lives, restore health and hope, and share God's love—but feel the pull of financial obligations to their own families.

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See reverse to start doing more than you ever thought possible!

"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."  
—Hebrews 13:16 (NIV)

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Find out how you can get involved with World Vision

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## Share World Vision your family

- 1 FAMILY SPONSORSHIP**  
sponsorship project in cycle of poverty in Ghana, Romania
- 2 WORLD VISION GIFT PLANNING**  
On behalf of you unique gifts such as medical supplies

## Bring World Vision church

- 3 A CHILD IS WORTH IT**  
Show your church a difference through adoption
- 4 30 HOUR FAMINE FEAST**  
Get your youth group in the fight against hunger by participating in World Vision's annual famine event

## Help children in need AND your loved ones

We offer a variety of flexible gift planning tools that can help you maximize your giving and increase your impact. These tools can also provide a variety of benefits to you and your family, including things like:

- Income payments for life
- Increased cash flow
- Reduced taxes (income, capital gains, estate)\*
- "Unlocked" capital gains

Our gift planning tools can help you create a lasting legacy of philanthropy for your family. More importantly, you'll be exercising good stewardship of what God has entrusted to you.

## Tools everyone can use

Gift planning isn't just for those with a lot of cash. *Everyone* has the opportunity to make the most of their resources. You can use many types of assets and plans to help transform lives, including:

- Stocks, bonds, mutual funds
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## Explore your possibilities

We love to help families discover exciting new opportunities. To learn how gift planning can allow you to bring hope to more children while you fulfill the goals and financial responsibilities that are important to you, please call us at **1.866.962.4453** or e-mail [giftplanning@worldvision.org](mailto:giftplanning@worldvision.org).

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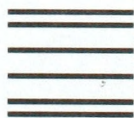
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# The Power of One

THINK OF ALL THE DECISIONS you made today. Did any of them change someone's life? Sometimes you don't know exactly how until much later.

On my recent trip to southern Africa to focus on our heroic work on behalf of the widows and orphans of AIDS, I met two remarkable boys and their grandmother: Morgan, 13, and Jackson, 15, live in Zambia—a country of 10 million people, where AIDS has devastated families and communities.

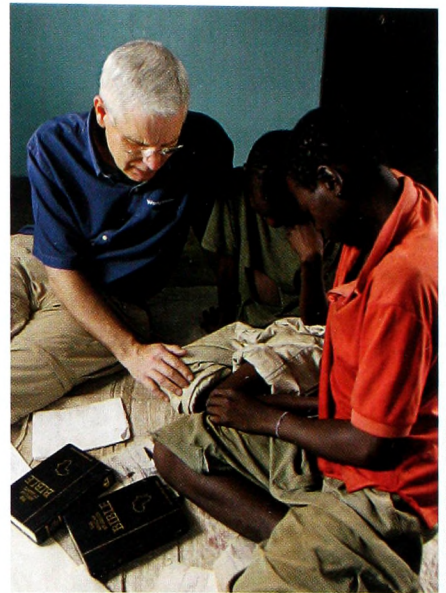
The boys' tale broke my heart. Their mother and father had died in rapid succession, presumably from AIDS, leaving the two boys and two other siblings totally alone. They became what we call a "child-headed household," a tragic reality throughout communities wracked by HIV/AIDS.

Jackson, as the oldest, dropped out of school to try to work. Still, they sometimes went seven days without food, Jackson told me with pain in his eyes. Jackson feared that Morgan would starve.

Eventually all four children dropped out of school. Sometimes they lay all day in their hut, moaning from hunger, unable to rise. But one day a ray of hope broke through: From a village hundreds of miles away, their grandmother learned of their plight and brought them to live with her.

A proud and determined woman, Mary Bwalya struggled as a poor widow, yet she was willing to care for her grandchildren in her own hut. Then, during a violent storm, the small home collapsed, and Mary and all four children were left homeless. Things looked grim.

Mary soon discovered, however, that both Morgan and Jackson were chosen to be sponsored by an American family through World Vision.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Rich Stearns unwittingly became a new "parent" to Morgan and Jackson when he decided to sponsor them.

As president of World Vision, I should have known better. I should have known that our decision to sponsor Morgan and Jackson was not inconsequential. It was life changing.

Lives are saved and lives are lost based on decisions that each of us makes ... or fails to make. One person can change the world. If you don't think that your decision to sponsor a child makes a difference, think again.

Today, Morgan and his siblings are back in school. They have just moved into a new house that World Vision built for them. There is ample food to eat, and they have Bibles provided by World Vision. Most importantly, the children have hope for a better future, and they have felt God's love for them in a tangible way.

Last but not least, one World Vision president had his life changed as well. ■

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." —Galatians 6:9*

"I was filled with joy," she told me, "because I knew at that moment that God had answered my prayers and that he was replacing the parents that these boys had lost!"

Her words brought tears to my eyes. Let me tell you why. Two years earlier, I had delivered the keynote address at a World Vision forum on HIV/AIDS in New York City. I challenged everyone there to respond by sponsoring a child orphaned by AIDS.

As guests filled out the sponsorship commitment forms, my wife, Renée, showed me the picture of a boy at our place setting and said, "We need to sponsor him." I answered that we already sponsored 10 children; we couldn't add another every time we went to a World Vision event. She simply handed me the pen and the response card. (I have a very special wife.) We sponsored Morgan that night, and our son, Andy, sponsored Jackson.





# News From the Field



KATE SCANNELL MICHEL/WORLD VISION

**Delivering emergency supplies to flooded areas of Haiti proves perilous.**

**Haiti** > WorldVision provided aid to southeastern communities hardest hit by a storm that flooded parts of the island of Hispaniola in May. Staff traveled three hours by boat to reach affected regions, where local runners alerted villagers to the arrival of emergency supplies. Five hundred families received plastic sheeting, blankets, clothing, and hygiene items. Later, a World Vision team assessed communities' ongoing needs, including improving water systems and schools, recovering agriculture, and restarting small businesses. In addition, WorldVision and UNICEF will partner on programs helping children who lost parents in the disaster.

**Sudan/Chad** > Despite a recent peace agreement, conflict continues in western Darfur, one of Sudan's poorest and most inaccessible regions. More than 1 million people have been uprooted by the fighting, and nearly 200,000 have fled to neighboring Chad. World Vision has moved forward with relief plans in Darfur, which include distributing food and improving water and sanitation for displaced families. In Chad, World Vision and the World Food Program are delivering more than 3,000 tons of food to Sudanese refugees. Families in the camps have already received emergency goods from World Vision such as plastic sheets and water-purification tablets. In the long term, staff plan to provide health care, education, and trauma counseling for refugee children in Chad.

**Colombia** > Mayerly Sanchez, 18, a former sponsored child from Colombia, won the *Zolfanello D'oro* (Golden Match Award) for her role as a young leader of the Children's Peace Movement. The award honors individuals who "light up the world"; it was named for the person who invented the match more than 200 years ago—a resident of Dogliani, Italy. Last May, Mayerly traveled to Dogliani to receive

*Zolfanello D'oro*. Past winners have included Italian President Francisco Cossiga and Greenpeace. Mayerly herself was also among the child leaders nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998.

**Gaza, Middle East** > A sponsored child was killed and another seriously injured during an Israeli military attack on Rafah in May. Mubarak Salim Almalalha, 9, was participating in a peaceful protest against the Israeli army's move to round up and question Palestinian men over age 16. Mubarak died of wounds from missile shrapnel; 13-year-old Mohammed Yousef Shakhelaid suffered abdominal injuries. World Vision sponsors care for 1,800 sponsored children in Rafah.

**North Korea** > After April's massive train explosion in Ryongchon that killed at least 154 people and left 8,100 homeless, World Vision donated emergency supplies to survivors. The initial shipments included 5,000 blankets, as well as clothing and shoes for 6,000 children and 4,000 adults, and water-purification kits for 1,000 families. World Vision South Korea staff set up a base in nearby Dandong, China, to coordinate relief shipments.

Sudan/Chad



HOWARD G. BUFFETT FOR WORLD VISION





CECIL LAGUARDIA/WORLD VISION

## ➔ Hope Update



COURTESY JAMES PEDRICK

Seattle Pacific students meet with Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.).

**Philippines** > World Vision recently launched a children's book, *Glimmers of Hope*. Some of the Philippines' most highly lauded writers contributed stories, including several winners of the prestigious Palanca Award. Profits from the book, which is available in Filipino and English, will support World Vision projects in the Philippines.

Hot off the press, a children's book launched by World Vision in the Philippines.

**Kenya** > World Vision distributed insecticide-treated mosquito nets to 81,000 sponsored children and their families. The nets provide protection against malaria, which kills 34,000 Kenya children under age 5 every year. Regular use of the nets cuts in half the risk of contracting the disease. The insecticide treatment remains effective in repelling and killing mosquitoes for up to 20 washes.

