



WorldVision

SUMMER 2008

SPREADING SMILES

Sponsors restore broken communities
in Peru and Sierra Leone



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“My heart goes out to people who don’t have things like a decent roof over their heads or who wonder what they will eat tomorrow . . .

My hope and my prayer is that more and more people can be helped through World Vision. That’s why I [put World Vision in] my Will.”

—Mary Sue, age 72, Texas

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World Vision

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» ON THE COVER

Traditional dancing provides a creative outlet for Vanessa Rondinel Mora, 6, and other sponsored girls in Huanta, Peru. 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 46 cents a copy to produce.

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.

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In Peru, child sponsorship is helping disadvantaged children thrive.



Voting Our Values »

All the pundits agree that the 2008 presidential race is a once-in-a-generation kind of election, with no incumbent president or vice president running. I listen with particular care to the debates around foreign policy because of the international nature of World Vision's work. Just once I would like to hear the candidates discuss the importance of addressing one of the greatest terrors facing our world today: poverty that enslaves one-third of the world's population and results in nearly 10 million children under age 5 dying needlessly each year.

Our founding documents proclaim that all of us are created equal in God's sight and endowed with rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I don't believe that those words should be meant only for Americans. Our good fortune in being born in this country means, to me, that God expects us to use our advantages to help those born without many. The prophet Ezekiel indicated that the sin that caused God to destroy Sodom was that they "were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49).

So how should U.S. foreign policy be crafted to lift up these ideals to the rest of the world? While it is not America's sole

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." —Declaration of Independence

responsibility to save the world, our power, influence, and wealth give us a precious opportunity to lead with our values. A good place to start is with increased and strengthened foreign assistance programs that build schools, fight disease, end hunger, and bring clean water to the poorest of the poor. These programs give children an opportunity to fulfill their God-given potential and become positive leaders in their communities.

In 2007 the U.S. spent five times more on the war in Iraq—one country—than we provided in foreign aid* for the rest of the world. In fact, our official development assistance on a per capita basis ranks among the lowest of wealthy nations. We spend less than 1 percent of our federal budget helping the poorest nations.

As a rule, nations whose citizens have access to education, economic opportunities, and basic human freedoms are far less likely to become failed states, breeding grounds for terrorists, or enemies of the United States. What Jesus called the second-greatest commandment—loving our neighbors as ourselves—



Morgan, Rich's sponsored child.

turns out to be a remarkably good basis for foreign policy. A foreign policy that consistently provides for "the least of these," in the long run, makes for a better and safer world for our children as well.

I write this as I return from Zambia, where I had the opportunity to visit one of my sponsored children, Morgan Chisanga, 16, an orphan who just six years ago was without hope and on the brink of starvation. I found Morgan sitting attentively in his classroom. He thanked me for the opportunity to go to a good school. Morgan now has dreams for his future. If you are a World Vision child sponsor, you have already cast a vote for the poor.

Yes, illegal immigration, universal access to health care, and the war in Iraq are very important election issues. But before you cast your ballot this fall, find out what each of the candidates will do for the 95 percent of the world's children who live outside the United States. ■

** The U.S. foreign affairs budget for 2007 was \$32.5 billion. President Bush has significantly increased foreign aid. However, as a percentage of our GNP, the U.S. ranks 21st among the world's wealthiest nations.*



FRONT LINES

Compiled by James Addis

Tragic Tradition

Zeineba Jemal, 18, was forced to undergo female circumcision, otherwise known as female genital mutilation (FGM), shortly before her marriage at age 15. An estimated 130 million girls around the world have been subjected to this harmful cultural practice; in Ethiopia, where Zeineba lives, more than 70 percent of women have endured it. FGM can cause damage to reproductive organs, childbirth complications, and even death.

After fleeing her abusive husband, Zeineba has gone back to school. In Ethiopia and other African countries, World Vision is working to help girls avoid Zeineba's fate by educating communities on the dangers of FGM and offering alternative rites of passage. To combat early marriage—often linked to FGM—World Vision advocates for girls to stay in school. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FGM,

visit www.worldvision.org/fgm.





INDONESIA

WORLD WATCH

INDONESIA | SEAWEED SELLS » Hundreds of poor farmers in the remote islands in East Nusa Tenggara are enjoying a rapid rise in living standards following a boom in the seaweed trade. World Vision conducted intensive training in seaweed cultivation among farmers, leading to a vast improvement in the quality of the crop. Strong demand for seaweed in the food and cosmetic industry has seen prices leap by more than 50 percent.

UNITED STATES | UGANDA LOBBY DAY » About 800 advocates converged on Capitol Hill in February to press Congress to help end the war that has turned thousands of children into soldiers and sex slaves in northern Uganda. The event, co-sponsored by World Vision, sought more U.S. diplomatic support for ongoing peace talks.



GERSON MOLINA/WORLD VISION

SUSAN CUTHBERT/WORLD VISION

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



UGANDA | EBOLA BREAKS OUT » An outbreak of the lethal Ebola virus prompted World Vision to evacuate all staff from western Uganda. More than 30 people died after contracting the virus, including one World Vision volunteer. World Vision donated drugs and protective equipment to the Ministry of Health to help counter the disease.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA | LEADING LENDERS » *Forbes* named World Vision microfinance institutions in the top 50 in the world. EKI, based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was ranked 14th, while Agroinvest, operating in Montenegro and Serbia, was ranked 22nd. The institutions provide loans to poor families for agricultural development, small businesses, and improved housing.

OSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | CHILDREN BRIDGE DIVIDE » Children divided by bitter ethnic strife came together to learn peace-building skills at a summer camp held at a lodge north of Sarajevo. Child representatives came from 12 schools in the Bosniak/Croat Federation and Republika Srpska mini-states as part of a World Vision peace initiative. Organizers said that accompanying teachers from the hostile communities were skeptical at first, but children quickly made friends.

MYANMAR | SEX, DRUGS, AND AIDS » World Vision launched a new project to counter the rampant spread of AIDS in areas bordering China and Thailand. A flourishing sex and drug trade, plus the presence of millions of migrant workers, is fuelling the spread of the disease. World Vision will target high-risk groups with prevention messages and care for those infected.

UZBEKISTAN | SPECIAL-NEEDS SUPPORT » An innovative new center for children with special needs has opened in the capital, Tashkent. The Community Based Rehabilitation point, sponsored by World Vision, is unique in Uzbekistan. The center will give economic, legal, and psychological support to children and their families—helping children integrate into society and reducing their chances of ending up in orphan institutions.



JOHN KABUBU/WORLDVISION

PRAYERPOINT

Once-peaceful Kenya erupted into violent clashes following a disputed presidential election in December 2007. Hundreds of people were killed and more than 300,000 fled their homes. Pray for healing among ethnic factions and safety for vulnerable women and children. Please also ask God's protection for World Vision workers as they provide relief and comfort for displaced families. ■



SIMON RICHARD RUGENT/WORLD VISION

UGANDA

UGANDA | CHILDREN CHALLENGE CHARLES » Children presented a statement to Prince Charles shortly before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kampala, calling for a Commonwealth Children's Forum. The forum would hold governments accountable for children's welfare. The statement was derived from a memorandum signed by 180 children at a children's conference, organized by World Vision and similar organizations.

SOMALIA | WAR ON TB » World Vision has secured a grant for \$29 million from the Global Fund to fight tuberculosis. Money will be spent on expansion of the organization's 47 treatment centers, drug procurement, and staff training. Somalia has one of the highest TB burdens in the world. Currently, World Vision treats about 12,500 patients each year. ■

FIGURE IT OUT

Numbers from World Vision's 2007 Annual Review:

- World Vision:
- Helps 100 million** people
- Operates in nearly 100** countries
- Employs 31,000** staff
- Runs 1,399** development projects
- Appreciates 3.1 million** U.S. supporters

» **FOR THE FULL REVIEW,** visit www.worldvision.org/AR



Acting on Hunger

A neglected play boosts the 30 Hour Famine effort.

Budding playwrights Heidi and Kari Brizendine from Bonney Lake, Wash., spent a year working on their first script, “The Mysterious Anonymous,” but then hit a snag.



FASTFACT » Last year, 86 percent of WorldVision's total U.S. revenue was designated for programs that benefit children, families, and communities in need.

Their family loved the sisters' madcap mystery tale set in the 1940s, but they wondered when it would ever be staged. “We didn't really know,” says Heidi, 21. “A year passed, and the script sat useless in folder, without any purpose.”

That changed when their church—Bonney Lake Community Church—was pondering how to help raise money for World Vision's 30 Hour Famine. Each year, thousands of young Americans participate in the Famine and raise millions of dollars for hungry children.

The congregation considered the usual suspects—car washes and bake sales—but instinctively felt the need for something more exciting. When Heidi suggested they put on the play, there was immediate enthusiasm.

Come opening night, there wasn't an empty seat in the house. Sales of tickets, popcorn, and other treats raised more than \$1,000.

