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World Vision Today

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Richard Stearns

President

Aid Tandon

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Shady Nigo

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Jane Salton

Senior Editors

Redner, Kari

Photo Editors

Costanza

Production Coordinator

Jon Warren

Design

Virginia Kolano

Communications

On the cover

Zinash Yohanis, 8, is a World Vision sponsored child living in Oromo, Ethiopia. Photograph by Jon Warren.

Corrections: The correct number for World Vision’s gift planning program is (800) 426-7753. The correct address for World Vision child sponsorship is P.O. Box 70550, Tacoma, WA 98481-0500.

World Vision Today, 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, the publication costs less than 35 cents a copy to print and mail.

We welcome your comments and feedback. Letters to the editor must include the writer’s full name, home address, and daytime telephone number; and should be sent to The Editor, World Vision Today, P.O. Box 70550, Federal Way, Washington 98063-9716, e-mailed to WVToday@worldvision.org or faxed to (253) 815-3445. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Submitted photos will not be returned.

Where Are They Now?
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Pacific Northwest: Joy in Action
For the first time in her life, this World Vision youth outreach worker is doing something she really loves.

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8 Hope Restored

LAST JULY, I EXPERIENCED A MOMENT I WILL never forget. It was my last day in Gujarat, India, surveying the rebuilding work that World Vision has been doing in the wake of the Jan. 26 earthquake. We were leaving a small village at the end of the day. As our car pulled away, I noticed a woman holding her child up to the car window, pleading with her eyes for help. When I looked at the child she was carrying, I knew why. He was a handsome little boy of about 6, but he was missing both of his feet.

All of this occurred in an instant as our car drove away. What had happened? Why did the boy have no feet? What would happen to him? These questions plagued me as I flew home the next morning, and continued each day thereafter as my thoughts returned to that unforgettable moment.

He was just one child out of thousands, I told myself. We can’t help everyone. World Vision responded to the disaster within six hours, and we have been working in Gujarat ever since, building hundreds of new houses for earthquake victims. But one brief glimpse of this little boy and his despairing mother reminded me powerfully of why World Vision exists: to restore hope to the hopeless.

Hope is a small word with tremendous significance. It is used so often and so casually in our culture that we don’t often stop to think of its meaning. In America, so many children can look to the future with confident expectations—confident that they can become almost anything they set out to be; confident that they will be secure tomorrow; and expectant that someday, they, too, will have children of their own.

If had to summarize the desired outcome of World Vision’s work in the 100 countries benefiting 1.7 million sponsored children and their communities, I would use the word hope. We provide health care, clean water, nutritious food, education, and economic opportunities for children and families. We offer relief to refugees and displaced people. We work in cities with street kids, runaways, and prostitutes, and we strive to abolish child labor and the use of children in combat.

So, what is the hope I saw last month in India? It was the look in that mother’s eyes. It was the sight of those new houses rising from the rubble left after last year’s India earthquake. It was the look of those children, happy and full of life, as they returned to their former homes.

Could he work someday? Would he marry, have a family, and care for his mother in her old age? Hope for her came down to the slim possibility that this stranger from across the sea, this man from the Christian organization World Vision, might somehow notice her son and change his future.

Unable to get this boy out of my mind, I contacted World Vision staff in India and asked if they could find him and his mother. Two weeks later I learned that the boy’s name is Vikas and he is 6. On the day of the earthquake, his house collapsed, trapping him and his mother in the debris. His frantic father dug through the rubble and managed to pull both of them out alive, but both of Vikas’ legs had been crushed. It was several days before a relief medical team came to Gujarat. They had to amputate both of Vikas’ feet to save his life.

Our staff told me that Vikas required additional surgery and would need prosthetic limbs, but he could be taught to walk again. They asked if World Vision U.S. would be able to cover the costs $3000! Three hundred dollars to restore hope and to give Vikas back his future.

Vikas has now had surgery and has been fitted with new feet and taught to walk again. Hope restored.

Hope is a priceless commodity, but sometimes it can be offered at relatively low cost. Hope must be offered to one person at a time. World Vision is in the business of hope, and your faithful gifts to our ministry create hope every single day for children and families who often have none.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

ROBERT E. STEARNS
How long can I sponsor my child?

THE ANSWER IS AS unique as your sponsored child. Length of sponsorship is influenced by the child’s age when sponsorship begins, the family and community’s circumstances, and progress in the sponsorship project. Through sponsorship, you are working with us to help children realize their God-given potential by tackling the root causes of poverty.

World Vision addresses the needs of sponsored children and their families. We also provide ways to strengthen their community’s resolve and their families. We stand on neither side. David Bruckner of Jesus for Jesus says it well: “If we’re going to be like Jesus in this world, we have to rearrange our thinking on this issue. We don't have to hate Palestinians in order to support Israel, we don’t have to throw a blanket condemnation over the state of Israel in order to love Palestinians.”

We find no theological justification for human rights violations, whatever one’s position on the Biblical role of Israel. Regardless of the decisions of political leaders, Christians cannot ignore individual suffering. Bulldozing homes and suicide bombings are not the answer to cries for justice. We pray fervently for peace. And we especially pray for our Christian brothers and sisters, both Israeli and Palestinian.