**Vietnam** > More than 5,600 children are receiving regular dental care in World Vision's Trieu Phong project, thanks to assistance from the Unilever Corporation. Nine professional Unilever dentists attend to the children from 11 primary and secondary schools. Previously, up to 83 percent of children in the project area had decayed teeth or gum inflammation, the result of poor dental services and families' lack of understanding about the importance of teeth brushing. ■

» **FAST FACT** Malaria threatens the lives and affects the development of more than 2.2 billion people in 100 countries. (UNICEF)

**College Students Act on AIDS** > Seattle Pacific University students James Pedrick and Lisa Krohn sparked a campus movement that had their student body seeing orange for an entire week.

James and Lisa had served as interns at World Vision in summer 2003. They were especially moved to learn about the struggles faced by more than 14 million orphans in developing countries—most of whom had lost parents to AIDS.

When they returned to campus, James and Lisa rallied a groundswell of support for a weeklong campus event called "Acting on AIDS," which focused on HIV/AIDS' devastating impact around the world.

To demonstrate AIDS' prevalence, 150 students wore identical orange T-shirts emblazoned with "ORPHAN"—representing the proportion of children that AIDS has orphaned, compared to the university's student population. As the week progressed, more campus "orphans" appeared, in relation to the projected growth in the coming decade. By Friday, 350 students were wearing orange.

The T-shirt demonstration helped draw more than 500 students to other AIDS-focused events, including a student panel, involvement fair, concert, and activism workshop. By week's end, 90 students had carved time out of their schedules to volunteer at local ministries that care for those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Now this creative event is expected to increase in impact: It is being designed as a template for use on Christian campuses across the country. In May, James and Lisa led an SPU delegation to Washington, D.C., to present Acting on AIDS to university representatives and lawmakers including Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash., shown above).

To learn about ongoing Acting on AIDS activities, check out [www.actingtonaids.org](http://www.actingtonaids.org). ■



## In the Spotlight

**Life Through a Different Lens** > “I feel as if, in the last 10 years, I’ve been forged on a blacksmith’s anvil—hammered and pummeled—and, at times, completely in-the-depths lost,” says John Schenk, 56.

As a photojournalist, John is no casual bystander. The stories he captured for World Vision in the world’s most suffering places have changed the story of his life.

Rewind 23 years. After a decade of news writing in Toronto, John was jaded. “I took off to hitchhike around the world and find a more significant way to live,” he vowed. “And I was never going to have anything to do with Christianity again.”

But God had different plans, starting in Mount Athos, Greece. Late one evening, John found himself defending the truth and power of Christianity to a disillusioned believer, “quoting Scripture that I hadn’t uttered in seven years,” he says. “That night I realized . . . the beliefs I thought I had rejected were in actuality *my* beliefs.”

Cut to Sudan, still on John’s hitchhiking journey. A local man, wanting to practice English, invited John to his village. He told John about his life, his struggles, and his dreams for his children. John’s calling came into focus: to tell the stories of people forgotten by the media, those of little means but high hopes.

Fast forward to 1986. John joined World Vision in Ethiopia as a communications manager in the wake of the country’s famine. A year later, he moved to Kenya. From his base in Nairobi, John covered World Vision’s community-development work across the continent as well as crises in Somalia, Sudan, and Angola.

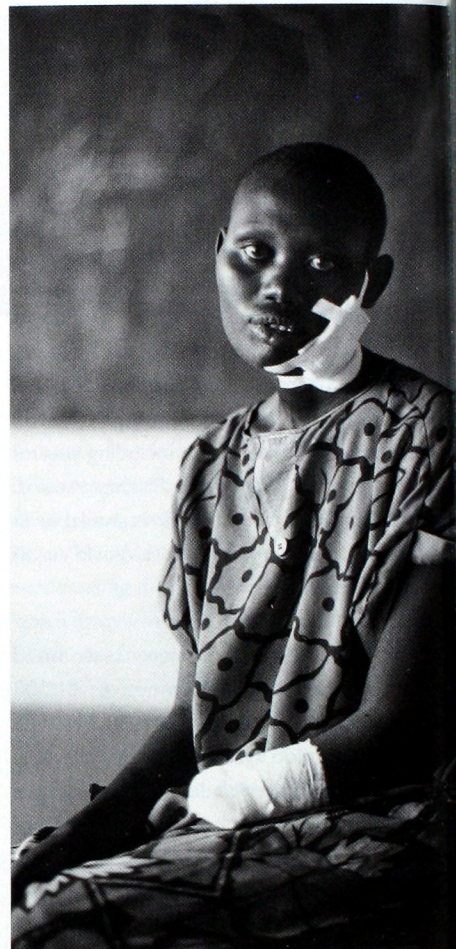
Fade up on Rwanda, 1994. In just 100 days, more than 800,000 people were killed as ethnic violence gripped the small country.

The carnage was still fresh when John arrived with a World Vision team. They visited a church where the decaying bodies of hundreds of murdered men, women, and children still lay on the brownish-red soil. “I put the camera on my shoulder and a bandana over my mouth and nose because of the stench,” he remembers.

“And I kept asking myself for permission to leave.”

It was the first time he didn’t want to be where the story was, but he wanted the world to know what had happened. So he kept one eye on the viewfinder and one on the ground, stepping over bodies.

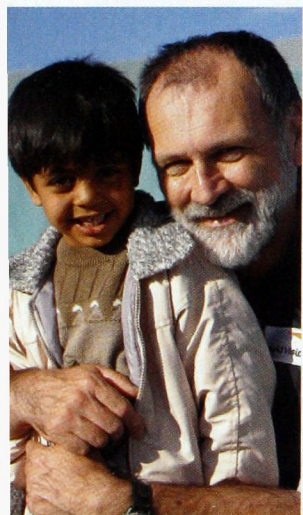
“The Hutu militia had thrown in hand grenades, shot through the windows, and then shot people when they ran out,” John says. “I never thought I’d be one to suffer depression, but looking at those bodies was the straw that broke the camel’s back.” John’s spirit began a fade to black.



One of John’s photos from Rwanda, showing Claudine, a survivor of the 1994 genocide.

Although John’s video images of the genocide were some of the first to reach an international audience, the story tormented him. He moved to the United States and worked in communications training for several years. Seeking help for his depression, he leaned on his faith. “It was the living Christ who got me through,” he says. “Eventually you start to realize [that] life is good.”

By 1998 John was ready to face another war zone—Kosovo—signaling a return to full-time storytelling. In April he went to Rwanda for the 10-year anniversary of the genocide. Now based in Cyprus, John covers the Middle East, again telling difficult stories of collapsed



In Iran, John Schenk befriended 6-year-old Amir, who lost his parents and sisters in the December 2003 earthquake.



conomies and conflict between nations. But he does so through a different lens.

“It was God’s harsh mercies at work in my life to make me a better, more empathetic person,” he says, “and a better, more sensitive ‘documentor’ of the people we work with at World Vision.”

In making the world his textbook, John discovered the most important news of all—that God is the true author of his life. ■

—Carla Swanson-Gawthrop



DAVE GETZCHMAN/VENTURA COUNTY STAR

**Photograph from the Ventura County (Calif.) Star, Mar. 4, 2004** >

The harsh realities of African life came alive to students at Oaks Christian High School in Westlake Village, Calif. They spent an entire day learning about and simulating political conflict, refugee life, famine, and genocide—problems affecting sub-Saharan Africa.

Out on the football field, the students crammed into the tight space of a refugee tent and performed a dance illustrating the effects of famine (pictured), among other activities. The day’s keynote speaker was a former World Vision-sponsored child from Kenya, Moses Pulei. Moses, now a student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., said that his sponsor gave him the encouragement to reach for his dreams.

The learning will continue as Oaks Christian students financially support a village in Malawi through World Vision. ■

**Reader Feedback**

**How did Kelvin contract AIDS?**

> NayWei Soong, head of virology at Maxygen Inc. in Redwood City, Calif., wrote: “I was puzzled by a statement in ‘The Game of Her Life’ [Spring 2004 World Vision]: ‘Kelvin ... probably contracted [HIV] as he nursed his sick mother before her death.’ As far as I am aware from my work with medical and research professionals in the field, transmission of HIV does not occur through caring for an afflicted individual. Can you shed some light on this?”

Ken Casey, World Vision HIV/AIDS expert, confirms that it is possible—and likely—that

14-year-old Kelvin contracted HIV through caring for his ill mother in their rural Malawi village. “The virus is not passed by air or casual contact with people,” Ken says. “But transmission can occur if, in the process of caring for a dying person, there is blood-to-blood contact. The caretaker might have open sores or cuts that come into contact with the infected person’s blood in sores, stools, or vomit.”

Families in rural villages also often lack clean water, disinfectants, and protective gloves that could reduce the chance of infection.

Kelvin’s mother passed away in 2002. Since his story appeared in this magazine, Kelvin has also succumbed to AIDS-related illnesses. ■



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



**» FAST FACT** Of all malnourished children in the developing world, half live in three countries: India, China, and Bangladesh. (UNICEF)



## → U.S. Scene

### Boosting Health in D.C.

**World Vision responds to children's need for immunizations.** *by Jane Sutton-Redner*

No shots, no school. That was the verdict facing thousands of Washington, D.C., public-school students as a new academic year approached. What might not be a problem in some cities caused an uproar here, where approximately 31 percent of children younger than 18 live in poverty. Nearly a quarter of all public high-school seniors graduate without ever receiving any medical attention.