Says Heidi: “God blessed our performance that night and helped us realize we can use any talents to help those in need—even when you don't know where and when they will be used.” ■

» Do you have an innovative way to serve the poor through World Vision?
Write to the editors at wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION



As candidates hit the campaign trail for the 2008 presidential election, they will be bombarded by every special interest group. But who speaks for the poor?

World Vision urges you to consider these issues as you cast your vote. No other person has the potential to help the impoverished more than the president of the United States.

Top 5 Humanitarian Priorities for the New President

- Increase funding to fight the global AIDS pandemic
- Back initiatives to eradicate malaria
- Take a lead role in bringing peace to Northern Uganda, Sudan, the Middle East, and other conflict areas
- Increase financial and food aid for the poor
- Fulfill U.S. commitments to achieving the Millennium Development Goals ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit www.seekjustice.org, www.onevote08.org, www.globalengagement.org, and www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

why I love

BEING A CHILD SPONSOR »

I have a twin sister, my twin sister has twins of her own, and my older sister also has twins.

I got to thinking, *What happens when twins need a sponsor? Would one get sponsored and not the other?* I knew at that moment that I wanted to sponsor twins, so I called World Vision. The lady said they do get twins that need sponsoring from time to time. I asked if they would take my name and when twins came up to let me know.

Three months later, my wish came true. I received a package from World Vision, and there they were. How cute they looked and how alike. I am the proud sponsor of Hellen and Helina Owusuuah from Ghana.



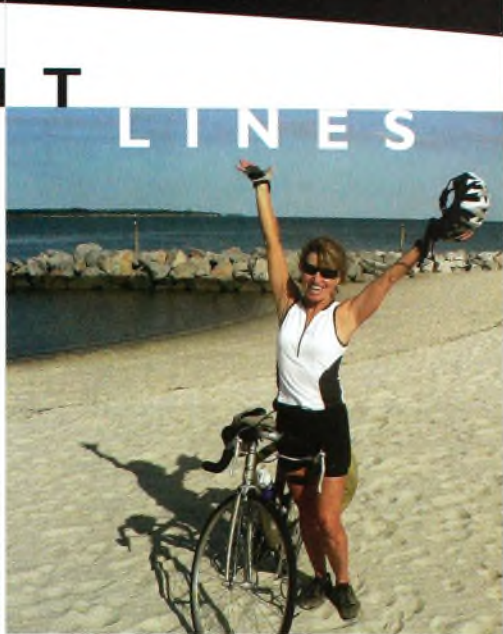
PHYLLIS AMAN
Madison Heights, Mich.

I enjoy mailing them little toys, games, dolls, and clothes. I feel I am blessed to touch their lives. I keep their pictures on my desk at work. When people ask me who they are, I say, "They are my twins."

I hope this story inspires other people to sponsor a child—maybe a child who has something in common with them. ■

» TELL US YOUR STORY

Why do you love being a child sponsor? Write the editors at wvmagazine@worldvision.org.



COURTESY SHIRLEY ADAMS

BIKING FOR WATER

Shirley Adams, 65, finds it difficult to act her age. The California woman recently completed 3,828-mile, coast-to-coast bike ride across the United States, raising \$30,000 for the West Africa Water Initiative—a World Vision-led effort to bring clean water to water-scarce communities in Ghana, Mali, and Niger. Shirley's stories from a past Africa trip inspired scores of people she met during her bike ride to pledge financial support. ■



HEIDI LENSEN/WORLD VISION

VISIT WORLD VISION

Planning to visit the Seattle area this summer? Stop in at World Vision's Federal Way headquarters to tour our interactive **Visitors Center**. See compelling displays about World Vision's history and impact in children's lives. The center is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, please call (866) 952-4453. ■



Big Man, Big Heart

Mike Weaver proves God is taking résumés.

Christian rock band Big Daddy Weave has supported World Vision for years, but when front man Mike Weaver was asked if he would encourage audiences to consider sponsoring a child, he was terrified.

Given he weighs something in excess of 300 pounds, Mike was convinced that any presentation from him on behalf of children in need would attract a chorus of smart-aleck remarks from the peanut gallery.

But as things turned out, he has not encountered a

"So many people say to me they had given up on their dream because they looked a certain way," Mike says. "Then they say, 'If God is using guys like you, man he must be taking résumés.'"

Speaking about World Vision became even easier after the band got to visit sponsored children in Ecuador. Seeing projects that give children access to clean water and improved nutrition made a lasting impression on the musicians.

Mike says the best part was the warmth he experienced from the children, many of whom walked several miles just to meet him and the band. When he gave one child in a group a high-five, they all went wild with enthusiasm.

The experience made him even more passionate about sharing what sponsorship can do. "The Lord really broke our hearts for these children," Mike says. ■

"The Lord really broke our hearts for these children" —Mike Weaver

single negative reaction. In fact, Mike says his pitches allow him an even greater connection with his audience—many of whom come in larger sizes.

change AGENT

It was a great experience for me to see the little kids' faces on their picture folders and help people to sign up and sponsor these children. I had a wonderful time."

—JOANNA OLSEN

For more on Artist Associates and other ways to change your world, visit www.worldvision.org/change.

Name: Joanna Olsen, 15.
Home: Canby, Ore.
Occupation: High school student
Program: Artist Associates

Buzz: Joanna is a big fan of pop and hip-hop music and a dedicated singer and piano player. She admits it would have been wonderful to see Casting Crowns play when they came to Portland. But she opted to remain outside the auditorium and sign up people willing to sponsor children after the band encouraged the audience to do so. Joanna says her passion to get children sponsored arose after taking a freshman history course about Africa. ■



GREG EBERKOLE/WORLD VISION

When Annet Met Sally

An Indiana student meets her sponsored child.

Anderson University student Sally Berger rates meeting her sponsored child, Annet Angelight, as one of the best days in her life.

It proved difficult for the Indiana student to travel to Annet's home community of Bundibugyo, Uganda, so World Vision arranged for them to spend a day together in Uganda's capital, Kampala.

The pair hit it off immediately. They spent time frolicking on a trampoline, going out to lunch, and sharing an ice cream together—the first time Annet had ever enjoyed such a treat.

Indeed, it was a day of many firsts for Annet, 5. She had never been to a big city

or seen houses and buildings equipped with such luxuries such as electric lights.

Like many children in AIDS-ravaged countries, Annet lives with her grandmother. Her father is dead and her mother is too sick to look after her.

Sally, 22, whose home is in Greenville, Ohio, says her greatest satisfaction as a sponsor is knowing that Annet has the opportunity to go to school. "As an education major, the fact that she is in school is just huge for me," she says.

She would encourage anybody to visit their sponsored child if they have the opportunity to do so. "Any time you can put a face to the statistics about AIDS, it totally changes the way you view it," she says.

Sally became interested in AIDS after joining Acting on AIDS—a World Vision-supported student movement that advocates on behalf of those impacted by the disease. Now, as coordinator for Acting on AIDS on Anderson's campus, she has organized students to visit HIV-positive patients in their local community. ■

» To sponsor a child affected by AIDS, see the envelope between pages 16 and 17.

WHAT CAN I DO?

////////// 5 WAYS TO SHARE CHILD SPONSORSHIP

- 1. Global Dinners** » Host a dinner party featuring a delicious meal from your sponsored child's country. www.worldvision.org/globaldinners
- 2. Sponsorship Display Program** » Place sponsorship brochures in highly visible community locations. www.worldvision.org/display
- 3. A Child is Waiting** » Present the joys of child sponsorship to your church, small group, or Sunday school class. www.worldvision.org/achildiswaiting
- 4. Child Sponsorship Parties** » Host a lively party for a great cause. www.worldvision.org/csparty
- 5. Child Ambassador** » Apply to be a sponsorship volunteer representative in your community. www.worldvision.org/childambassador ■