As Christians, we must learn to see the people of Palestine in the way that God sees them—as unique individuals beloved by God and therefore deserving of our own love and support. God hasn’t called us to figure out a solution to the conflict, nor to weigh the relative merits and guilt of the warring parties. God calls us to support the people and programs that labor to share God’s love with hurting individuals on all sides of the conflict. I commend World Vision for their efforts in this area.

—Dr. Christopher D. Stanley, Department of Theology St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

I am deeply concerned about the naive and unbalanced portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Autumn 2001 World Vision Today. Palestinians suffer today in large degree because of their leadership’s moral failure to recognize the very existence of Israel. Under responsible and competent leadership, the Palestinians would be rebuilding their economy, expanding their infrastructure, and laying the foundations for a viable statehood. Instead, they are pursuing Arafat’s radical, rejectionist agenda. Shame on your magazine for encouraging this agenda.

—Russell Resneck, General Secretary Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, Albuquerque, N.M.

I am sorry to hear of your organization’s flawed opinion of Israel and of their God-given right to live in Israel, in peace and without fear of terrorism. Would not the United States retaliate on any group within our borders that was encouraging suicide bombers and using children as shields while rioting against the government?

—Rene Wallace, San Diego, Calif.

It was encouraging to see a periodical of your reputation and stature taking a stand on this issue. I have long been skeptical of our blind allegiance to the Israeli government, especially when it is so often defended with a religious mask. I am proud of our Jewish heritage, and I enjoy living in a predominantly Jewish community. However, we must not give the nation of Israel carte blanche. Furthermore, since when does God need America’s help in fulfilling his ultimate plan for his people, whatever that may be?

—David Steen, Springfield, N.J.

It is quite clear that World Vision puts all its support toward the Palestinians and that you have cast Israel as the “bad guy.” First, Israel’s acquisition of land not included in the original 1948 map occurred solely as a result of wars made against Israel by her neighbors; Israel did not set out to conquer and annex the land in question. Second, Israel has offered to create a homeland for Palestine; however, Palestinian leaders do not want that—what they really want is the total extermination of Israel. Third, the violence attributed to Israel comes only in response to attacks on innocents. I feel that Israel has shown considerable restraint in going after military targets while suicide bombers have purposely focused on civilians, including children. I do not pretend that there is no suffering of Palestinians, but do you weep only for those children and not for the murdered Jewish children?

—Diana Hanson, Santa Monica, Calif.

Thank you so much for having the courage and faith to bring to light the terrible injustices being suffered by Palestinians in Israel. I do pray daily for Israel, and your coverage of this situation gives me hope that our prayers can spur the Church to become a united force for peace. I am also very grateful for Serge Duss’ inspiring reminder that we serve a Lord of justice whose inaugural address in Luke 4 proclaims liberty to those in captivity.

—Barbara Shiffer, Oneida, Wis.
A REASON TO LIVE

IN GOD’S HANDS

World Vision sponsorship helped Rosy Garcia overcome a dark period in her life and reach for her dreams.

AT THE AGE OF 12, ROSY GARCIA WANTED TO DIE. SHE'D already had more than her share of neglect and pain growing up in Panchimalco, a community near El Salvador’s capital, San Salvador. Her father had been absent from her life for years. Her mother, mentally unbalanced and influenced by the occult, beat her. One night, Rosy couldn’t stand the abuse any longer. My life has no meaning, she thought. Nobody can ever help me. She tied a rope around her neck and tried to hang herself. Rosy doesn’t remember what happened next. When she regained consciousness the next day, she found the rope cut. There were no bruises on her neck.

Surviving suicide was just the first step in Rosy’s awareness that God loved her. Afterward, she found the strength to move in with her older brother. In her new life she encountered World Vision that God loved her. Afterward, she found the strength to move in with her older brother. In her new life she encountered World Vision and, she became sponsored. Her sponsor’s support and the encouragement of World Vision staff guided her course toward Christ and her calling.

Today, Rosy is 26 and a teacher at a Christian school. “God touched hearts and opened doors, making my way easier,” she says. “I don’t like to have preferences. They all have the same confidence to get close to me when they need it.”

Being a teacher gives Rosy plenty of opportunities to care for the children’s emotional as well as educational needs. “Whenever I have a student with troubles, whether big or small, I pray for him or her, and I put him or her in God’s hands.”

Rosi was always in God’s hands throughout her difficult childhood, although she didn’t know it then. Her father moved to the United States when Rosy was 7, cutting off all contact with her. Rosy and her mother, Heriberta, struggled to survive by selling food on the street. Panchimalco is a poor community with a large indigenous population. Spiritism—magic and witchcraft—was common practice, and Heriberta dabbled in it. Eventually, Heriberta believed she could become rich through a pact with the devil—an obsession that drove her insane.

Rosi rejected her mother’s twisted religion. She tried to help Heriberta get treatment for her mental problems, but the woman only became more violent. Rosy couldn’t find help from teachers or school friends—she had dropped out to help her mother work—and she did not belong to any church.