The prospect of having so many children unprotected from diseases in the classroom forced District of Columbia Public Schools officials to strict measures. In 2002 they had voted to tighten an immunization law by stipulating that students couldn't start the next school year without proof of up-to-date immunizations. In 2003, noncompliant students still numbered more than 14,000.

"This has been an ongoing problem," says Clark Jones, executive director of World Vision in D.C. "We decided to have a health fair because we wanted to do something to change that."

The result: "What About the Children Family Health Fair," in

which World Vision teamed up with the D.C. Department of Health and a host of corporate and local partners to offer free health services for the whole family, including shots, health screenings, and workshops.

Adelaide Davis Elementary School in southeast D.C., where the event took place, struggles with the immunization deficit. "Our kids come to school in September, and we've had as many as 150 out of 350 not properly immunized," says Yvonne Morse, principal at Davis, where many students are from single-parent homes. "Parents won't take them in time or they don't know to take them until they get to school."

Health fair organizers know that D.C. public-school students need more than just shots. "If you can't hear the teacher, you've got a problem. If you can't see the chalkboard, you've got a problem," says Kevin Hunter, vice president of U.S. programs for World Vision. "And so it really is a holistic approach to helping kids succeed in their educational adventures."

The health fair was originally scheduled for April 2003 at Davis Elementary, but a hurricane interfered. A year later, the event went off without a hitch.

### World Vision in D.C.

World Vision works alongside church and local partners in Washington D.C. that are already striving to lift families out of poverty. At The Storehouse, these groups can access building supplies, school supplies, clothes, toys, and household goods for the needy. The church-based Vision Youth program enables adults to build relationships with at-risk youth and help them succeed in school and in making better choices. World Vision in D.C. also serves more than 200 local schools by providing education materials.

Theresa Nokes attended with her five children. The unemployed single mother lives in Benning Heights, a southeast neighborhood known for drug dealing and violent crimes. "It's hard for me to get my kids everything they want," she says, "but I do my best to see that they get what they need."

Like many mothers raising children alone, Theresa loses track of preventive health care for her family. The fair gave her a chance to get daughter Nakiah, 11, and William, 9, immunized. She and William also had eye exams and received free glasses donated by LensCrafters.

While the fair targeted school-age children, services were designed to benefit the whole community, especially vulnerable groups like the elderly. Patricia Hall, whose great-granddaughter attends Davis, had her cholesterol checked. "It's a beautiful thing," she says of the fair. "I wish they could have it every year, for the benefit of the kids."

What made the difference, Clark says, was holding the health fair in one of the poorest and



PAUL PECK/WORLD VISION (2)

**William, 9, warily awaits his immunization at World Vision's health fair.**





most neglected communities in D.C. "For a long time, kids and families who lived in underserved communities didn't go to health fairs throughout this city," he says. "But when WorldVision D.C. decided to do this, the public and private agencies were more than willing to join us." In all, 52 agencies participated.

Children were the day's big winners. After their shots and eye tests, they could eat hot dogs, get their faces painted, and play basketball. "We're seeing this as a great opportunity to provide fun for the kids, and provide services, screening and support for families so that they can help kids be all they can be," says Kevin.

And with the next school year approaching, more D.C. kids can look forward to pursuing their potential—in the classroom, where they belong. ■

—with reporting by Tom Costanza

Children attending the fair could get free dental check-ups in a mobile dental lab.



NTHATI MOOROSI/WORLD VISION

## ➔ Churches Making a Difference

**Trip of a Lifetime** > A new World Vision program is inspiring churches across the United States to care for children, communities, and churches on the front lines of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

"The visit of a lifetime," said the Rev. Marty Briney, senior pastor of Maxie Chapel in Victoria, Ill., about his World Vision trip to southern Africa. "The people I met and the things I experienced will have a place in my heart and prayers for the rest of my days."

C2C (Churches to Children, Communities, and Churches) provides U.S. churches with a bridge to directly participate in God's work among impoverished people, particularly those devastated by HIV/AIDS.

"Churches of all denominations are no longer content to take the other side of the Jericho road," said Steve Haas, World Vision's vice president of church relations. "Without question, [HIV/AIDS] is the greatest issue of our time, and these churches are making a real difference in the lives of people who felt they had been forgotten."

Steve has accompanied dozens of pastors to AIDS-ravaged communities throughout Africa. He has witnessed their hearts changing as they visit the sick and orphaned. When they return home, the pastors share with their congregations a new vision of caring for these communities.

Already, thousands of children are sponsored through churches participating in C2C. Yet these flourishing relationships go beyond child sponsorship. U.S. churches also provide communities with encouragement, training, and resources such as clean water or improved agriculture.

A church's senior pastor and other leaders are invited to participate in these life-changing experiences. Ten-day trips with up to 45 participants are scheduled quarterly to southern and eastern Africa and the Caribbean. For more information, visit [www.worldvision.org/c2c](http://www.worldvision.org/c2c) or call the Pastor's Vision Trip toll-free line at (866) 962-4453. ■

» **FAST FACT** Children in Angola, southern Africa, spend an average of four years on their education, compared to more than 14 years for students in the United States. (UNESCO's *Global Education Digest 2004*)





# When *Every* Se

World Vision was first on the scene when massive flash floods hit the Dominican Republic, providing life-saving and long-term help.

By *Carla Swanson-Gawthrop* | Photographs by Jon Warren



## In Memory

World Vision mourns the loss of 33 sponsored children killed in the flood, pictured over the next few pages. The tragedy also claimed the lives of 116 other relatives of sponsored children and 101 parents. In addition, Josefina de la Cruz, a World Vision Dominican Republic staff member, died in a weather-related car accident.



Silvia P Novas Medrano, 13



Yamaulin Moisés Pérez Nova, 11



Narosky Isamar Baéz Novas, 11



Bioilín Nova Sena, 12



Yirmín Aleisi Baez Novas, 15



Karys Novas Montero, 11



Soleiny Díaz Novas, 12



José Antonio Novas Novas, 15\*



Yurquín Pérez Novas, 12

\* Photo taken at initiation of sponsorship

—continued on Page

# nd Counts

**LATE ON SUNDAY, MAY 23**, a powerful storm descended over the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, pouring down rain and knocking out power. By 2 a.m., it was directly on top of Jimaní, a town in the Dominican Republic near the Haiti border. Lightening sliced the sky, echoed by loud booms of thunder.





## Standing Ready:

### WORLD VISION'S CRISIS RESPONSE

Crises in today's world are inevitable—so World Vision is ready. Staff around the world are trained to work in concert during an emergency. First on the scene are the workers living in the project areas. They are quickly assisted by colleagues in World Vision's national offices and by the Global Rapid Response Team—international experts poised to respond to disasters anywhere in the world within 72 hours. Such coordinated preparedness means that World Vision can make critical, lifesaving decisions quickly—and save lives.

Staff also stay to support communities over the years it takes to rebuild. Sometimes it's a continuation of work already being done, such as in the Dominican Republic, where World Vision has a 26-year history. In other cases, such as the Rwanda genocide or wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, a crisis provides an opportunity for long-term transformation.

Julián Pérez woke in the pitch dark to knee-deep water. Within an hour, this sponsorship coordinator for World Vision was out with a flashlight, forming a team to help. “We went to the aid of those who were alive,” Julián says, “and to rescue the bodies of the many who had died.”

Only later would he learn that more than 400 people—including 33 sponsored children—had lost their lives.

Dawn revealed the full devastation. In town, mud-stained walls showed that the current had gushed through at depths of at least 8 feet. Large piles of debris were wrapped around downed electricity poles. Vehicles lay upended. Items washed out of destroyed homes scattered the streets: refrigerators, broken chairs, clothing, individual shoes. Mud-covered people stumbled by, dazed with shock or crying. “Have you found your family?” they asked each other.

Groups of men desperately looked for survivors. Cries signaled a discovery, but many of the bodies turned out to be lifeless. Trucks took the corpses away.

The worst destruction could be seen on the edge of town. A series of deep channels, some with waist-high water, stretched 1,000 feet across where hundreds of homes used to stand beside a dry riverbed. More than 200 homes there vanished between 2 and 3 a.m. that Monday. Few people had time to evacuate.

“We have never had a situation like this,” Julián says. “The water level never reached the houses [before]. But this time it was different. Everything was gone.”

During the heaviest rains, all the roads to Jimaní were blocked. There was no electricity. No radio. No cell-phone reception. But World Vision was already in place—having worked in the border region for eight years (and in the Dominican Republic since 1978). Julián was among the first on the scene because he lives in the community he serves.

### First response

The first priority for World Vision staff in Jimaní, after immediate rescue attempts, was to check on sponsored children and



Rescuers evacuate an elderly woman (above). Julián Pérez (in orange vest, at right), leads community leaders in surveying damage and looking for survivors.

their families. “The majority of children in this region are sponsored,” Julián explains. Staff discovered that 101 parents had died and that hundreds of families’ houses were damaged or destroyed.