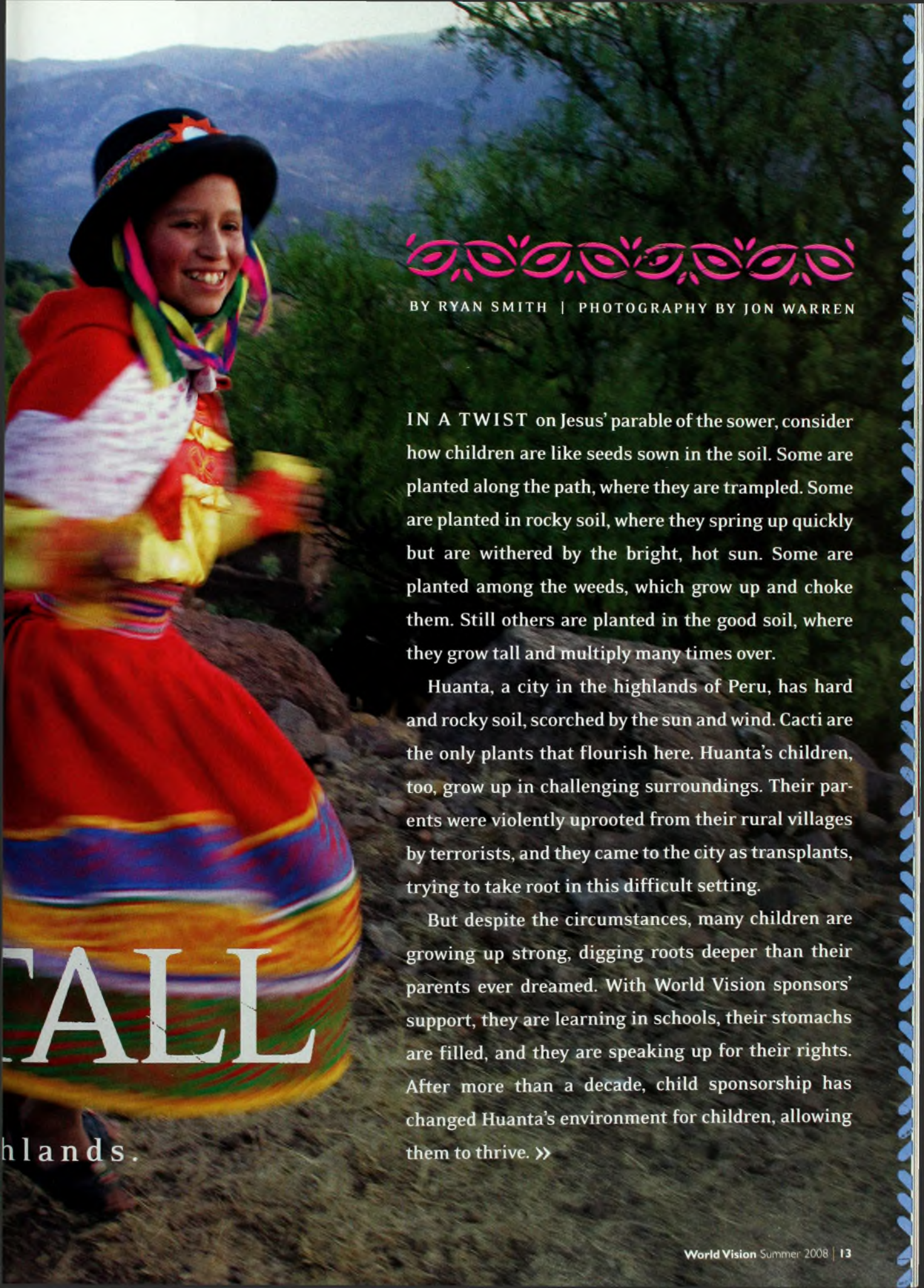
FASTFACT » Worldwide, there are 2.8 million children sponsored through World Vision.





DIGGING DEEP and GROWING

Sponsorship yields fruit for children living in Peru's ha



BY RYAN SMITH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JON WARREN

IN A TWIST on Jesus' parable of the sower, consider how children are like seeds sown in the soil. Some are planted along the path, where they are trampled. Some are planted in rocky soil, where they spring up quickly but are withered by the bright, hot sun. Some are planted among the weeds, which grow up and choke them. Still others are planted in the good soil, where they grow tall and multiply many times over.

Huanta, a city in the highlands of Peru, has hard and rocky soil, scorched by the sun and wind. Cacti are the only plants that flourish here. Huanta's children, too, grow up in challenging surroundings. Their parents were violently uprooted from their rural villages by terrorists, and they came to the city as transplants, trying to take root in this difficult setting.

But despite the circumstances, many children are growing up strong, digging roots deeper than their parents ever dreamed. With World Vision sponsors' support, they are learning in schools, their stomachs are filled, and they are speaking up for their rights. After more than a decade, child sponsorship has changed Huanta's environment for children, allowing them to thrive. >>

TALL

hlands.



ABOVE: Sponsorship helped provide clean tap water for nearly every household.
BELOW: Water is especially important in the arid deserts of the Andes Mountains.
FACING PAGE: A 65-foot-tall statue of Christ watches over Huanta.

HUANTA'S ROCKY SOIL

In the 1980s and early '90s, Ayacucho province, where Huanta is located, was the focal point for clashes between the Shining Path terrorist group and Peruvian government forces. The fighting left almost 70,000 people dead and 500,000 uprooted. The Shining Path claimed to fight for poor, rural people, but 79 percent of the victims were those they claimed to defend.

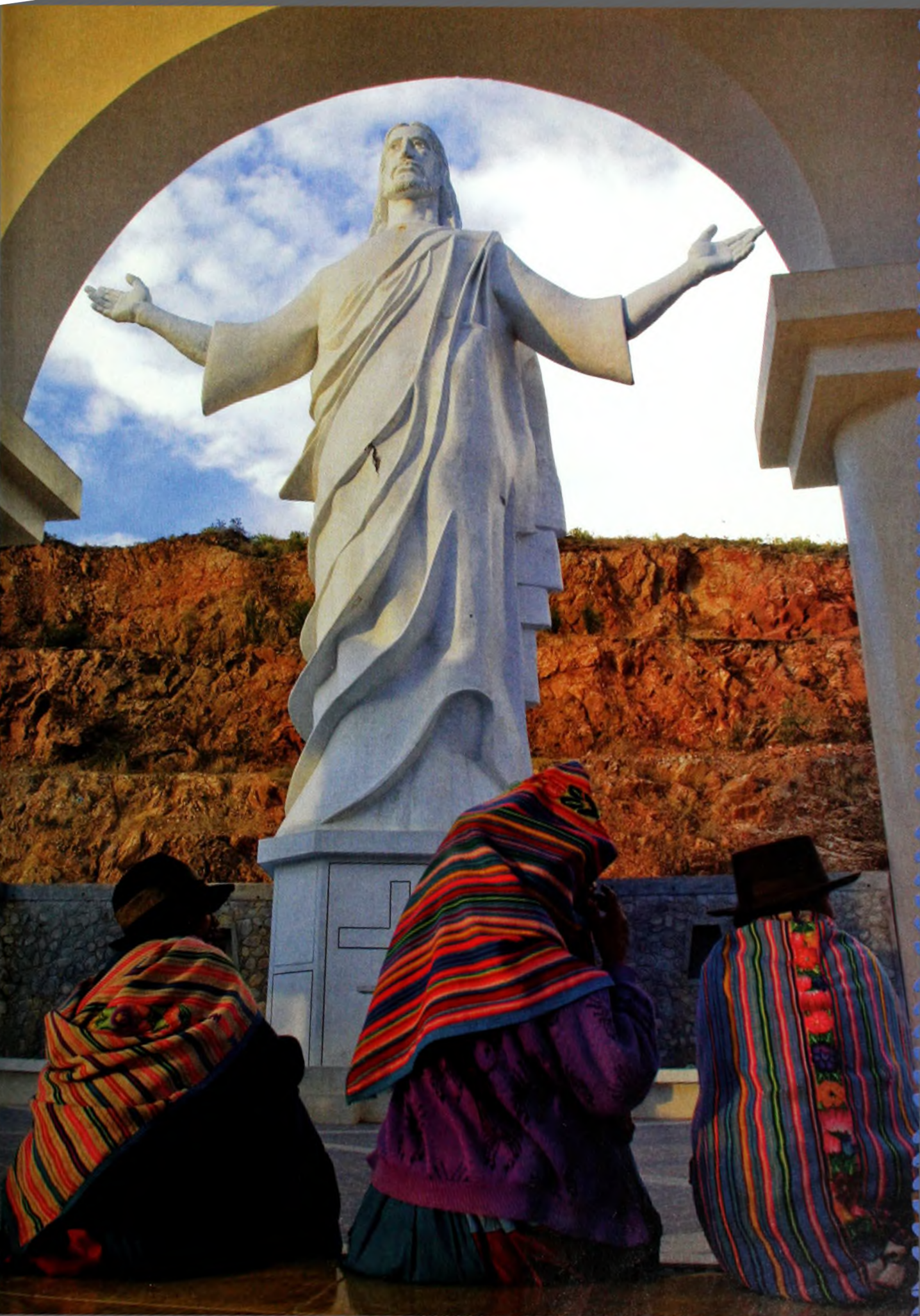
"Sometimes the terrorists would come at night. We would have to hide our children in the corn plantations," says Gladys Condor, 38. Her children, both under age 5 at the time, could not run fast enough to escape the terrorists, so their best hope was to stay hidden while the parents fled, drawing the rebels away. "I think the children knew what was happening, because they stayed very quiet," Gladys says.