But after cheating death, Rosy began to seek God. She moved in with her brother, Jaime, then a 22-year-old accountant. He cared for her and praised her. Jaime, a Christian, also gave her a Bible. Reading the New Testament brought her great comfort.

SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENED

That same year, 1989, World Vision started the Fuente de Jacob Project in Panchimalco. The project targeted more than 600 children for sponsorship, providing school fees, supplies, and uniforms and shoes. World Vision also improved the community by launching reforestation campaigns; training farmers in new agricultural technology and teaching mothers to plant vegetable gardens; and providing better housing for 274 families.

Thanks to her sponsor, Maria Cruz of Hacienda Heights, Calif., 14-year-old Rosy continued her education and received medical and dental care. “I am grateful for everything she did for me without even knowing me,” Rosy says. Sponsorship made her career possible, she explains, because without finishing high school, she couldn’t have gone on to college to become a teacher. World Vision also provided the spiritual support she longed for. She participated in Bible study groups—even becoming a group leader—and attended Christian camps offered to sponsored children. Rosy found a confidante in World Vision project leader Elizabeth Flores. “All the moments I have shared with Rosy have been so special,” says Elizabeth. “She has always had the confidence to tell me her problems and her joys, and luckily God has always given me the wisdom to give her advice.”

Rosi grew steadily in her faith. During a service at her church, Emmanuel Church of Assemblies of God (where she is still an active member), “I felt in my heart that something wonderful was about to happen,” Rosy recalls. “When they called to accept Jesus, I was the first person who rose.”

Becoming a Christian changed Rosy, enabling her to see the tragic events of her past in a new light. “When I first met Jesus, I was freed from the chains in my heart. I remember I blamed God because of the psychological problems of my mother. As I knew more about Jesus, I realized that all things happen because of God’s will,” she says.

In time, her feelings also softened toward her mother. “I have forgiven her from my heart, and I love her,” says Rosy. “As I read the Bible I realized that I should not judge her. I understand that what she did was because of ignorance.” Heriberta has been hospitalized a few times, but the doctors found no cause. Rosy believes her mother’s disease is spiritual in nature. When Heriberta visits, Rosy talks to her about God.

Rosi’s former sponsor, Maria, is pleased to hear what has become of Rosy. “It makes me happy that she is walking with the Lord, living an upright life,” says Maria.

GOD’S TOOL

Teaching is more than a job for Rosy; it’s her true calling. Recently she enrolled in a six-year theology program at a local Bible college. “I have the responsibility to teach my students not only numbers, but the word of God—God’s Word,” she explains. “I must be well-prepared intellectually.”

Having survived the darkness of her mother’s dementia, Rosy is determined to live in God’s light, and to be an example to children and young people to do the same. Her commitment impresses Elizabeth Flores, who watched Rosy grow from a despondent teen to an admirable woman. “She serves others, expecting nothing in return,” says Elizabeth. “Rosi is a tool in God’s hands.”

“I like to guide young people to make decisions according to God’s word and to tell them that God loves them just as they are,” Rosy says.

World Vision Today Spring 2002
FOR 52 YEARS, YOU HAVE FAITHFULLY
shared with God’s people in need. Your gifts
have provided hope to millions of children and
families worldwide. In the following stories
and essays, World Vision Today focuses on
Paul’s words in Romans 12 to share with you
how suffering, prayer, faith, and hospitality
produce a vision of hope in our world today.

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”
—Romans 12:12-13

So why are we often surprised by suffering?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN

there's hope

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN

ETHIOPIA
Americans are utterly unequipped for life in the real world.” ¶ “Oh really?” I said. “That’s quite a claim. What do you mean?” ¶ “You think that life is supposed to be pleasant; life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and all that stuff,” one said. “When it’s not, you think something is wrong that you need to fix. Once fixed, you can get back to a normal state—pleasant. On the contrary,” he continued. “We think that life is hard. We know we will suffer. Our challenge is to learn how to trust God in the midst of suffering, find his purposes through it, and still have the courage and hope to change it.” ¶ I think they were right. We do act as if something is wrong when sorrow strikes. Usually we seek the fastest way out—an escape. Some even suggest that our Western economy would collapse if we stopped trying to escape suffering. Much of our society seeks to provide us with medical or chemical escapes. We long for electronic diversions, whether televised, digitized, or pre-recorded. Entire industries are devoted to fantasy vacations or encouraging us to indulge in shopping sprees. These diversions aren’t in themselves bad, unless we’re tempted to believe that happiness is best found apart from the normal fabric of life: joy and sorrow, suffering and pleasure all mixed together, often existing simultaneously.

As Christians, we know that the gospel is Good News of Great Joy. We celebrate it as the proclamation of an immovable hope. We have received a Kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). We are admonished in 1 Peter 3:14-15*: “Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your heart sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.”