Meanwhile, Henry Pimentel, World Vision’s emergency response coordinator, rushed to Jimaní from World Vision’s national office in Santo Domingo, the capital. By Monday night, after the heavy rains had abated, he was leading a coordinated effort with the





Karina Montero Novas, 11\*



Geiron Díaz Novas, 14\*



María Elena Novas Medrano, 13\*



Jesuleidy Novas Novas, 10



Robinson Matéo Novas, 12



Awilda Novas Novas, 10



Yoelis Lisset Novas Novas, 8\*



Danyelina Recio Sena, 9



Yaniris Novas Sena, 8



Genmuel Domingo Díaz Novas, 10



Gerizon David Novas Novas, 6



Luis Ignacio Trinidad Pérez, 6

\* Photo taken at Initiation of sponsorship







**World Vision coordinated tetanus vaccinations for everyone over age 4 (top). Elena and Joselo dig into their food rations from World Vision.**

Red Cross, civil defense, the fire department, and other local authorities to assess damage, care for survivors, and clear the roads.

“We need drinking water and nonperishable food,” Henry announced. He drove to a nearby city, Barahona, where he opened a credit line to purchase large quantities of drinking water, sardines, tuna, sugar, bread, crackers, diapers, and soap. He also organized food and water to be trucked in from Santo Domingo and other cities.

The supplies were dropped off at a local Catholic church, where pews had been pushed to the side so that volunteers could organize the goods into family-sized packs. Nearly 100 families received food and water by Tuesday evening. Hundreds of house-to-house deliveries continued during the rest of the week.

Many of the families had harrowing stories. Joselo Trinidad, 12, who has benefited from World Vision sponsorship since he was 2, described holding on to his mother, Elena, as the water rose in the middle of the night. On Wednesday,

World Vision delivered a plastic bin heavy with rations including water, bread, tuna, bananas, candles, and soap. As Joselo helped carry the bin into their home, Elena smiled gratefully. “World Vision is my friend,” she said. “They always help.”

Lifesaving help also came through health care. Diseases easily spread after flooding emergencies, especially with the lack of power and fresh water. Within 24 hours, World Vision had organized tetanus vaccinations to prevent infections of cuts and open wounds. Hundreds of people received shots at street-corner clinics. Families could also seek medical treatment at health-care centers that World Vision opened on Wednesday.

Parents were grateful. “I was sleeping when the water came in through the door, carried us out, and destroyed everything,” explains Nana Peraboka, holding her exhausted 1-year-old son, Duce maria. She received free antibiotics and antiparasitic medicines.

Two days after the disaster, nearly 3,000 people had received essential water, food, and health care from World Vision.



Families' needs went beyond the physical. World Vision staff opened trauma centers that immediately filled with distraught survivors. "It is going to take many years for the people to erase

destroyed homes as well as recover small businesses and livelihoods. Working with the community, World Vision is rehabilitating water, electricity, and sanitation services and cleaning up schools

World Vision



JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

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Rebuilding  
will take  
years.

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In Memory *continued*



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Dervin Ismael Novas Novas, 6



Papito Nova, 7



Katerin Yissel Mota Abad, 8



Maiker M Pérez Vólquez, 6



Verónica Pérez Vólquez, 3



Marizaida Moquete Méndez, 5



José A Méndez Trinidad, 9\*



Miguel Novas Pérez, 3



Mari Isabel Recio Méndez, 2



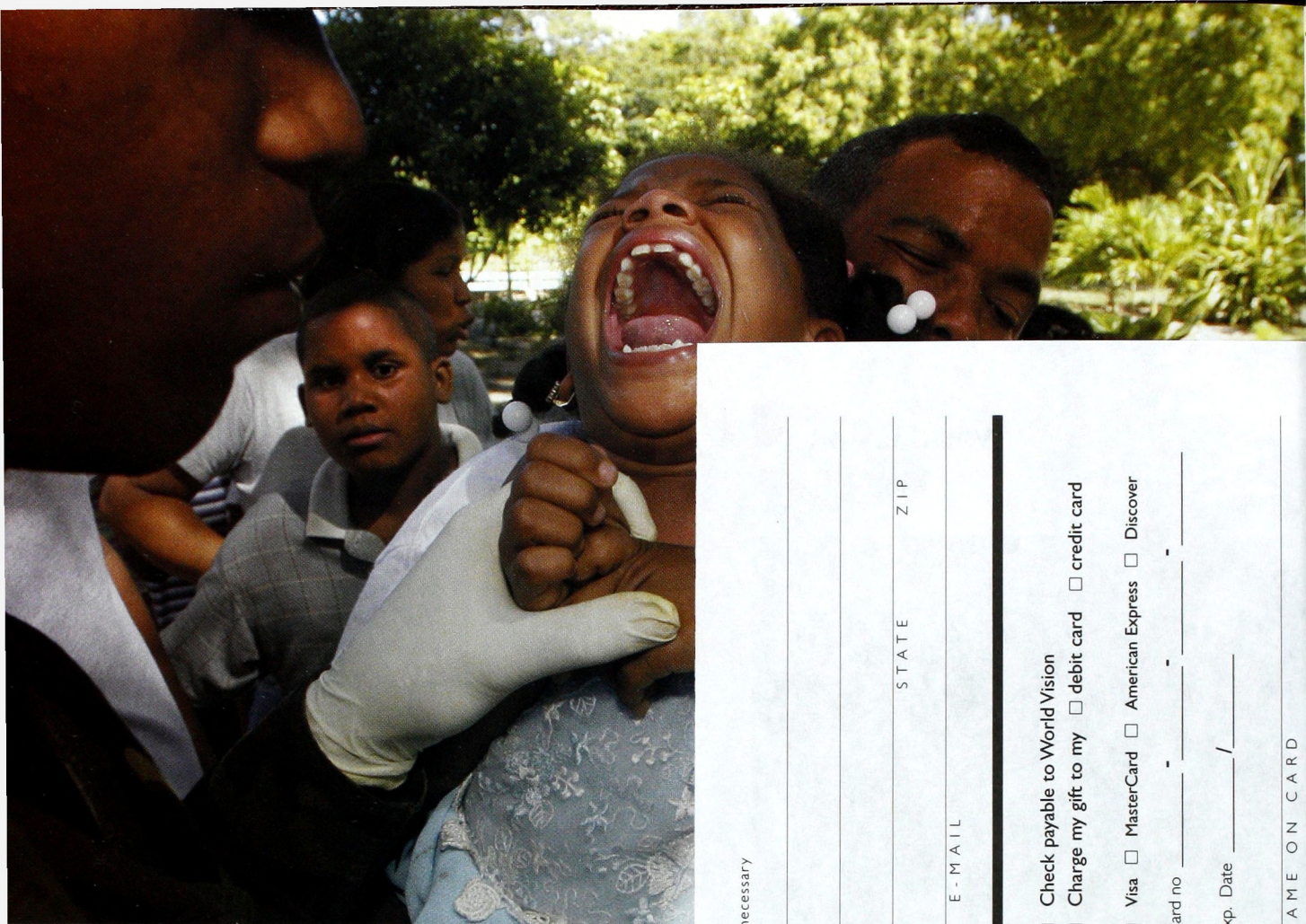
Viailin Novas Pérez, 2



Humberto Emilio Baéz Novas, 2\*

\* Photo taken at initiation of sponsorship





World Vision coordinated tetanus vaccinations for everyone over age 4 (top). Elena and Joselo dig into their food rations from World Vision.

Red Cross, civil department, and other assess damage, care clear the roads.

"We need drink nonperishable food," He drove to a nearby where he opened a crate large quantities of sardines, tuna, sugar, diapers, and soap. food and water to Santo Domingo and

The supplies were local Catholic church been pushed to the side could organize the sized packs. Nearly 1 food and water by Hundreds of households continued during the

Many of the families stories. Joselo Trini benefited from World since he was 2, described his mother, Elena, as middle of the night

Please update your address if necessary

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( ) TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

- Please use my gift to help families in the Dominican Republic and Haiti recover from the floods. Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to sponsor a HopeChild for \$30/month.
- a girl  a boy living in
- Asia  Africa  the Dominican Republic/Haiti
- where most needed
- I want my one-time donation to go where it's needed most. Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I've enclosed my gift of \$25 or more, or my first gift of \$30 to begin sponsoring a HopeChild. Please send me a World Vision 2005 calendar (see details between pages 28 and 29).

Receive a free  
World Vision  
2005 Calendar  
by sponsoring  
a child OR with  
your gift of  
\$25

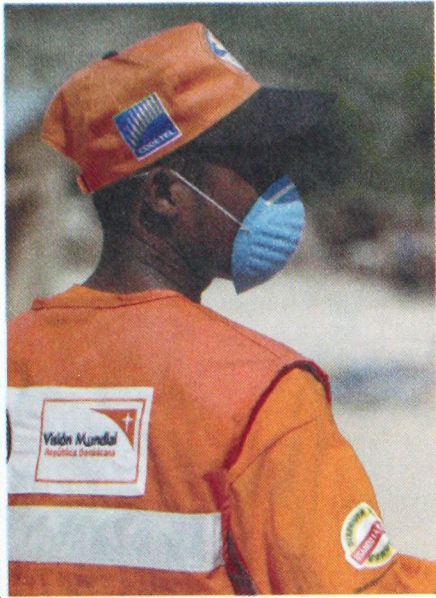
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Families' needs went beyond the physical. World Vision staff opened trauma centers that immediately filled with distraught survivors. "It is going to take many years for the people to erase

destroyed homes as well as recover small businesses and livelihoods. Working with the community, World Vision is rehabilitating water, electricity, and sanitation services and cleaning up schools



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Heavy rains caused severe flooding in the Dominican Republic in May, sweeping away whole neighborhoods. Hundreds of families lost loved ones. Homes and lives were shattered.