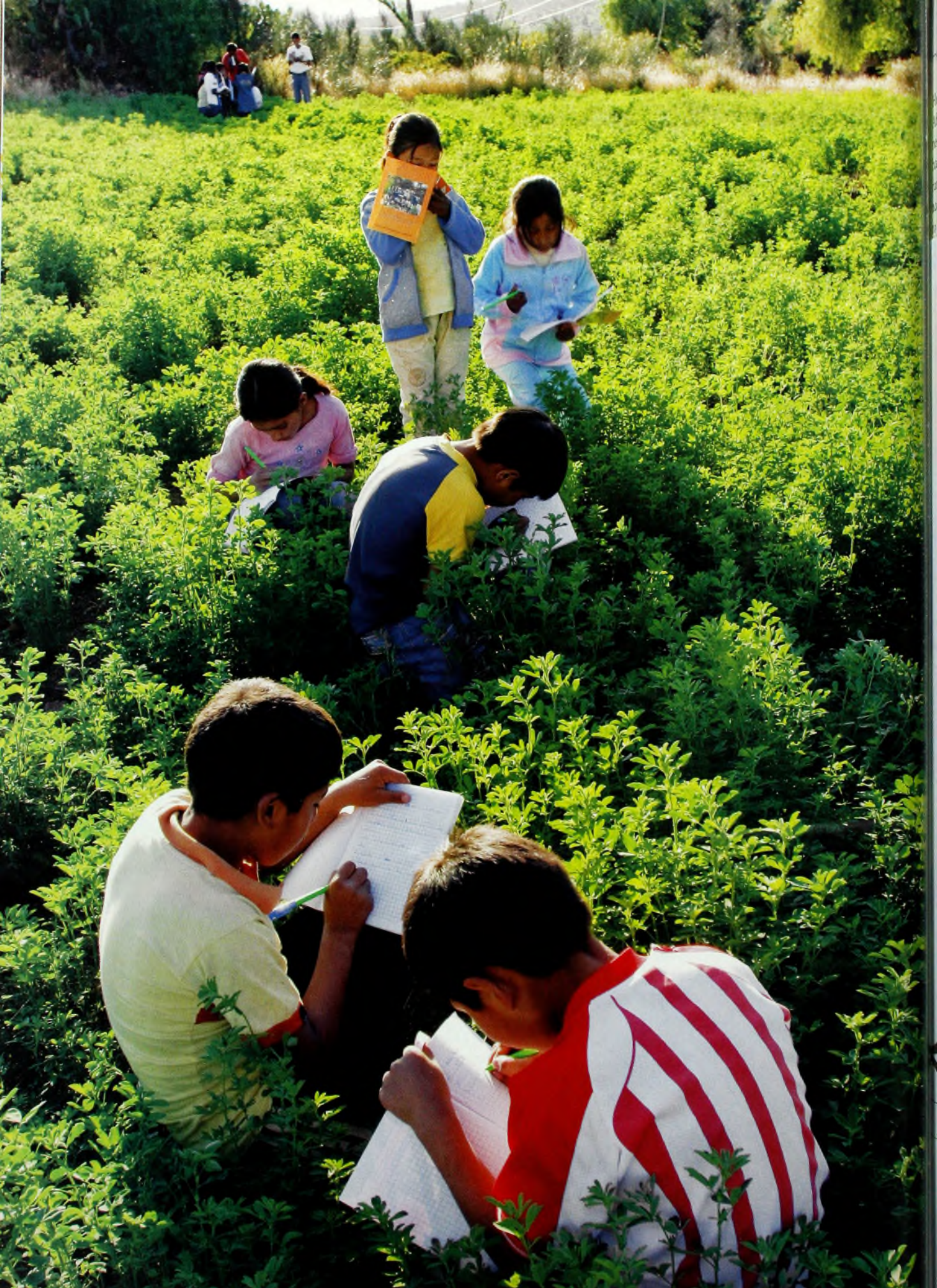
The family packed what they could carry and fled to the only place they knew was safe. But living in the city had its own difficulties. "There were no jobs here, for me or my husband," Gladys says. She and Emiliano Perez, 44, were farmers who spoke the indigenous Quechua language instead of Spanish.

Thousands of families fled to Huanta during the period of unrest. When World Vision first began working there in 1994, staff focused on providing basic necessities like food, water, and sanitation for families who settled on the edges of town. When the fighting subsided, many stayed, but they needed long-term support like safe housing and access to schools.

—continued on page 17







In 1996, World Vision began child sponsorship in Guatemala, making a commitment to help displaced families. After 12 years of support from U.S. sponsors, many basic needs have been addressed: Nearly 97 percent of families have clean water piped to their homes; malnutrition, once rampant, is now nearly nonexistent; and all children have access to primary education. Today, World Vision's focus is to develop local leaders so that, eventually, the community

development of motor skills. World Vision staff noticed that many students entering kindergarten had difficulty playing with their peers and performing basic tasks like holding a pencil, so they created the center to help young children develop.

"At the beginning, mothers thought this was a waste of time," says teacher Nancy Silvera, 25. "But when mothers learn the importance of early education, they want to bring their children here."



COURTESY SALLY BERGER

"As an education major,
the fact that she is in school
is just huge for me."

» Child sponsor Sally Berger, of Annet Angelight
(see Sally's story on page 11)

at the center is chaotic, with 22 youngsters playing in a ball pit, climbing all over a small slide, singing in every possible direction. But the chaos is what Nancy says: "Everything is for a reason."


When children play with the plastic balls, they learn. When they play on the slide, they learn about taking turns. When they sing, they exercise their creativity. When the children started, they couldn't climb up the stairs, but now they do it with ease," Nancy says. "When they are very shy, but here they start to be more active." When the children run off some energy, they gather around for more structured learning. On this day, the children are learning to color with crayons. Nancy draws a few examples as an example, then turns the toddlers loose to try themselves. At first, the children are timid, but their short marks soon turn into long, bold strokes. "It's a reward to exercise their hands, so when they go to school, they have [better] ability to write," Nancy says. "There is a big difference between the children who read and those who don't."

BRINGING FAITH

Since 2001, World Vision workers have provided a quiet refuge for families robbed of hope by the Shining Path terrorism. "World Vision staff treated us with love and care," says a woman who fled the violence. Why? "Because they know the Lord. In the past, I didn't know about the Bible."



BELOW: Elementary students examine alfalfa plants for a nutrition project. **AFTERWARD,** they return to a World Vision computer center to enter their findings. **ABOVE:** Nutrition workshops are held for young mothers like Julia Huaman Aaruj.



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continued from page 14

In 1996, World Vision began child sponsorship in Guatemala, making a commitment to help displaced families. After 12 years of support from U.S. sponsors, many basic needs have been addressed: Nearly 97 percent of families have clean water piped to their homes; malnutrition, once rampant, is now nearly nonexistent; and all children have access to primary education. Today, World Vision's focus is to develop local leaders so that, eventually, the community

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JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

REENA SAMUEL/WORLD VISION



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Through sponsorship, you can personally connect with a child living in poverty—and help change the child's entire community—by providing access to basic necessities such as education, nutritious food, clean water, and health care.

And as a HopeChild sponsor, you can provide an extra layer of support to a boy or girl living in an AIDS-devastated community through things like counseling and AIDS-prevention education based on biblical values.

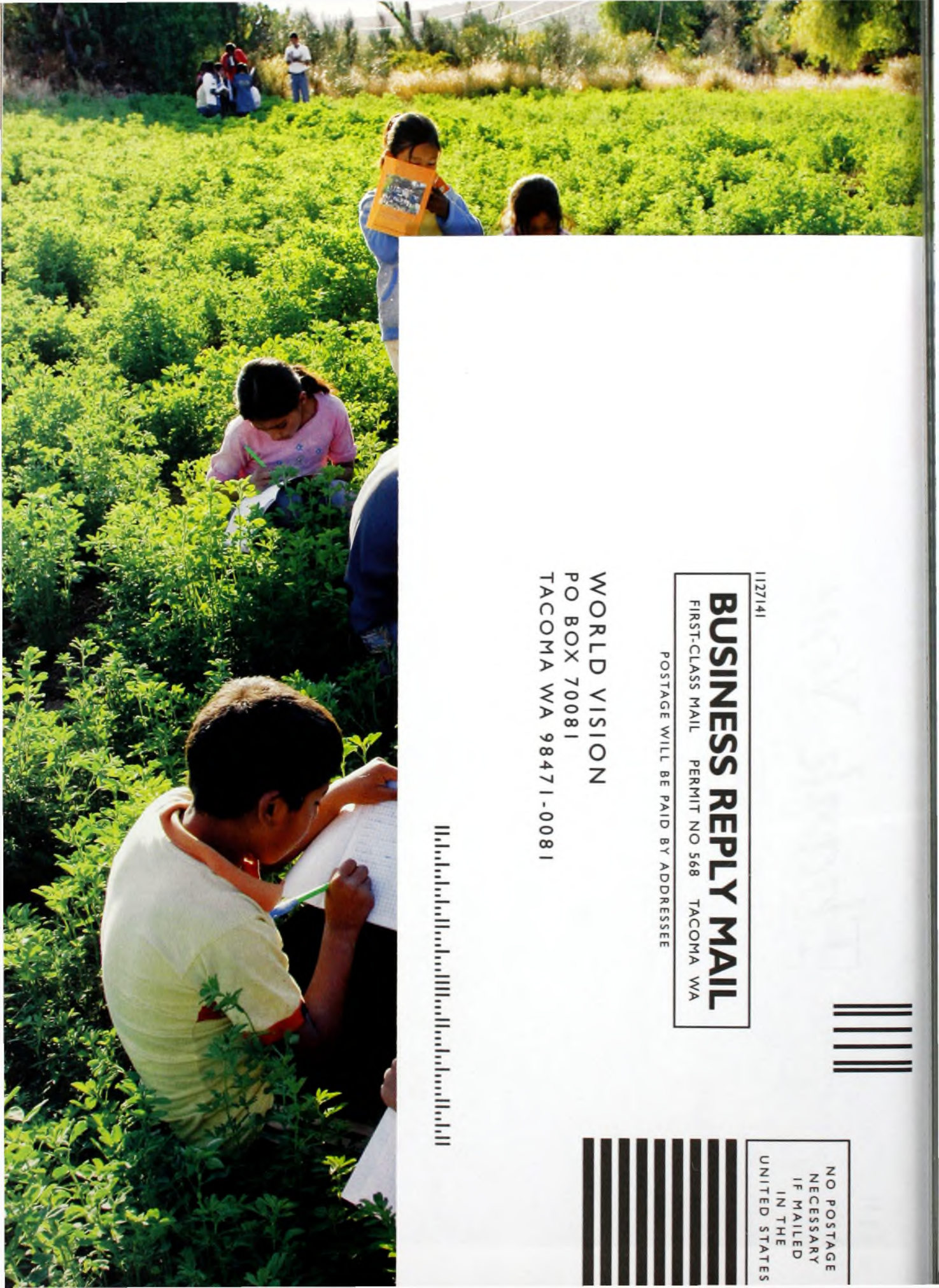
Help change a child's life!