How do we live that unshakable hope when we feel like our lives have become entangled in a hopeless web of problems, pain, and troubles? We know God is faithful and trustworthy—and yet when storms come, we question whether the anchor will hold. When we feel snared in the trap of our circumstances, how can we keep on hoping? Furthermore, we see people all around us trusting in God, and yet suffering. How do we make sense of that, and what kind of hope can we have?

When Israel was suffering, captive in Babylon, God gave them profound words of guidance through the prophet Jeremiah. These verses have been sources of comfort to suffering people for thousands of years. “I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

**HOPE STRETCHED TIGHT**

Hope in Hebrew is a wonderful picture word, describing the tension placed on a spider’s web. When disconnected, it can bear no weight. When firmly anchored between two points and stretched tight, the web can bear great weight. Hope is to be stretched tight between two places—firmly anchored in both the present and the future. Rather than char-
When 16-year-old Javkhlan arrived at World Vision’s Lighthouse Center, a shelter for street children in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia’s capital, she was aggressive, angry and sexually promiscuous. Now she is a “walking, talking success story of a transformed life,” in the words of a World Vision project manager.

I want to be the first Mongolian woman president. I want to make a difference in my country. And if I work hard and apply myself, I believe I can,” declares 18-year-old Javkhlan. It’s a staggering goal, coming from a girl with such an unstable past.

When Javkhlan was 2, her mother divorced her father; a violent drunkard and gambler. He refused to let Javkhlan live with her mother, so for the next nine years the girl shuttled between relatives. By age 11, she had enough, and she took refuge on the streets.

For four years, Javkhlan lived in stairwells, doorways, and in the underground tunnels housing the city’s heating system. She survived by begging, stealing, and foraging in rubbish bins around the city. Occasionally she would go to a shelter but she always rebelled against the authority figures there.

The Lighthouse Center was different. After 18 months of counseling, unconditional love, and gentle discipline from the staff Javkhlan changed. “When I came to this center, despite my fears, it was the beginning of my new life,” she says. “It’s the best center I’ve ever been to. The staff work hard for us, teach us good habits, and give good advice on how to be a better person.”

Javkhlan is now a talented young woman excelling in her studies and in Mongolian traditional dancing and singing. Because of her confidence and poise, she was chosen to represent World Vision Mongolia’s street children project at the EXPO 2000 in Hanover, Germany. The international trip was a life-changing experience for Javkhlan. “She has now seen that the world has so much to offer, and she has a much broader vision of what her future can hold,” says World Vision project manager Mungsai Togt.

Now living with a supportive aunt in Ulaanbaatar, Javkhlan is light-years from the aggressive, unsmiling girl who walked through the Lighthouse door. “Without World Vision, I would still be on the streets with no hope of anything better,” she says.

*Mungisai Togt*

*All Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version.*

**HOPE FOR JAVKHLAN**

**HOPE FOR VESTINE**

Although blind, Vestine envisions a brighter future for herself and her brother in post-war Rwanda, thanks to World Vision assistance.

V estine Nyrabahimana was 13 when she noticed pain in her eyes and deteriorating sight. She started treatment in Gikongoro, southwest Rwanda, in April 1994. Then her country exploded into genocidal rage. The last images she ever saw were scenes of horror: A mob beat her mother, a Tutsi, to death. Her Hutu father was spared. Kind Hutu neighbors hid her and her four siblings from the death squads. A month in hiding saved Vestine’s life, but without treatment for her eyes, her sight completely failed. With her vision went her expectations of a normal life in rural Africa.

In 1997, Vestine’s father died. Vestine and her 7-year-old brother, Claude, were left to fend for themselves while the younger children were taken in by distant relatives. “It was a very difficult time,” she said. “We would ask the neighbors to help us bring in crops from the field.” As conditions worsened for their community, however, help became harder and harder to find.

World Vision began a food and nutritional project in Gikongoro in 1998, providing seeds and tools to hundreds of families. “World Vision has helped us much more than the people who live around us do,” said Vestine, now 20. “They give us seeds, and that has enabled us to have a big crop of potatoes, soy beans, wheat, cabbage, tomatoes, and carrots.”

Claude, now 11, has a World Vision sponsor, so he receives school materials and a uniform. He also receives regular visits from a social worker visits Vestine and Claude every week to check their well-being.

Vestine keeps busy by hiring the workers who harvest their crops, selling some of their vegetables at the market, and caring for Claude. “I would like to have a skill that I can use, despite my blindness, to earn money for Claude,” she said. “It is very difficult—there are many blind people around. But I have hope that in the future I can do it.”

**CAMBODIA**

**THE LAST CHAPTER**

K nowing the last chapter eases the suffering. In the early ’80s, my wife and I visited the Khoj Dang refugee camp in Thailand where 100,000 Cambodians wallowed between their violent past and their uncertain future. Christian refugees gathered for hours to voice their praise at the Church of Jesus Christ for Refugees. Following one of the services, my wife spoke with one Cambodian, Sammang. His wife had died, one by one, as they escaped with him to Thailand. Now he had no country, home, possessions, or any hope of being sponsored to a third country. His future was to wait there until international politics pushed him back into Cambodia. My wife asked, “Let me ask you. Do you face such a future?” With an intense passion burning in his eyes, he replied, “Jesus is my future, and he is enough.” Clearly, joyous hope can be sustained in the midst of the harsh realities of pain and suffering. Now, 20 years later, World Vision is still deeply immersed in the lives of Cambodians. New schools, hospitals, and homes are testament to the new life and hope in that decimated nation.