World Vision is responding to the overwhelming needs in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, also devastated by the storm. World Vision's emergency-relief programs address families' immediate physical needs and trauma, while ongoing relief efforts rebuild houses, schools, roads, water systems, and latrines.

Your gifts help bring stability and hope to children and families.

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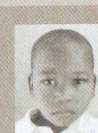
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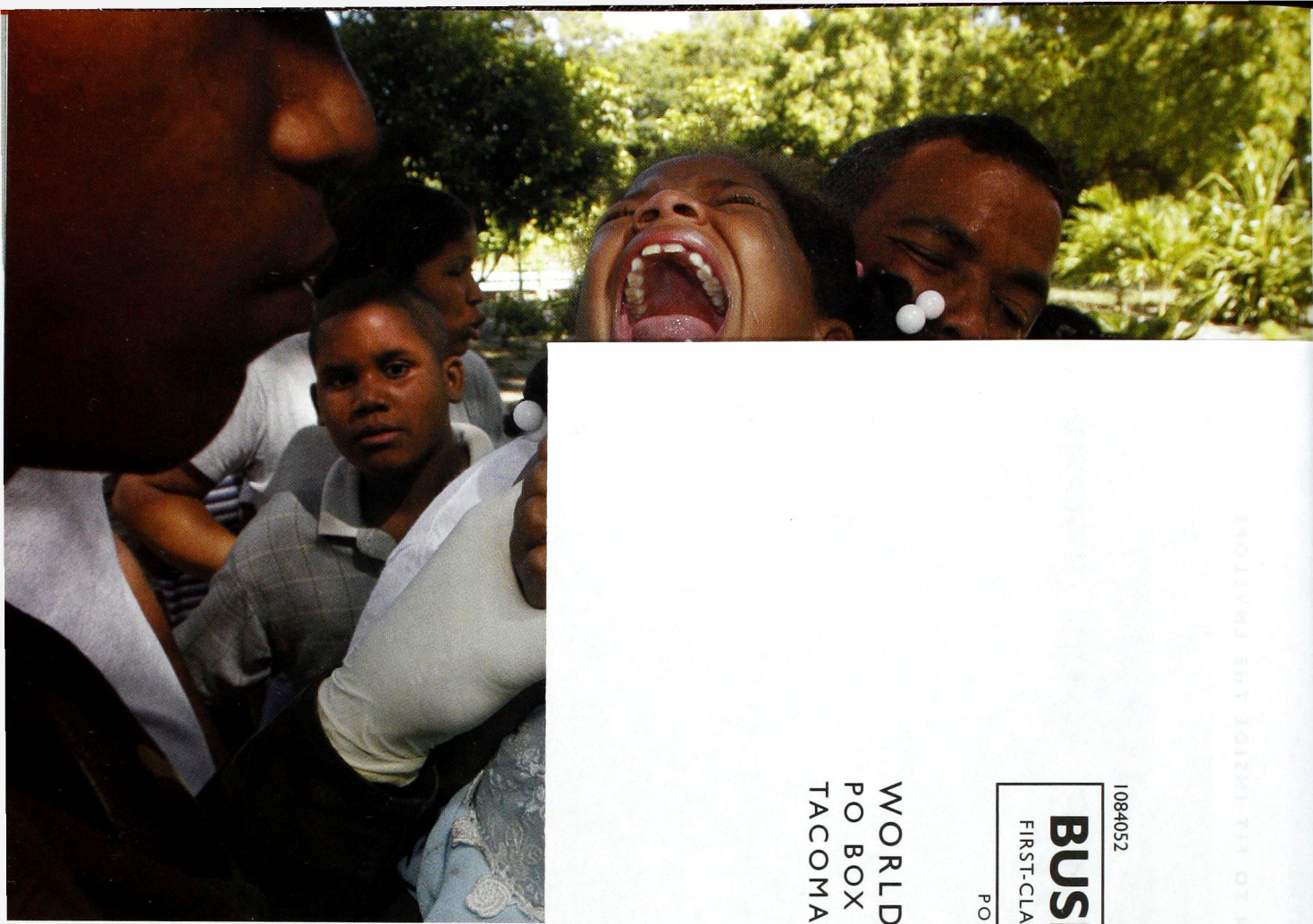
Viailin Novas Pérez, 2



Humberto Emilio Baéz Novas, 2\*

\* Photo taken at initiation of sponsorship





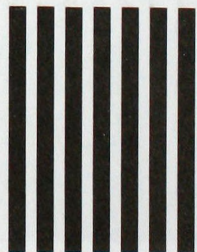
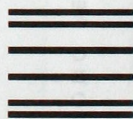
World Vision coordinated tetanus vaccinations for everyone over age 4 (top). Elena and Joselo dig into their food rations from World Vision.

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Families' needs went beyond the physical. World Vision staff opened trauma centers that immediately filled with distraught survivors. "It is going to take many years for the people to erase this event," Julián says.

Idarez Mejia wept as she recalled the night of the flood. Her three children and two grandchildren huddled on her bed in the dark as the waters rose. They climbed up on furniture, then the roof—but the current caught her eldest daughter and swept her away. The house split in two as waves washed over the roof.

The family was finally rescued, but not before Idarez's grandson, Pedro Sejas Mejia, 8, suffered scrapes from falling debris. Now homeless, Idarez struggles with her daughter's death and her family's uncertain future. "I ask God to give me help," she says.

World Vision staff hugged her and told her they'd be back. People need more than just physical assistance after a disaster. World Vision reaches out with comfort from the God of all comfort.

### Hope on the horizon

In the following months, World Vision moved into the second phase of helping children and families after a disaster: rebuilding for a stronger future.

First, World Vision is helping families reconstruct hundreds of damaged and

destroyed homes as well as recover small businesses and livelihoods. Working with the community, World Vision is rehabilitating water, electricity, and sanitation services and cleaning up schools so children can return to classes.

"Poverty is closely linked to vulnerability," says Henry Pimentel. This flood, for example, was made much worse because of deforestation—the result of poor families cutting down trees to make charcoal to sell.

World Vision's long-term development work—driven by sponsorship—helps mitigate future disasters through programs such as replanting trees to provide some resistance to subsequent storms. Improved water, sanitation, health, and agriculture systems mean that communities can better withstand a disaster, and bounce back more quickly after one.

There will always be natural disasters, especially in hurricane-prone Latin America. But there will always be caring World Vision staff like Julián Pérez, ready to grab a flashlight and help sponsored children. Once the crisis passes, they plan for the long term.

After all, Julián isn't just working for the good of a community far away—he's helping rehabilitate his own hometown. ■

*Carla Swanson-Gawthrop is a writer with World Vision United States.*



Nana Peraboka (left) received medicine for her son Ducemaria, J.



Yamirka Novas Novas, 7



Dervin Ismael Novas Novas, 6



Papito Nova, 7



Katerin Yissel Mota Abad, 8



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Viailín Novas Pérez, 2



Humberto Emilio Baéz Novas, 2\*

\* Photo taken at initiation of sponsorship



BY RICH STEARNS  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN

**M**ost people preparing for a trip overseas do so with excitement and anticipation. But as my own trip to Zambia and Malawi drew closer, I felt a growing sense of apprehension. I was not going for a safari or a vacation. I knew that I would be entering the pain, the suffering, and the horror of the AIDS pandemic, the most devastating “weapon of mass destruction” in the world today. I, more than many, am familiar with the terrible statistics of AIDS. Now I would have to confront those statistics face-to-face, human-to-human, and I knew that it would be emotionally agonizing.

I am an optimist by nature, but in my heart of hearts I was not optimistic about HIV/AIDS. I was convinced it was too overwhelming, too deadly, and too insidious to be stopped. As president of World Vision, I have rallied our organization to take a stand against AIDS and to fight back with everything in our arsenal of humanitarian and Christian response. But I was not confident that we could win—until the people of Malawi and Zambia changed my mind and lifted my spirits.

In Africa, I was surprised by hope as I found people who are facing this fire with courage. Now, I believe they will prevail.

*“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

—JOHN 16:33







FACING THE

HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

FIRE





zambia

‘When you run alone,  
you run *fast*.  
When you run  
together, you run *far*.’  
—Zambian proverb

Meeting my sponsored children for the first time (at right, Jackson, 15, in red, and Morgan, 13) made me realize they're real flesh and blood. They're real kids. They like playing soccer. They go to school. They dream of the future. And they have a life story that is amazingly tragic. (See my column, page 5.) Equally tragic—the sex workers whom my wife and I visited in the brothels in Livingstone. Renéé said it was “the closest thing I have ever seen to hell on earth.” Young girls, selling themselves for \$3, some of them carrying their babies on their hips. It's a terrible quicksand of a situation for these young women—forced into prostitution because of poverty. The day after that evening of hopelessness, we celebrated a graduation ceremony with 17 young women (three graduates are pictured below). World Vision had trained them as seamstresses so that they could leave prostitution. It was a pinpoint of light in the darkness.