BRINGING FAITH

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FOURISHING THE SEEDLINGS

Ask any parent of a sponsored child about his or her life, and you get a similar response: "Before, I didn't know, but now..." or "In the past, we knew nothing, but now I know..." Rosario Ramos, 38, is such a success story.

"When I had my first son, I didn't know anything about nutrition," she says. "I just made some food. I didn't think about making a balanced meal." But shortly after her five children were sponsored, she began attending World Vision nutrition workshops. "Now I know to mix foods to get a good balance," she says.

Rosario learned that proper nutrition is only part of what her children needed. "I have to feed them with love and care," she says. "Physical contact is important, because they learn about love from their parents. When they are loved, they are more self-confident and learn to share love with others.

"I also teach them to be with God," she adds. "It is important to have that guidance in life."

For eight years, Rosario has been a World Vision-trained health promoter. Now she leads the workshops she once attended, training mothers to create meals with a balance of energy (breads and grains), protection (fruits and vegetables), and protein (meat and dairy). Then she visits them at home to make sure they are following through with the lessons.

Julia Huaman Aarujó, a 17-year-old single mother, just began attending Rosario's weekly workshops, but she is quickly catching on. "I've learned about what to feed my child," she says of her 1-year-old daughter, Yaki. "Now I give my daughter cheese, milk, eggs, and fish."

Rosario congratulates these mothers in their progress, but she doesn't take all the credit. "I thank my children's sponsors in the name of Jesus," she says. "They don't know us, but they have a big heart, and they take care of us."

GROWING YOUNG MINDS

When displaced families first arrived in Huanta, their children weren't readily accepted in schools. Many parents were poorly educated themselves. World Vision, with child sponsors' support, helped pave the way for the children of the displaced to access education—starting young.

In one community, World Vision created an early development center for 3-year-olds. Traditionally, children of this age were carried around on their mothers' backs, keeping them out of harm's way but hampering social interaction and devel-

opment of motor skills. World Vision staff noticed that many students entering kindergarten had difficulty playing with their peers and performing basic tasks like holding a pencil, so they created the center to help young children develop.

"At the beginning, mothers thought this was a waste of time," says teacher Nancy Silvera, 25. "But when mothers learn the importance of early education, they want to bring their children here."

The scene at the center is chaotic, with 22 youngsters playing in a plastic ball pit, climbing all over a small slide, singing, and running in every possible direction. But the chaos is purposeful, Nancy says: "Everything is for a reason."

When the children play with the plastic balls, they learn to share; when they play on the slide, they learn about taking turns; and when they sing, they exercise their creativity. "When the children started, they couldn't climb up the stairs on the slide, but now they do it with ease," Nancy says. "They came very shy, but here they start to be more active."

After the children run off some energy, they gather around the teacher for more structured learning. On this day, the children are learning to color with crayons. Nancy draws a few lines and dots as an example, then turns the toddlers loose to try it out for themselves. At first, the children are timid, but the short, light marks soon turn into long, bold strokes.

"They draw to exercise their hands, so when they go to kindergarten, they have [better] ability to write," Nancy explains. "There is a big difference between the children who come here and those who don't."

FOSTERING FAITH

As Christians, World Vision workers have provided a quiet witness to families robbed of hope by the Shining Path terrorists. "World Vision staff treated us with love and care," says Gladys, who fled the violence. Why? "Because they know the word of the Lord. In the past, I didn't know about the Bible.



FACING PAGE: Elementary students examine alfalfa plants for a school project. Afterward, they return to a World Vision computer lab to document their findings. **ABOVE:** Nutrition workshops provide support for young mothers like Julia Huaman Aarujó.



With all the things I know now, I have changed.”

On a community level, churches are critical to fostering faith. World Vision partners with seven churches in Huanta, helping them serve their congregations.

Alberto Huamani, pastor of Cathedral of the Faith, says that World Vision has helped him reach people of all ages. “Before World Vision was involved, we only had services for adults,” he says, “But now we have Bible classes for the children, and the children encourage their parents to come.”

World Vision trains Sunday school teachers and provides Bibles and supplies. The teachers gather on Saturdays to practice their lessons, often using puppets and songs to help the children stay interested.

Luana Ramos, 6, Rosario’s daughter, looks forward to Sunday school at the Evangelical Presbyterian and Reformed Church. “We play and sing,” she says. “I learn to pray and read the Bible.”

Each Sunday, the children memorize a simplified version of a Bible verse. Luana’s class learns Galatians 6:2, “Help each other when you are in trouble.” As they repeat the verse, the children gain confidence until their shouts drown out the teacher’s prompting.

A BETTER WORLD FOR CHILDREN

Over the years, sponsorship has placed children at the center of the community’s concern. This is transforming the way parents view their children. During the terrorist violence, many parents hoped that their children would simply survive; now they can hope for so much more.

“At first, I didn’t understand sponsorship. I was so proud



ABOVE LEFT: Toddlers are encouraged to be rambunctious at the early development center. **ABOVE:** Kindergarteners at Madre Teresa Calcutta school march to wash their hands before lunch.

of my family, and I did not want any help,” says Mauro Ramos, Rosario’s husband. “But now I have changed my mind. I realized that my family could be better.”

The Ramos’ oldest son, Joey, 13, has been sponsored for as long as he can remember. Today, the teen is part of the Children’s Parliament, a group of sponsored children working for change in their community. “I talk to other children about their rights and make sure that others respect them,” he says.

Joey’s group addressed the mayor of Huanta on behalf of local child laborers. “We asked the mayor to provide more support for them,” he says. Last summer, Joey traveled to Lima, Peru’s capital, for a gathering of young leaders.

Seeing Joey’s heart for others grow and his influence multiply, Mauro can’t help but smile. “I’m proud of my son. I never dreamed he could be in this position,” he says.

“Our children don’t have to be like us. Thanks to World Vision, they can be *better* than us.” ■

Yadira Pacheco, World Vision’s communications manager in Peru, contributed to this story.



WHERE U.S. SPONSORS' CHILDREN LIVE

- 4% Middle East/Eastern Europe
- 21% Asia
- 30% Latin America
- 45% Africa

SPONSORS NEEDED

Top four countries for children needing sponsors:

1. Ethiopia
2. Mozambique
3. Zambia
4. India

To sponsor a child, see the envelope between pages 16 and 17.

www.worldvision.org/magazine

SEE THIS STORY ONLINE

THE END IN SIGHT

WORLD VISION'S HUANTA personnel are trying to work themselves out of their jobs—by 2015.

Closing a sponsorship project, however, is far from abandoning the community. When the first children were sponsored in 1996, World Vision helped local leaders form the Association of Displaced Families in the Province of Huanta (AFADIPH) to encourage community members to come together, discuss problems, and propose their own solutions.

"In the past, we were quiet, because we didn't know how to be leaders," says Aurelio Pineda, president of AFADIPH. Now we know our rights. We can speak openly about everything we think, not

only to World Vision, but also to the local authorities."

As the association grew and the leaders became more confident, they began to take over some of the work started by World Vision, such as nutrition workshops for mothers, after-school tutoring for students, and government lobbying efforts on behalf of displaced people. "We were shy, but we are leaving that behind," says vice president Emiliano Perez. "We are starting to be new people."

In Huanta—and every sponsorship project across globe—World Vision sponsors provide a boost to families, helping them create a healthy way of life that they can ultimately sustain themselves.