Beyond meeting people's physical needs, World Vision’s work is to reveal the last chapter to the hopeless so they can be set free to live amidst present difficulties with boldness and confidence. Paul elaborates on this in Romans. Having proclaimed the good news that by faith we stand in grace, surrounded by the goodness and mercy of God, Paul goes on to proclaim, therefore we rejoice in hope...and not only so, but rejoice in suf- fering, because sufferings are necessary if they bring forth perseverance, perseverance, character, and hope. And hope does not disappoint us for the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:1-5). Rejoicing in hope we may understand, but rejoicing in suf- fering is an extraordinary gift. We rejoice because even suffering can bear good fruit in our lives, and because nothing sepa- rates us from the love of God. The Spirit of God pours into us God’s assuring love, remolding and shaping us.

As a result, we have nothing to fear. The future holds neither terror nor mystery. Oh, the short-term is laden with the unknown—most likely filled with great joy and deep sorrow. But because the last chapter is known, we can walk through the remaining chapters with anticipatory delight, living even their pain to its fullest, wanting to experience and learn from everything as we’re enroute to the glorious future that is yet to come.

*The Rev. Tim Dearborn, Ph.D, is a professor, author, and dean of the chapel at Seattle Pacific University.*

*All Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version.*
Ed spends half his life traveling for his corporate job. At home, he's constantly on his cell phone, and he rarely takes a day off. His wife thinks he is more familiar with the inside of a plane than with their own home. Ed's drive comes from his unquestioning acceptance that the overarching purpose of life is to get ahead in his career. Lois is completely invested in her kids, enabling them to be high achievers in their upscale neighborhood. She has nudged her two girls in a raft of activities, from music lessons to modeling classes. But she has never noticed that, although family life, relationships, and spiritual life?

Do you suffer from “hurry sickness”?&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbs
World Vision’s newest program, family sponsorship, allows U.S. families to share the burdens of another family overseas and help them in their time of need. The burdens are great for families like the Raitas in Cluj, Romania. Parents Iuliu and Dana are unemployed; the oldest son, 13-year-old Iuliu, earns $1 a day selling apples. Dana can’t send the four youngest to school because they don’t have adequate clothes. The family lives in a one-room home with no electricity, plumbing, or heat. The nearest clean water is three miles away.

To break out of their cycle of poverty, the Raitas need a range of assistance. Family sponsorship provides training in farming, nutrition, and hygiene for parents, enabling them to improve their families’ diets and health. Parents also learn skills that can boost the family income. Children receive school supplies, uniforms, and other educational necessities. Family sponsorship also provides housing improvements and access to clean water and medical assistance. Initially, family sponsorship is only available in Ghana, Romania, El Salvador, and Sri Lanka.

“Family sponsorship is a wonderful way to help lift an entire family out of poverty,” says World Vision President Rich Stearns, whose family sponsors the Rostas family in Romania. Rich’s daughter, Grace, enjoys writing to one of the Rostas girls.

Like Grace Stearns, sponsors can correspond with their sponsored families. They will receive at least one letter and a Christmas card each year. World Vision sends sponsors an annual progress report describing specific assistance to the family, the children’s educational advancements, and the latest community improvements. Sponsors also receive a full-color newsletter featuring stories and information about how family sponsorship is helping communities thrive.

“I’ve seen for myself how family sponsorship programs transform entire communities,” says Luci Swindoll, Women of Faith author and speaker. Luci visited a World Vision project in Atebubu, Ghana, that cares for 1,000 families. There she met Abena Gyalmea, 45, who single-handedly supports six children, a grand-daughter, two nieces, her elderly mother, and a disabled uncle. Luci’s sponsorship assistance eases Abena’s struggle.

“As a sponsor, you’ll help a needy family who simply cannot make it without your help,” says Abena of her “American friend.”

“We pray that God will add many days to her life and bless her for her care,”

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Sponsor a family today! Here are three ways to sign up:

1. Call (888) 511-6493.
2. Sign up on the Web at www.worldvision.org/family.
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Dana Raita’s family are from Romania’s disadvantaged Roma minority group. About 60 percent of the Romas are unemployed.

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World Vision is an organization founded, built, and sustained by prayer. Every year, World Vision staff around the world set aside a day for corporate prayer. We ask God’s wisdom and blessings for our work, and we lift up specific prayer requests sent in by you, our faithful supporters.

In this first magazine issue of 2002, we invite you to pray for World Vision—for our staff and ministry, and for the children and families we assist in the world’s hurting places.

Photographs by Jon Warren

these prayer requests and praise reports were provided by World Vision offices around the world. Please pray with your family or your church group for World Vision throughout 2002.

Pray for the safety of World Vision staff in **ANGOLA** when they travel. Public vehicles are often attacked and passengers can be injured or killed.