When you have next-to-nothing, the smallest gesture means everything. How do you pray for a woman who is dying, leaving her four children behind—the youngest only 10? For Agnes (above), 40, you pray for comfort and peace, and that her children will be cared for. Open about her HIV-positive status, she fights prejudice from her neighbors, but not from World Vision. Staff gave Agnes' house a new roof and sturdy plaster walls. Her children received blankets, shoes, and clothes. Others, such as Maggie, 7, and her 80ish great-grandmother, Finedia (right), had nothing, not even family. They're all dead, including Maggie's baby brother. The two slept under a tarp in their leaky house until World Vision learned of their need and built them a new home—warm and dry.







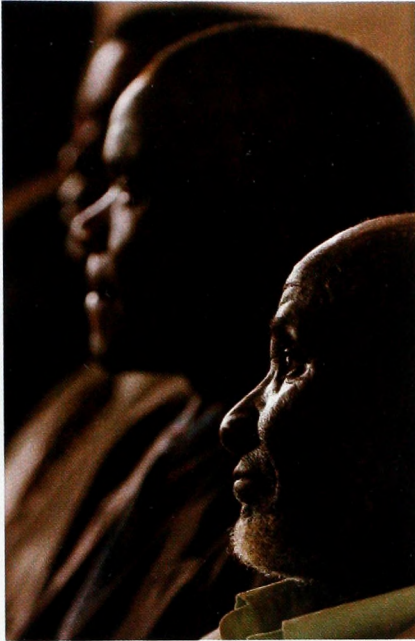
NIGEL MARSH/WORLD VISION







malawi



There was a humble beauty in the gathering of pastors (immediate and middle left) who came to talk with me about HIV/AIDS. Most of them wore sport coats and ties, and they had walked miles, some barefoot, to be there. "How many of you are caring for orphans in your own home?" I asked. Half of the 16 pastors raised their hands. One said he performed five funerals a day in his congregation. Their challenges are different than many American pastors'. They feed orphans, care for them, pray for the dying, and spread God's word. They told me that World Vision had helped them come together to organize a response to AIDS. Individually, they hadn't known what to do. Though they come from different denominations, they now have strength and a strategy.

Anastazia, 56, cared for one orphan, her sister's child, until she realized how many orphans there were in her community of Senzani, Malawi. So she started an orphan day-care center (left). All 170 of these children are under 5. The kids eat one hot meal a day—often their only food. They learn their ABCs, their numbers, and they sing songs. Anastazia is a symbol for the community—evidence of what one person can do with vision and the help of volunteers. Senzani is not a community frozen with despair but a community on the move, determined to fight back and prevail through the most difficult circumstances. In Chingale, I saw great examples of how World Vision helps people help themselves. Fish farming sustains villagers—even septuagenarian Segele (upper left)—while a community seed bank ensures future harvests (right). This had been one of the poorest areas in one of the poorest countries in the world. Now, with the young and old pitching in to do their part, Chingale is changing itself for the better.



‘When we *give*,  
we *keep* for  
*tomorrow*.’

—Malawian proverb





## World Vision in Africa

Our *seemingly*  
inconsequential acts  
*change* lives. **;**

—Rich Stearns

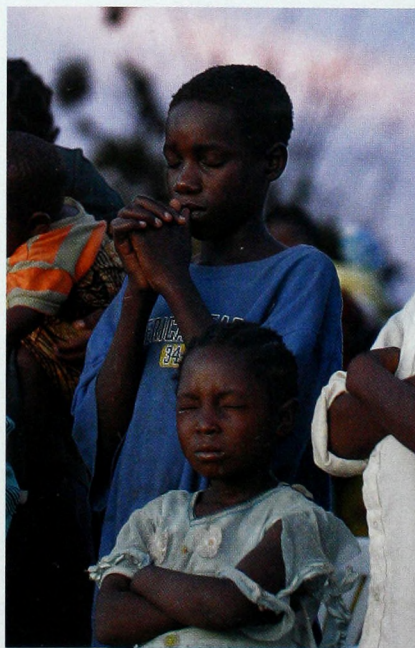


Wherever I traveled in Zambia and Malawi, I was surprised by hope. I found people determined to win and to beat this disease. I found pastors organized and communities planning for tomorrow. I found young people committed to remain uninfected. I found stigma and silence broken. I sat in on HIV/AIDS education classes (above), where teens learned that saying no has lifesaving consequences. I found community volunteers organized to care for their own orphans and widows and to comfort their sick. I found people of every generation spending time with God in prayer (right). I found courageous World Vision staff who believe that it's possible to prevail against this terrible plague and are acting on that faith.

I found hope and even joy in Africa among people who by all rights should have none, even children like Leonard (right). This 10-year-old's mother is dying of HIV/AIDS.

Leonard helped World Vision staff build his house, fetching the water for the plaster. Leonard tends a beautiful cornfield that's grown to make *nshima*—a porridge he cooks for his mother. I met another girl named Maggie, 14 (below, at far right), an orphan living with her elderly grandmother. Maggie's smile proved that there is joy to be found in perseverance. I met children (below-middle) who are still just children. They loved the soccer balls and stickers we brought. They loved seeing their images in my digital camera.

**In Zambia and Malawi I saw the courage of the human spirit. I saw my brothers and sisters in the human family inviting us to stand beside them in their time of need. I ask you to join them. In facing the fire, they are winning this war. ■**









# mothers and daughters, hopes and fears

BY RENÉE STEARNS



JOHN WARREN/WORLD VISION

One of the many pictures taken on the trip to Malawi with my husband, Rich Stearns, shows me seated on a grass mat, deep in conversation with a young woman named Rabecca. We're struggling to position umbrellas over our heads in the midst of a summer shower.

You wouldn't know it, but our conversation is centered on the topic of death and dying.

Because Rabecca has AIDS, she spends much of her day thinking about and preparing for the future—for when she will no longer be there to care for her two little girls.

There we sat, two women separated by culture, language, economics, and, perhaps most importantly, by a disease that soon will leave Rabecca's children orphaned. And yet, as I turned to admire Shailey, her beautiful 8-year-old, I was struck not so much by what separated us as by what we had in common.

While we talked, I could see in her smile the pride she had in her little family, the pleasure she took in seeing her children become the focus of my attention.

As a mom, I know those feelings. I also know the dreams a mother holds for her children's future. In spite of her circumstances, I think Rabecca and I share those as well. Her life is evidence that you can be dying of AIDS and still dream of a tomorrow without hunger and poverty and disease. You can call a straw-and-mud hut a home and still imagine a future filled with promise.

Rabecca's immediate concerns center on practical things: making sure her daughters get a good education, avoid AIDS, and withstand the cultural pressures to marry and have children too young. They echo those of so many mothers around the developing world (see the results, at right, of a survey that World Vision conducted in West Africa among 100 mothers).

But Rabecca's heart is also full of hope that transcends the day-to-day struggles. In that, she is no different from a mother anywhere.

Thank you for your part in helping to make those hopes a reality—for Rabecca's children and thousands like them around the world. ■

## Calling ALL Mothers

World Vision magazine invited U.S. moms to share their greatest hopes for their daughters. More than 250 of you responded. The top five answers, and some of your comments:

»»**Christ-like life:** "My greatest hope is that they would have a vibrant faith in Christ that would direct them in every aspect of their lives."

»»**Salvation in Christ:** "My prayer is that they come to a personal and saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

»»**Health and happiness:** "I hope she will grow up strong, healthy, wise, loving, compassionate, educated, and a good wife and mother."

»»**Marriage to a Christian:** "Even though [my daughter] is only 4, I pray every day that the Lord is preparing a Christian husband for her."

»»**Self-confidence:** "My greatest hope is that she will know how much she is loved and will always be as confident as she is now."



# Top FIVE Fears of West African Mothers

## 1) EARLY MARRIAGE

In West Africa, many mothers feel torn over the issue of marriage. They want their daughters to find educated, upstanding men who can provide for their families, but they don't want their daughters to marry as young as they did. Disgrace, however, is dreaded more than illness or even poverty. So, many parents marry off their daughters early, sometimes as young as 13, to avoid the shame of pregnancy out of wedlock. In West Africa, a staggering 49 percent of girls under 19 are married.

## 2) DYING IN CHILDBIRTH

Childbirth is not necessarily a joyful topic in West Africa, where most women have lost a sister, a cousin, a friend, or even their own mothers to pregnancy complications. Mauritania has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Africa, where one in every 16 women will die as a consequence of complications. More than 80 percent of these deaths are due to four causes: hemorrhage, sepsis (blood poisoning), obstructed labor, and abnormally high blood pressure. The majority of these deaths could be prevented if a trained birth attendant were present.