PRAYER POINT

Maritza Flores, coordinator of the sponsorship project in Huanta, suffered a broken spine in a vehicle accident in December 2007. Please pray for Maritza and her family throughout her treatment and rehabilitation. Also, pray for the safety and health of all World Vision staff worldwide.



[SIERRA LEONE]

BEYOND BLOOD DIAMOND

HOW CHILD SPONSORS ARE HELPING
REBUILD A SOCIETY IN SIERRA LEONE.

IN THE OPENING SCENES of the film “Blood Diamond,” Solomon Vandy, brilliantly played by Djimon Hounsou, is in total panic as he attempts to gather his wife and children and flee his village. He is running from the Revolutionary United Front—one of the ugliest rebel armies in all of Africa. Solomon knows that capture by the RUF means having a hand hacked off by a machete, enslavement, or execution. »



FACING PAGE: **Walking to school—a new experience for Bagbo's children. ABOVE: Manawa Rogers loves her rebuilt classroom.**

[BY JAMES ADDIS | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN BIRCH]

The people of Bagbo chiefdom in southern Sierra Leone don't need to see a film to understand all this. Through most of the 1990s they personally witnessed the looting and burning of their villages and the killing and maiming of their friends by RUF thugs.

Those who escaped fled to towns such as Bo, ending up in crowded displaced people's camps dependent on aid organizations like World Vision. Others lived as nomads in the bush, surviving by eating wild fruits and roots.

As the war waned, people drifted back to Bagbo. Chief Kennie Gabei surveyed the remains of his village—ruined dwellings overgrown by bush. Headmaster Joe King stared at the bullet holes through the roof of American Calvary Baptist School, a former mission school now run by the government. Blackboards and desks had been smashed up and used as firewood. In the main town of Jimi, the Rev. Jeremy Saffa discovered the burned-out shell of the Methodist church. Health clinics had been similarly wrecked and raided for drugs. Those who came home faced the daunting prospect of rebuilding their entire world.

“People came in the thousands. They were so happy to have the support.”

JOE KING | HEADMASTER

In the face of such crippling obstacles, people carried on. Joe reopened the school even though he had zero teaching resources and rain poured through the roof. Jeremy suspended plastic sheeting across the remaining walls of the church and resumed Sunday services.

Any help was welcome. World Vision, which had undertaken relief work in Sierra Leone since 1996, assisted farmers by distributing seeds and tools to restart agricultural production. But if



At Kids Club, children enthusiastically say their prayers.

Bagbo were to thrive, there would need to be more fundamental changes. Conditions for children would need to radically improve.

So over months of talks with community leaders and villagers, World Vision put a proposal to the people of Bagbo, based on a strategy that has worked in hundreds of poor communities around the world. World Vision promised to find sponsors for about 2,500 of Bagbo's children. The funding would help children secure an education, plus fund water wells, new health clinics, and new business ventures that would benefit all local children and revitalize the community as a whole.

The aid would not be a one-way street. Community representatives would form a committee to set priorities and direct the programs. Community members would supply the necessary labor to build or reconstruct schools, wells, and clinics. In addition, sponsored children would be required to attend school—a big deal for families who had come to count on them working in the fields.

It wasn't always an easy sell. Mamie Gbehen was initially suspicious. She had spent the war years hiding in the bush, and three of her children had died of hunger. In her experience, outsiders—like the RUF fighters who destroyed her village—simply caused pain. But others were more open. Farmer Mohamed Boima had no hesitation in seeing his son, Aruna, sponsored. He had come to know World Vision well in the displaced camps and during his return to Bagbo. “World Vision helped us greatly to start again,” he says.

Influential figures were also supportive. Bagbo's paramount chief allowed World Vision to set up an office rent-free in one of the few houses in Jimi that survived the war intact.

The program officially began in May 2004 with a projected timeframe of 15 years. As the benefits have begun to emerge, remaining suspicions have dissolved. Much to Joe King's delight, one of the first projects was the rehabilitation of his school. World Vision supplied the funding and materials, while parents turned up in droves to do the physical reconstruction. “People came in the

thousands. They were so happy to have the support,” King says with a smile.

The school still looks primitive, but for the children who study there—both sponsored and non-sponsored—it’s a new world. Sponsored child Samuka Kanneh, 11, says the refurbished building helped him prepare for his junior high school exams. “Before, the building was dangerous. It could have collapsed at any time,” he says.

Ask any child in Bagbo about why it’s good to be sponsored, and they will usually begin with their education. In addition to better school facilities, they will talk about the notebooks, pens, pencils, and school uniforms they’ve received. Their enthusiasm seems extraordinary until one remembers that the children all recall a time when these things were nonexistent.

Children who have received letters, cards, or small gifts from their sponsors have something else to sing about. Most, like Kadiatu Nguguyeh, 10, have never received a letter in their lives. “My sponsor wrote and said he would love to meet me one day,” she says.

The letter whetted Kadiatu’s appetite to know more. “I would like to know where he lives in America and all about his family.”

Meanwhile, Hawa Swarray, 9, is speechless when she receives a package from her sponsor containing stickers, toothpaste, colored pencils, and a fairy doll. For a moment she struggles to take it all in, then suddenly she reaches for the doll and clutches it to her chest, not quite believing that

—continued on page 25



LEFT: Bagbo’s roads pose a challenge. **ABOVE:** Sponsorship volunteer Mary Kebbie (right) with Hawa Swarray. Mary came to trust World Vision through relief efforts after the war. She helped persuade war-weary parents that sponsorship was a good thing.



BAGBO'S BEST

Bagbo has a population of 25,000 spread over more than 70 villages, but World Vision employs only three full-time staff in the chiefdom. Volunteers perform much of the work. Here are some of them.



MASSA LAMIN | PUMP ATTENDANT » Every village well requires someone to monitor its proper use, report breakdowns, and keep the surrounding area clean. The people of Levuma village had no hesitation in picking Massa for the role. Four of her children died due to diarrhea. Nobody knows the value of clean water better than her.

“God has now blessed us with clean water in our village, so I felt responsible for taking care of it.”



PATRICK ROGERS | MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEER » After the war, Patrick returned home to restore his 25-acre palm oil plantation. But the successful businessman wanted yet another challenge. He decided to pass on his skills to women in World Vision's microenterprise program. Patrick, 51, bicycles up to 28 miles a day on dirt roads to reach villages.

“By the grace of God, we will turn Bagbo into a major industrial center.”



SYLVESTER KALILU | SPONSORSHIP VOLUNTEER » Shocked by the level of domestic violence against children in Bagbo, Sylvester joined World Vision's child welfare committee. Later he became a sponsorship volunteer, delivering and translating mail from sponsors to children.

“I'm the one who brings all the letters to the children. It's made me the most popular man in the community.”



JULIUS LAHAI | CHILD REPRESENTATIVE, PROJECT COMMITTEE » Every two months, Julius, 11, joins other community leaders to make decisions affecting the whole chiefdom. He ensures that respect for children remains a top priority.

“It's a difficult job to do, because I am the smallest person at the table. But they do allow me to talk.”

—continued from page 23

all this bounty could be for her. (Meet Hawa's sponsor and other U.S. sponsors on page 27.)

Another sponsored child, Sombo Fabbah, 11, explains that before sponsorship, toys were unknown. They did play ball games, but children would make the ball themselves by collecting scraps of rubbish and squeezing them tightly into a discarded plastic bag.

Gifts and letters bring a much-needed splash of color into children's lives and are important reminders of the key role sponsors are playing. And there are other contributors to children's welfare. The program has been helped by World Vision Gift Catalog money that bolsters funding from child sponsors. The catalog enables donors to give money in lump sums for big-ticket items such as water wells and health clinics.

Chief Kennie Gabei says the people danced for two days when World Vision helped install a well at his village of Mandehun, ending their reliance on water drawn from a muddy swamp. "Before, about four children died from diarrhea each year, and there's no doubt it was the fault of dirty water," he says.

Among those celebrating was sponsored child Fatmata Bao, 10, who no longer has to make several trips to the swamp after completing her 3-mile walk home from school. "I used to get so tired," she says.

So far, World Vision has initiated construction of 22 wells. But there are 25,000 people in Bagbo, and World Vision program manager Edward Fewry estimates that providing clean water for all would require constructing another 50 to 60 wells, something he hopes will be achieved in coming years.

On the health front, things are surging ahead. Gift Catalog donations have funded the construction of three clinics, and a fourth is nearing completion. Once it's finished, the goal of having a clinic in each of the chiefdom's subdivisions will have been achieved.

Government nurse Sando Fisher revels in the fact that she now works in a facility at Bum Kaku that is replete with a drug store, observation room, deliv-

ery room, and a freezer for vaccines. Sando laughs uproariously when she describes where she used to work—a dilapidated thatched hut with a dirt floor, devoid of equipment. On one occasion she had to beat back a poisonous snake emerging through the roof, threatening to drop on the distended tummy of a woman giving birth.