Pray for World Vision’s work with families and communities in **BOLIVIA**, where an estimated 80 percent of children living in rural areas are forced to drop out of school and go to work before they reach age 9.

Thank God for sustaining World Vision staff in **BOSNIA** as they rebuild homes and schools,
created jobs, and developed community-based programs. These efforts are building a sustainable future for Bosnians. Pray for continued strength and endurance for the staff.

Pray for the innocent victims of violence, kidnappings, and displacement in COLOMBIA. More than 300 churches have closed, and 52 pastors and church leaders have been killed in the last three years. Pray for World Vision's work in this troubled country.

Praise God for providing funding for World Vision's water development activities in the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

Pray for World Vision staff in ECUADOR as they seek ways to relieve malnutrition among children. An estimated 60 percent of children under age 5 suffer from a lack of healthy food.

Ask God for continued peace in EAST TIMOR, and that he would sustain World Vision staff and give them hope for the future.

Praise God for 2001’s successes in ETHIOPIA: sufficient rainfall, political peace, and a good spirit of cooperation between World Vision and the government in serving families and communities.

Pray for World Vision staff in GHANA as World Vision’s water project expands to the north. Ask God’s wisdom for the staff as they seek the best possible ways to improve children’s lives through this program.

Praise God for enabling World Vision INDIA to build 221 houses for families in a North Delhi slum.

Remember the children and families in Gujarat, INDIA, who suffer from psychological fears and acute depression after last year’s earthquake, and pray for the World Vision staff who serve this traumatized population.

Ask the Lord to give spiritual and physical strength to World Vision staff in JERUSALEM, WEST BANK, and GAZA as they seek to demonstrate God’s love to both sides in this age-old conflict.

Praise God for much-needed rainfall in parts of KENYA last year. Thanks to God’s work through World Vision’s Moralem Irrigation Scheme, the Moralem community now grows enough grain for its people and does not need food assistance.

Remember World Vision staff caring for mentally disabled children in KOSOVO through the Lef Nosi school. World Vision supplies food—including fresh fruit that was previously unavailable—clothing, and other necessities for the children.

Praise God that the government in MONGOLIA provided land for World Vision’s Bayankhoshuu project, for families to plant vegetables to improve their nutrition.

Thank God for the generous donors who support World Vision’s Gloria Project in PERU, which provides surgery for children with cleft palates and other deformations.

Ask God for protection for community leaders in three World Vision projects in Ayacucho, PERU, where a small group of terrorists is threatening the local population.

Pray for World Vision staff in ROMANIA as they continue to provide comfort and hope for the suffering, including homeless children.

Pray for World Vision staff in RWANDA as they continue their own journey toward healing and reconciliation and encourage the same for surrounding communities.

Ask God for stability and security in SOMALIA so that World Vision staff can continue programs for children and families in the Middle Juba region.

Pray for World Vision’s work with AIDS-affected communities in southern AFRICA. New research suggests that half of all 13-year-olds in the region are likely to die from the disease.

Thank God for his many blessings in SRI LANKA in 2001, especially for the resources enabling World Vision to assist sponsored children with heart operations.

Pray for World Vision programs serving children in SUDAN, where 1.8 million children go without adequate food, medical services, and education.

Praise God for delivering a World Vision worker in UGANDA from chronic malaria, and for several recently married staff.

Ask God’s blessing on World Vision’s Kids In Need program in the UNITED STATES, which provides school supplies for children from low-income families.

Thank God for the provision of resources in 2001 for World Vision ZAMBIA. Pray for staff as they launch new programs serving orphans and refugees.

Ask that World Vision can quickly respond to the food shortage in ZIMBABWE.

Praise God for much-needed rainfall in AFRICA in 2001. The book describes in depth how God heals nations through prayer, with examples from Bosnia, Cambodia, Kosovo, and Rwanda. It is available through Amazon.com or the publisher, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000. The book describes in depth how God heals nations through prayer, with examples from Bosnia, Cambodia, Kosovo, and Rwanda. It is available through Amazon.com or the publisher, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.
The only thing this Vision Youth outreach worker doesn’t find time for is eating.

IT’S LATE MORNING BEFORE JOY ECKWOOD REMEMBERS she hadn’t had breakfast. She pulls into McDonald’s for apple pies and milk. The diminutive youth outreach worker at St. John Baptist Church in Tacoma doesn’t always find time to eat on the go. The girl’s drug-addicted dad was no longer in her life. His ex-wife, who ran a methamphetamine lab out of her house, offered Laza the only home she had, as well as easy access to the life-strangling drug. Laza was addicted.

Joy helped the girl find a new home with caring family members in a nearby town and helped her get treatment for her drug problem. It took six months, but Lara kicked her addiction. She’s now an A student involved in church. She feels good about herself, and it shows.