## 3) DIVORCE

Divorce and abandonment are critical problems in West Africa, where up to 60 percent of women raise their families alone. Unemployment is high, and husbands often travel to other towns or neighboring African countries to find work. Some meet other women there and formally divorce their wives; many just never return.

Divorcée Toutou mint Mohamed, 45, lives in Sebkhā, a poor neighbourhood in Nouakchott, Mauritania's capital. She is raising her children alone. "The No. 1 reason for divorce is illiteracy, the lack of education among women," Toutou says. "Girls leave school and have too many children, too young. Eventually the

husband flees, and these mothers are left with no way of supporting themselves."

## 4) HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS has not hit conservative, predominantly Muslim West Africa to the same extent as other African regions, but experts say it's only a matter of time. Currently, an estimated 400,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in Ghana, Mauritania, and Senegal. Poor girls here are especially vulnerable, because many work as domestic servants and are often abused by male employers. Mothers are desperate to protect their daughters from the disease.

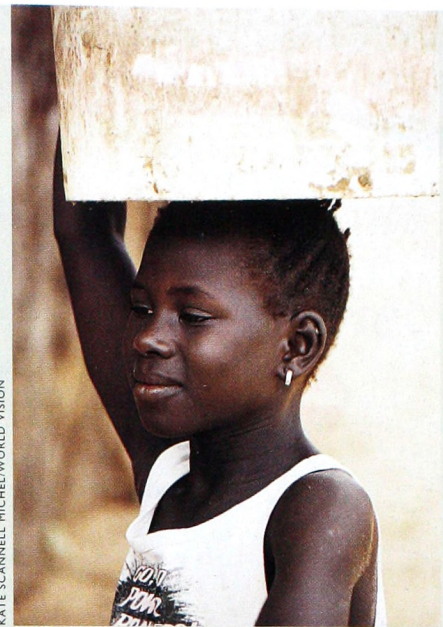
## 5) LACK OF EDUCATION

Across West Africa, mothers are unanimous: Education is the single most important factor in changing a girl's life. But most can't afford it. The average West African family survives on about \$1 a day. Parents can hardly buy food, let alone uniforms, books, and supplies. As a result, more than half of school-aged children in Mauritania and Senegal don't attend class.

Girls have been particularly disadvantaged, held back by tradition as well as economics. "About 10 years ago, we did not send our girls to school," says Aissata Diaw, a Mauritanian mother. "Schools were seen as a bad colonial influence where girls would be taught Western values."

Thankfully, those attitudes are changing. Dozens of interviewed mothers talked about how child sponsorship is making education possible for their daughters. In Ghana, Mauritania, and Senegal, more than 57,000 sponsored children receive assistance with schooling—boys and girls. ■

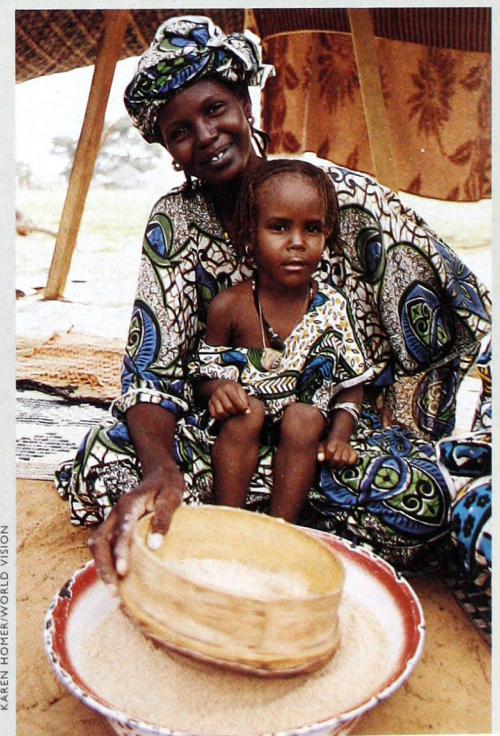
—by Karen Homer in Mauritania,  
with reports from Faustina Bookye (Ghana)  
and Debi Biess (Senegal)



KATE SCANNELL MICHEL/WORLD VISION



ANTHONY KOFI ODOOH/WORLD VISION



KAREN HOMER/WORLD VISION



## ➔ Since We Met

Sponsorship seeded a 14-year friendship across the miles.

By Luis Armenta Fraire

**WHILE GROWING UP, JESSICA ONOFRE** had always hoped to become a kindergarten teacher. "I dreamed of having small chairs and small tables for little children," she says. "I even thought of how I was going to decorate my classroom."

Today her dream has come true, down to the last detail. Jessica, 19, teaches kindergarten in her hometown of Hank Gonzalez, Mexico. Her classroom comes equipped with child-sized furniture, the walls festooned with colorful charts, paper figures, and the Mexican flag.

She might not have gotten there if it hadn't been for a day, 14 years ago, when Jessica herself was in kindergarten. Her school hosted U.S.

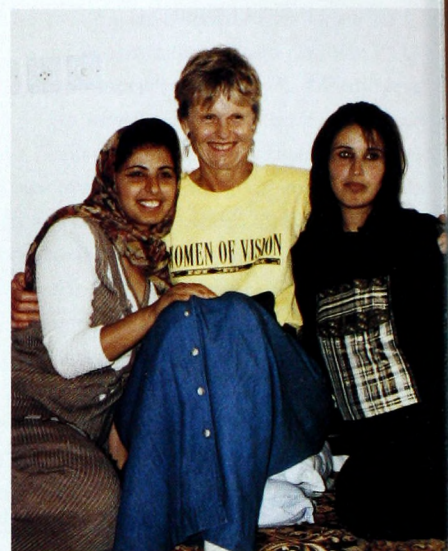
visitors: a World Vision group called Women of Vision—volunteers with a passion to help poor communities. Five-year-old Jessica was excited, but she didn't realize the significance of meeting one woman, Betsy Tarbell of Newport Beach, Calif.

"I just gravitated to Jessica," Betsy recalls. "We couldn't talk because I didn't speak Spanish and she didn't speak English, but we communicated by hugs and eyes and gestures."

Betsy became Jessica's sponsor. It was a turning point for the girl who lived with her mother and

sister in a small, two-room house made of cardboard and wood—no door. "When it rained, we had to sweep the water and take it out in buckets," Jessica says, smiling at what now seems like a funny adventure.

But her mother, Victoria Avila Nicolas, breaks down in tears at the memory. Abandoned by her husband, she washed clothes for her neighbors in order to keep food on the table for Jessica and Araceli, now 17 (a brief reconciliation with her husband later produced a son, José Alberto, now 4). "It was very difficult," Victoria says, "but we found a big support in the World Vision program."



After Mexico, Betsy traveled with the Women of Vision to other places, including the Middle East.

Through Betsy's monthly gifts, World Vision helped Victoria improve her home. A loan enabled her to build a simple but nice house with proper bedrooms, a kitchen with a dining area, and a living room. Jessica also received school supplies and health care. Jessica and her mother agree that without this support, Jessica probably couldn't have continued studying.

Jessica was the first of many children Betsy would help in this way. Subsequent travels with Women of Vision to Kenya and the Middle East introduced her to more children to sponsor, and now she also assists children in Peru and Malawi.

But her relationship with Jessica is



LUIS ARMENTA FRAIRE/WORLD VISION

Jessica (above) treasures the memory of the first time she met Betsy.

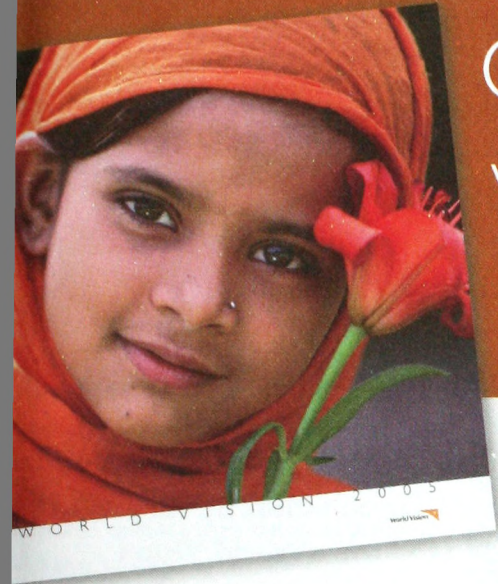


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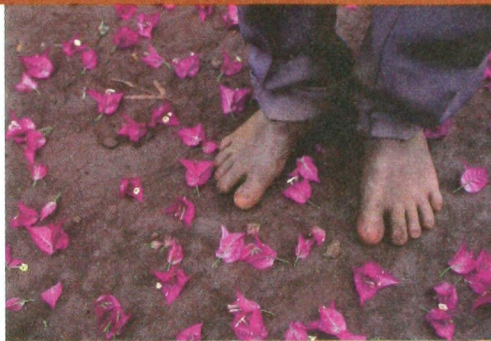
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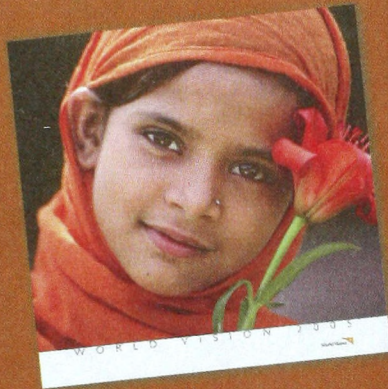
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**Jessica (above) treasures the memory of the first time she met Betsy.**

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*'The only way out of poverty is one life at a time...'*

... something special. "She writes me wonderful, affectionate letters," Betsy says. "When she had her coming-out party at age 14, she was sad because I couldn't come. Of all my sponsored children, she's the most personal and willing to share."