For Adama Jongo, the best thing about the new clinics is that pregnant women with complications no longer have to be carried by stretcher to the main health post at Jimi, up to 12 miles away. Adama, a traditional birth attendant, was among 50 midwives who attended a two-week training

“Parents have renewed hope and confidence because they are seeing their children develop.”

MOMOH LAHAI | PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBER

course run by World Vision. It's early days, but Adama thinks such training has already reduced fatalities in childbirth.

Statistics are more certain when it comes to malaria. World Vision ensures that each sponsored child has access to a mosquito net, complementing similar efforts by other humanitarian organizations in Bagbo. Isaac Tucker, head nurse at the Niagorehun health post, says the initiatives have slashed malaria cases by 45 percent. Malaria is the biggest killer of young children in Africa, and sponsored children like Kadiatu Nguguyeh have experienced the symptoms and know the threat. "Now my net will prevent mosquitoes from eating me," she says.

Still, one of the best indicators that poverty really is on the back burner is when people have cash in their pockets. One who has this confidence is Gbessay



Loan recipient and budding entrepreneur Gbessay Bao and her children.

Bao. World Vision gave women in her village three sheep to start a livestock-rearing venture. They bred them, sold some, and put proceeds into other money-making activities, such as groundnut production. World Vision also put Gbessay through a book-keeping course—something of a challenge for a woman who never went to school. But she persevered and succeeded. Now she has about 200,000 Leones (\$70) in savings—a tidy sum in a country with a per capita annual income of \$220.

Gbessay says the best thing about having reserves is the ability to cope with sudden emergencies. “If one of my children gets sick, I have money to pay for medicines. Before, I had to rely on gathering herbs.”

In late 2006, World Vision began offering more sophisticated income generation initiatives, which allow village women’s groups to borrow money for more ambitious ventures. The most impressive is in the village of Manoyogbor, where women invested a 2,704,000 Leone (\$920) loan in a factory to produce *garri*—a food product made from cassava.

Anybody familiar with the humble villages of Bagbo would be taken aback on seeing the factory in full swing. Fresh loads of cassava are ferried in from the fields on carts. It’s then grated, pressed, fermented, sieved, and baked. About a dozen villagers are engaged in production—working into the night when demand is high. Trucks cart the finished product to wholesalers in Bo.

Supervisor Josephine Nabibe says the factory has been a huge morale booster, especially for parents who are now able to send their children to secondary school. “That is why we are working so hard, so that our children will not be cast aside,” she says.

According to Jimi’s mayor and project committee member Momoh Lahai, the comment typifies a big change of outlook in villages. A favorite saying in Bagbo used to be, “My child is my walking stick.” In other words, children were expected to support their parents—not the other way around. Children would work long hours in the fields and carry heavy loads. School was considered not



Babies are weighed at this health clinic, funded by the Gift Catalog.

important, and thrashings were common. Now, Momoh says, those attitudes are declining, and chiefs are even fining parents whose children are not in school.

But it’s not just the children who benefit. “Parents have renewed hope and confidence because they are seeing their children develop,” says Momoh.

One way this transformation has come about is through Kids Clubs that World Vision has established at each of Bagbo’s 30 primary schools. Schoolteachers volunteer their time to run the clubs, while World Vision supplies training and resources.

The club at Mattru village is a boisterous affair, involving most of the village. Adults stand at the back and about 100 children sit packed onto benches while club secretary 12-year-old Samu Lahai acts as master of ceremonies. Much of the meeting feels like a traditional Sunday school. Children repeat the Lord’s Prayer, sing, and perform sketches on Christian themes. But there’s also an emphasis on the importance of showing respect to children. One sketch features dictatorial parents treating their children like slaves. One child ends up getting a thrashing. Everybody roars with laughter as the actors ham up the beating scene. But there is a thoughtful quiet afterward when Samu points out how wrong such behavior is.

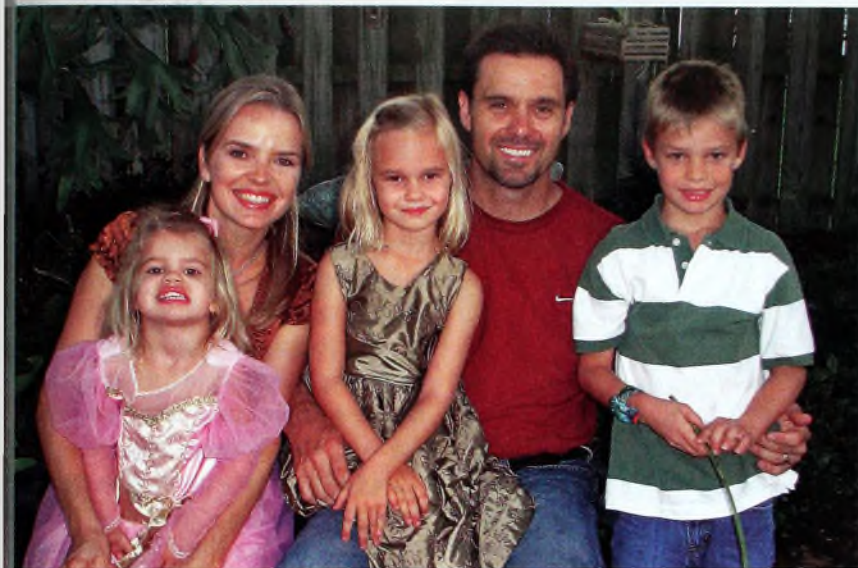
Though the message can be serious, the overall tone of the meeting is joyful. Children don’t just say the prayers, they almost shout them; they don’t just get up to perform—they leap to their feet. They sing with a passion that is exhilarating.

Afterward, Edward Fewry reflects on why he loves his job so much. “It’s true parents have been damaged by the war,” he says. “But you see the children—fresh, innocent, and alive. There is hope for the children.” ■

Ann Birch is World Vision’s West Africa regional communications manager, based in Dakar, Senegal.

MEET THE SPONSORS

What motivates people in the United States to sponsor 2,500 children in Bagbo? Here, a few of these dedicated sponsors explain.



LAURA LEE OLNEY, HUSBAND CHRIS, AND CHILDREN (OLIVIA, 2, ELYSE, 5, IAN, 7) | BONITA SPRINGS, FLA. | SPONSORS OF HAWA SWARRAY » Laura always had a heart for Africa and was eager that her own children learn to reach out to those in need. The family loves shopping in dollar stores and picking out items they think Hawa will love.

“We pray for Hawa in the evenings and talk about the letters we get back from her. My children feel they have a little bit of a foothold in another part of the world.”

COURTESY OF DIANE LEE



DIANE LEE | ORLANDO, FLA. | SPONSOR OF FATMATA BAO » Diane has sponsored children for more than 15 years and says it's a real joy to see children progress from toddlers to adults. She hopes to go to Sierra Leone soon and meet Fatmata in person.

“I've seen how sponsorship has helped not only the child but also their families and communities.”

COURTESY OF JONATHAN SLATTERY



JONATHAN SLATTERY, 10 | WAKE FOREST, N.C. | SPONSOR OF SAMUNKA KANNEH » Jonathan is delighted to share a love of soccer with Samunka and was thrilled to be able to send him a soccer ball and a pump to inflate it. Jonathan does extra household chores to help pay sponsorship pledges.

“I write about every two months and tell Samunka I'm thinking of him and praying for him.”

COURTESY OF SOON OH



SOON OH | HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF. | SPONSOR OF ARUNA BOIMA » Soon's father died during the Korean War. Her mother brought her up during the difficult times following the conflict.

“When I grew up I was poor, so I understand what it is like for kids in poverty.”

www.worldvision.org/magazine



SEE THIS STORY ONLINE

WHERE ARE THEY

NOW?



Sheuli's sponsor helped her fulfill two dreams: to learn and to teach.

Sheuli Som, 28, still remembers the terrifying day in 1988 that a flash flood hit her hometown of Durgapur, Bangladesh. While her parents sent Sheuli and her two older siblings away to safety, they stayed to watch over the house. "The boat left us on a highway," Sheuli says. "We three brothers and sisters were crying and screaming, sitting on the road."

Later that night, relatives found the frightened children and helped them reunite with their parents the following day. All of the family was safe, but the flood had destroyed their home, forcing them to relocate.

After the move, Sheuli's father could not continue his job as an agricultural laborer. He was able to find some work as a tutor, but it did not pay much—especially to keep three children in school.

Two years after the flood, visitors came to Sheuli's school, wrote down the children's names, and took their photos. Sheuli's teacher said that the visitors were from World Vision, and they were there to sign up all the children for sponsorship.

"During that time, I did not know much about World Vision," Sheuli says. "First, I thought [it] might be a kind of an educational institute. Later I realized that my teacher did a very good job for us by enrolling us with World Vision. I have come to know that World Vision is an organization that works for development of children and community."

Shortly after being sponsored, Sheuli received a photo of her sponsor with her daughter. "She wrote me that I am like her daughter," Sheuli says. "It touched me most—a woman who never saw me but treated me as her own daughter and supports me. I became so emotional reading her message."