“When she was in the office the other day, someone asked, ‘Is that the same girl?’ She just glows now,” Joy says. Although Joy and her family (six children, ages 1 to 15) live in the same neighborhood as the teens in her ministry, their lives are starkly different. Mornings start with a whirlwind of activity, with the older kids pitching in to help out in an atmosphere of controlled chaos. But teamwork is everything, and Joy’s requests are met with good-natured “Yes ‘mams’” and quick responses. Love and respect flow both ways, and there’s a flurry of kisses and hugs before Moms scoots out the door. Dinner time is family time, when kids and adults share their day and study the Bible together.

Joy’s homelife is foreign to her outreach kids. But she tries to share some sense of normalcy with them by building relationships and offering something they’re not accustomed to. “Scripture tells us that to be a leader, we have to be a servant. To be a servant, we have to be humble,” Joy says. This is not the time to win any arguments. “There’s no place in there for ‘being right.’”

Despite her own troubled youth, Joy doesn’t pour out her story on them. “Adults tend to talk too much when we’re around kids,” she says.

Those listening skills pulled one young woman from the depths of drug addiction and despair. Joy was drawn to a 15-year-old girl at the alternative school who barely spoke and had been cut off from her family. She tells of a boy who thinks he’s “getting better” because now, when his mom beats him, he doesn’t just stand there and suffer the abuse—he hits back. This breaks her heart. “These are the kids God brings me. I love ’em. I listen, I care, and sometimes, I just cry with them,” she says.

Joy’s day is filled with laughter as well as tears. One evening, she bounces around her living room, enthusiastically orchestrating icebreakers during an inaugural outreach for middle school kids. She’s directing 13 youngsters to play video or computer games while they wait for the pizza to arrive when she realizes she’s late for a meeting at church. Leaving her husband and a volunteer in charge, she dashes out. “I’m never late,” she says, laughing, “but that was too much fun.”

Her meeting on outreach training, retreats, and youth ministry schedules for fall wraps up around 9:30 p.m. On the way home, Joy stops by McDonald’s again. “I forgot to eat,” she says, smiling.
The events of Sept. 11 sparked an outpouring of donations and prayer from World Vision donors. The next several issues of *World Vision Today* will share the stories of people who received much-needed gifts through World Vision’s American Families Assistance FundSM.

MANSURA SHAJAHAN’S 7-YEAR-OLD daughter Shirin climbs on the living room couch and grimaces uncomfortably. “I want to scratch all the time,” she complains. Little sister Jahnan, 6, is also home from school. “Today, I just didn’t feel like going,” she says. Eight-year-old Yusuf points to the little girl who has curled herself around Mansura. “That’s Laila,” he says. “She’s 3. She has the chicken pox too.”

Mansura is tired, her face drawn. A closer look reveals small scabs on her forehead. She, too, has chicken pox. Mansura would normally have more than enough strength to manage the challenges of a full household. But things are far from normal. These days she is just trying to keep her family going without her husband, Mohammed, who died in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11.

“I think about it, then I cry,” she says in her limited English. “I don’t know who will take care of my children’s future.” She stops and starts to tear, unable to speak about it any further.

HERE TO HELP

In December, World Vision regional coordinator Linda Rudrow presented Mansura with an American Families Assistance FundSM gift of $5,500. World Vision has made funds available for victims’ families to meet basic financial needs such as transportation costs and medical expenses. Funds are given regardless of the family’s race or religion. “We’re here to give you a gift,” said Ruby Zigrino, a relative of the Shajahans. “He helped a lot of people financially, here and back home. He prayed and fasted regularly. He was a good man and a good Muslim.”

He was also a good provider. Mohammed had a well-paying job as an information technology specialist at Marsh & McLennan. The pay provided just enough money for their children to start attending a private school near their home in upstate New York. Mohammed’s office was an hour away on the 96th floor of the World Trade Center.

“WHERE IS SHAJAHAN?”

Mansura, a homemaker, was at home that day in September. She didn’t know about the attacks until she started to receive phone calls from relatives. “Shaajahan kothai?” they asked. “Where is Shaajahan?” As they explained what happened, Mansura started to panic.

She placed calls to her husband’s pager but received no answer. Mohammed’s office and cell phones were not working either. The family knew the first plane hit at 8:45 a.m. and hoped that Mohammed hadn’t made it to work yet.

“The whole day we were hoping that he would somehow show up or call us,” said Ruby. That call never came. “The next few days we were hoping he was in a hospital, unconscious and unidentified,” she says. “We also thought maybe he was alive under the rubble. As the days went by our hope got dimmer and dimmer. We grew desperate, frustrated, and we grieved with the realization of what had happened.”

LOSING THEIR BREADWINNER

Like many families, Mansura’s husband was the sole breadwinner in the family. Delwar Hossein, Mansura’s brother who lives in Florida, says that at first Mansura couldn’t access the couple’s savings because it was held in an account under Mohammed’s name. The bank said they needed to see an official death certificate for Mohammed. Unfortunately, death certificates for World Trade Center employees were not issued until one month after the attacks.

In November, Mansura started to get Social Security checks to cover some of her food and living expenses. But with no job and no income, there were thousands of dollars in outstanding medical and credit card bills that were going unpaid.