In May 2000, Betsy found out that she had breast cancer. After battling the disease aggressively, she received a second devastating diagnosis in 2002: leukemia. A recent bone-marrow transplant is restoring her health. But in the midst of her illnesses, Betsy wrote to Jessica about what she was going through, sending photos of herself, bald after chemotherapy. Jessica replied that she was praying for Betsy.

In her letters, Jessica wrote about her dream to teach kindergarten, coming closer with every grade she completed. After junior-high school she studied for two years at a technical school to become a child educator. As part of her course, she started working at José Antonio Gutierrez School in her community and was hired on after graduation.

"Children are everything to me," says Jessica, who spends four hours with 30 kindergartners Monday through Friday. "I love when the small children, especially the girls, tell me that when they grow up they want to be teachers just like me. I tell them to work hard, because they can be whatever they want to be."

After the students go home, Jessica prepares for the next day's class. "When she wants to prepare something for her children," Victoria says, "she only stops [when] she is satisfied. She doesn't mind if it's the weekend or holidays."

Jessica earns about \$150 a month, part of



LUIS ARMENTA FRAIRE/WORLD VISION

**Under Jessica's care, the kindergartners learn to draw, distinguish colors, read a few words, and perform traditional dances.**

which goes to help her family. She's also saving up to finish high school. Although Jessica is older than the age traditionally covered by sponsorship, Betsy remains a source of support: "I wanted to help her, because she's still needing schooling.

"I sense such appreciation from Jessica, and that makes it worthwhile," Betsy says. "The only way out of poverty is one life at a time—that's what we've tried to do with Jessica, and she has taken that opportunity.

It makes me happy to see that."

What would make Jessica happy is to see Betsy again. "I would like to have her close to me," she says.

Despite time and distance, Betsy and Jessica are close. Building from a brief meeting years ago, they've linked their lives through letters, pictures, and prayers. ■

*Luis Armenta Fraire is communications director for World Vision Mexico.*



# Taking Action, Touching Hearts

THEY TOLD US THAT THE GIRL, JUSTEEN, probably had malaria, which could explain why she seemed so listless and her face so despondent. Then again, how much vitality would you or I have if we were 14 years old and the sole caretaker for two younger siblings?

The story is not an unusual one in Uganda. I was there in September 2003 on a trip with seven other U.S. pastors and guests hosted by World Vision. The world has never seen anything like the HIV/AIDS scourge. I had read the statistics: 22 million dead; 40 million sick; 14 million orphans. An entire generation wiped out in some countries. The numbers are so large, they don't even seem real. I think that's why I chose to go on this 10-day trip. I had to try and understand at a level deeper than numbers.

It worked. There are pictures I will never get out of my head. There is a softness that wells up at unexpected moments. AIDS is not an issue encased in anonymity to me now, but a tragedy overwhelming the people I wept over and embraced.

Justeen lives in a rural village outside Masaka, Uganda. We took a highway, then a street, then a dirt road, then a grassy path, and finally got out and walked the last quarter-mile down a narrow trail to reach her

*AIDS is not an issue encased in anonymity to me now, but a tragedy overwhelming the people I wept over and embraced.*

village. Her house is no more than 300 square feet in size, with no electricity or water.

Justeen's father died in the 1990s and her mother in 2001. Their graves are just 15 feet away from the front door, along with those of other family members. Justeen is responsible for her brothers Paul, 10, and JohnTheBaptist, 7. Since so many of their extended family also died of HIV/AIDS, there is no adult to care for them. A neighbor woman checks on them periodically.

I walked into their little house and saw a cement floor, a few dishes, some ragged clothes, and two thin mattresses stacked against a wall. Not much more. Of all the moments on the trip, this was the hard one for me. The whole situation was so devoid of hope. I had to get outside and clear my head and wipe my eyes. One of my friends on the trip, Dave, was experiencing the same thing, and we staggered out of the front door into the intense, equatorial sun.

"Boy," he croaked, "this is where the Incarnation really means something."

It sounded like a poor time for a theological discussion, but I was inter-

ested. "Can you believe," Dave said, "that Christ came into *this* kind of world? Into *this* place?"

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Dwelt in that or tiny house, that one small village, that one country on that one continent. And dwelt with people like me. I grapple not just with how I contributed to a world gone so awry but also with the call to participate in God's redemptive work.

Every time I tell stories from Uganda, many people react by asking very earnestly, "What can I do?" Our church community decided to take a first step by sponsoring children through World Vision. For me, it seemed important that we start somewhere . . . now. Do something, pray, donate money, consume less so that you have more to give others. Just do something. Otherwise, the nearly unbelievable number of children born into a form of paralysis.

It's not a question of statistics. Statistics are not at risk. People are at risk. People like Justeen, JohnTheBaptist, and Paul.

Since the Uganda trip, I find myself more appreciative than ever for the blessings of my life. I find myself more determined than ever to live globally. And I find myself more grateful than ever for a God who would come into places of pain, dirt, and mess to find us.

"The Message" says it this way: "And the Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." I guess that includes a village in Uganda, and wherever it is you live. ■

**Dan Baumgartner is senior pastor at Bethany Presbyterian Church in Seattle. For more information on World Vision trips to Africa for pastors, please see Page 11.**







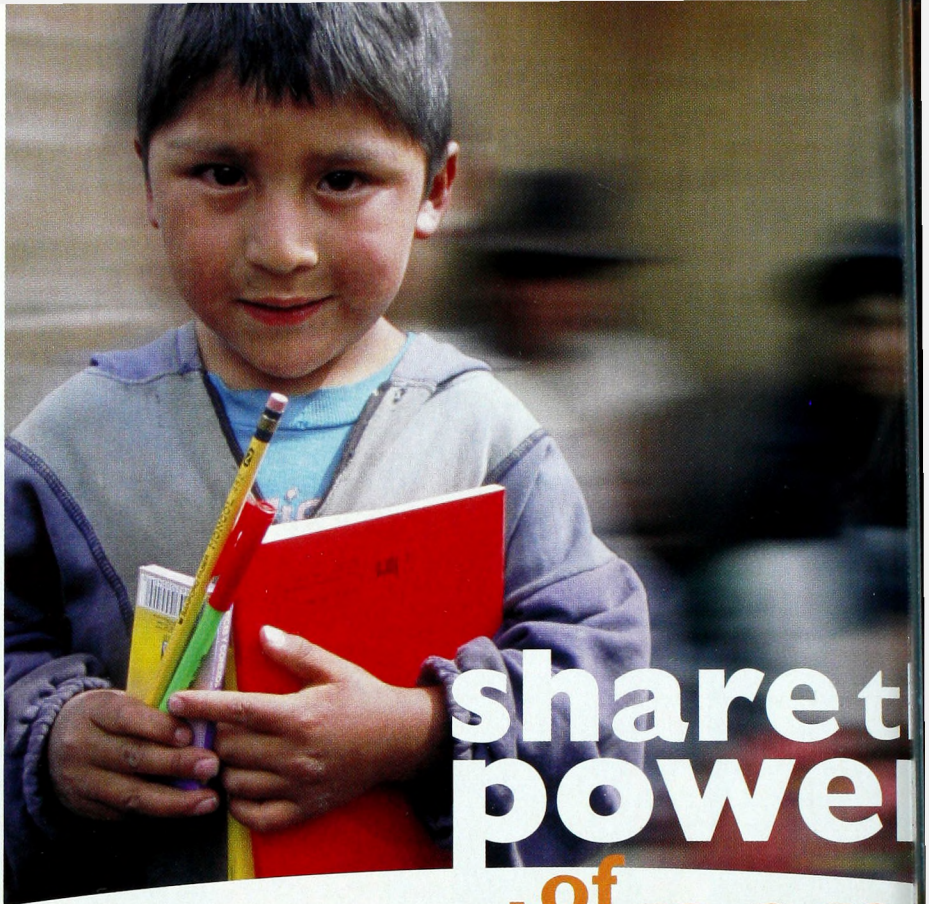
JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

## Reflections

### A R M E N I A

World Vision works with an orphanage in Gyumri, Armenia—one of the many ways children receive help. Our Lady of Armenia Center provides nutritious food, clothing, and education to 64 orphans in an area still devastated by a 1988 earthquake. But this orphanage goes far beyond caring for basic needs. Founder Sister Arousiag Sajonian ensures that boys and girls are also skilled in music, drawing, handicrafts, and dance, and that they learn the traditions of the Armenian Church through lessons and prayer. More than a decade after the earthquake, Gyumri still looks like a construction zone, with cranes and half-finished buildings lining the streets. But inside the center, children experience beauty—a gift that both World Vision and its partners want for every child.





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