AMIO ASCENSION/WORLD VISION (2)

Back to School »

Sponsorship helped a girl overcome the odds to be educated. Now she is helping others do the same.

By Ryan Smith

"After [seeing] the photo and having continuous support, I have realized that she is a woman of great heart," Sheuli says. "If she is not a human being of great heart, how could she support a child from another country whom she did not meet?"

As a sponsored child, Sheuli received regular medical checkups, medicine, clothing, and school supplies throughout her 16 years of support. But it was the payment of school fees that was most important for Sheuli. In Bangladesh, only 48 percent of adults are literate, according to UNICEF.

"If I had not been sponsored, it might have happened that I would [have] gotten married in young age—that tradition happens in village life," she explains. "My father needed to struggle very hard to keep [me] continuing my studies. There was a 50-50 possibility of becoming educated without World Vision's support."

Sheuli was an excellent student, always among the top 10 in her class. "World Vision staff helped me to do well, because they were always encouraging me to continue my studies, trying to do better," she says. Throughout her education, English was her favorite subject.

Now she has found a way to put her passions into practice as an assistant teacher at Rambari Government Primary School. Sheuli teaches the English alphabet as well as the Bangla alphabet and arithmetic. She also leads physical exercise.

Meanwhile, she is pursuing a master's degree in philosophy. After completing her degree in late 2008, she hopes to become a high school teacher.

"I love to teach children," Sheuli says. "I think it is an opportunity for me to give back to my community, because I am contributing toward building a literate generation and nation."

As a teacher, Sheuli witnesses the impact of sponsorship throughout the community. "I see that many poor children have gotten the chance of being educated," she says, reflecting on how things have changed since she was young. "Poor families hardly could feed their children, and they would never think for educating their children, but through sponsorship, World Vision made it possible for poor children to go to school."

Despite this improvement, Sheuli says that Bangladeshi children—especially girls—still needs sponsors. "I hope and believe that new people would come forward to support poor little children of my country, so that they could be educated like me." ■

» **With reporting by Amio Ascension, a communicator for World Vision in Bangladesh.**

» **To sponsor a child in Bangladesh or elsewhere, see the envelope between pages 16 and 17.**



About World Vision

WHO WE ARE | World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to helping children, families, and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

WHOM WE SERVE | Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed—regardless of a person's religion, race, ethnicity, or gender—as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people.

WHY WE SERVE | Our passion is for the world's poorest children whose suffering breaks the heart of God. To help secure a better future for each child, we focus on lasting, community-based transformation. We partner with individuals and communities, empowering them to develop sustainable access to clean water, food supplies, health care, education, and economic opportunities.

HOW WE SERVE | Since 1950, World Vision has helped millions of children and families by providing emergency assistance to those affected by natural disasters and civil conflict, developing long-term solutions within communities to alleviate poverty and advocating for justice on behalf of the poor.

YOU CAN HELP | Partnering with World Vision provides tangible ways to honor God and put faith into action. By working together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families who are struggling to overcome poverty. To find out how you can help, visit www.worldvision.org.



Life After Death »

As an eighth-grade science teacher, I used to introduce my students to my Tanzanian sponsored child, Imani, as part of a unit focusing on the AIDS pandemic in Africa. But what my students did not know is why I chose to sponsor Imani in the first place.

In 2002, I lost my beautiful, blonde, blue-eyed, nearly 3-year-old son, Aaron, when he drowned in a neighbor's pond. After hours of intense struggle in the emergency room to save him, I whispered into his ear that he could go. I knew he was already in glory.

Shortly after Aaron's death, a group of grieving Christian moms found each other on the Internet and began to correspond. I remember asking them, "What do I do with the love that I no longer get to share with Aaron?" One mom suggested that I sponsor a child, as she had. She said it would be therapeutic. I heeded her advice and chose a child from the World Vision Web site who was born the same year as Aaron. Imani's beautiful face popped up on my screen.

Knowing that I am helping Imani helps me in the process of grieving. Aaron doesn't need my nurturing anymore, but Imani does. In retrospect, I can see that my friend's advice was far wiser than I could have imagined. Healing came to me when I forgot my own problems long enough to focus on someone else. There's a

"Put yourself aside, and help others. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage." —Philippians 2:4 (The Message)

verse in Philippians that says, "Put yourself aside, and help others. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage" (Philippians 2:4, The Message).

My proudest moment as a teacher came when I was somehow able to communicate this idea to my students. One year they were so inspired by Imani's story that they wanted to raise funds for children orphaned by AIDS. I suggested that they raise money to send some of them to school. My students agreed, and we set a goal to help send four Tanzanian orphans to school for a year.

I had around 140 students, of which 80 percent live at or below the poverty line and are eligible for free or subsidized lunches. Nevertheless, I asked them to bring their own money, not their parents' money. I wanted this project to belong to them and for them to make the sacrifices. I asked them to give up a soda or



Beth Richert inspires her students.

candy bar, contribute part of their allowance, or do extra chores. In three weeks my students brought in \$733.34—several times more than their original goal and completely from their own pockets.

What thrilled me was this: I did not promise these students pizza or that I would kiss a pig if they met their goal. They did this because they felt passionate about helping. It's not always easy to teach children to value an intrinsic reward instead of always expecting a payoff for good action.

One of my students said, "I felt passionate about helping with this project, because when I was little, I remember that meal after meal I ate bread, beans, and eggs because bread, beans, and eggs were the only things my family could afford. These children have even less." I have had several memorable moments in my career but this is my best one by far.

There is a blessing in giving that we don't understand until that gift returns to us in ways we never expected. That's what I've learned through giving—and what my students have learned, too. ■

» **Beth Richert** formerly taught science at Clinton Middle School, Clinton, Okla. She is now principal of Washington Elementary School in Clinton, Okla.

RETROSPECT



SOPHEAK KONG/WORLD VISION

C A M B O D I A

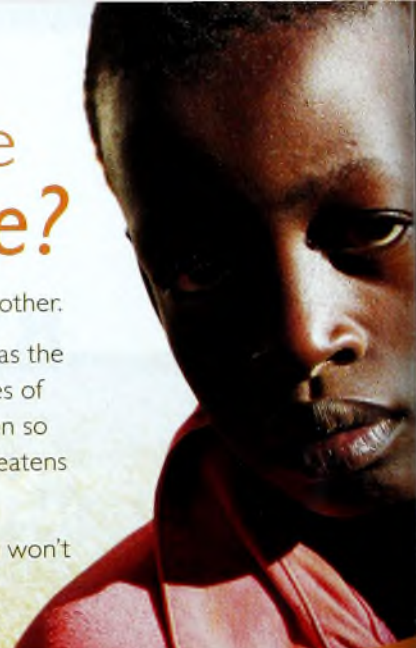
It's all smiles for 130 children at the end of World Vision's Children's Leadership Workshop in Kompong Som, Cambodia. These youth participate in children's clubs around the country, and they gathered to share their experiences and discuss their communities' challenges. The workshop's focus: proper nutrition. Malnutrition affects many Cambodian children; 37 percent of boys and girls under age 5 are stunted. But with the information and inspiration these young leaders now have, they can go home and spread knowledge—and smiles—in their communities. ■

Can he escape the *big disease?*

First it took his father. Then his mother.

What 12-year-old Kombo knows as the "big disease" has stalked the villages of Kenya for years. Now, having taken so much from him already, AIDS threatens to steal Kombo's life.

But thanks to his sponsor, Kombo won't have to face the future alone . . .



To
sponsor a
child like Kombo,
please call
1.866.952.4453

Find out how Kombo is surviving with the help of a child sponsor. Visit www.worldvisionexperience.org to see if our interactive exhibit featuring Kombo's story is coming to your area.

The difference a sponsor makes:

More than 1 million children in Kenya—including Kombo—have lost one or both parents to AIDS. But thanks to his sponsor, Kombo's life is changing for the better. Like every child in World Vision's HopeChild sponsorship program, Kombo benefits from access to resources like

- Clean water, nutritious food, health care, and education
- Age-appropriate HIV-prevention training based on biblical values
- Trained volunteers who care for the emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of children affected by AIDS

NEW
sponsorship
welcome kit w/
FREE DVD!

Yes, I want to sponsor a HopeChild today!

Please send me information and the photo of a child affected by the AIDS crisis.

I want to sponsor a boy girl either

In: Africa Caribbean

I've enclosed a check or money order for my first \$35 gift (payable to World Vision)

I authorize World Vision to charge my \$35 monthly sponsorship gift to my credit/debit card each month*: VISA MasterCard American Express Discover

Card number

Expiration date

Signature (required)

World Vision account number

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other

First name

Last name

Address

City

State

ZIP

Phone

E-mail

World Vision will not rent, sell, or share your personal information with third parties.

*Our promise to you: World Vision reviews the monthly sponsorship commitment on an ongoing basis to maintain the quality of its programs and respect the needs of the families and communities it serves. As a participant in World Vision's Automatic Gift Plan, you will receive 30 days' advance written notice of any rate changes and will have the option to opt out.

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