Additional debt came from having to hire babysitters and cabs so that Mansura could make funeral arrangements and apply for government aid. “Mansura only has a learner’s driver’s license,” says Delwar. “She cannot drive anywhere. She has to pay for transportation into the city. It is hard and expensive for her, so she only goes out when it is an emergency.”

HELP COMES FOR MANSURA

Sometimes Mansura didn’t have enough cash to take care of her children’s emergencies. Marsh & McLennan decided to continue providing the family with medical coverage until December. But when the children got chicken pox, Mansura couldn’t pay for the taxi to take her children to the hospital.

“So she had no money. And still in December she had no access, even though she had a death certificate,” said Delwar. “The process is slow. I helped her get a lawyer so that she can be named the administrator of her husband’s estate.”

Members of the Jerrahi Mosque, where the Shajahans worship, helped as well, generously providing food and moral support. The mosque also raised money for the children’s education. Mansura received some financial help from the Red Cross, but it wasn’t enough for her to cover rent payments and feed her children.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

World Vision’s goal through the American Families Assistance FundSM is to see that families like Mansura’s still have hope. Ruby says Mansura wants to raise her children in the United States the way her husband wanted. “I hope that they will have a fair chance.”
Children Thankful for Renovated School
Students in Sanwakyi-Afrefresco, Ghana, can sit in their classroom without fear of the walls coming down on them. Through its Atebubu sponsorship project, World Vision renovated the primary and nursery school building with $600 worth of materials. Community members contributed the labor.

Built in 1960, the school’s walls had become so cracked over time that the children could see through them. The hole-pocked roof looked as if it had been sprayed with bullets. The pillars supporting the roof had worn thin, causing the building to sit dangerously during rains and winds. Today, the school has strong walls and pillars, a new roof, and a fresh coat of paint. Students in Sanwakyi-Afrefresco, Ghana, can sit in their classroom without fear of the walls coming down on them.

Renovated School Children Thankful for

CRISIS UPDATES
HONDURAS
A partnership between World Vision and the World Food Programme (WFP) is helping to repair northern Honduras after Hurricane Michelle. Last autumn the storm caused damage to homes, roads, and drinking water systems, affecting 16,000 people. Immediately afterward, World Vision provided food, blankets, medical supplies, water purification tablets and other supplies to affected communities. Now World Vision is organizing the rebuilding effort, paying residents for their labor with WFP food.

“We developed a very good WFP/World Vision relationship during Hurricane Mitch [in 1998]. We’ve seen that World Vision works in a very serious way, and it’s for this reason that we work together again to help these 3,500 who were affected by this new disgrace called Michelle,” said WFP Director Claudia Von Roehl.

WFP is also planning to launch a school lunch program in World Vision communities, targeting children with low weight and height levels. The program aims to improve the diets and health of thousands of World Vision sponsored children.

LIBERIA
Although Liberia’s civil war officially ended in 1997, the West African nation continues to struggle. Cross-border conflict with its neighbors, Sierra Leone and Guinea, causes increasing instability. The country’s economy and infrastructure are in shambles, and many families uprooted by violence—past and present—live in desperately poor conditions.

World Vision recently came to the aid of 2,000 internally displaced people in Gbarpolu county, northwest Liberia. Staff distributed 7,350 sacks of new shoes and clothing donated to World Vision by U.S. corporations. In partnership with UNICEF, World Vision also provided mosquito nets for 900 families. The nets are specially treated to kill mosquitoes. “Using these nets properly is one of the best ways of reducing the incidence of malaria, the main cause of sickness and death in the country,” said county health officer George Boakai.

A key way World Vision helps Liberia recover is agricultural assistance—helping farmers boost food production. Since 1999 the U.S. government has given World Vision Liberia $1 million for these efforts. The United States Ambassador Bisnarrick Myrick recently loaded World Vision’s work, and pledged more USAID support for programs benefiting war-destitute Liberians.

Right after Hurricane Michelle, World Vision provided food and supplies to affected families in northern Honduras.

VEGGIE TALES” CONCERTS TO PROMOTE CHILD SPONSORSHIP
World Vision and Big Idea Productions, creators of the children’s Christian video series “VeggieTales,” are teaming up to help the world’s needy children. Bob the Tomato, Larry the Cucumber, and the rest of the Veggie cast are touring the country in “VeggieTales Live!,” a stage show featuring humor, music, and biblically based storytelling to promote timeless values such as self-esteem and the importance of friendship. Prior to intermission, a World Vision video introduces child sponsorship, and audience members can sign up to sponsor a child at World Vision displays in each venue.

G O O D N E W S A F T E R S E P T E M B E R 1 1
WEST COAST FIREFIGHTER FOUND OPEN HEARTS AT GROUND ZERO
When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, Joshua Harris immediately wanted to help. The 26-year-old firefighter from Tacoma, Wash., called his friend, a New York Fire Department battalion chief, who arranged to get him on a crew at Ground Zero. Joshua rallied seven other firefighter friends from the West Coast to accompany him to New York. The group’s fights and expenses were covered by donations from their churches, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and World Vision’s American Families Assistance Fund.

Joshua (pictured second from left) spent two grueling weeks sifting through the rubble for victims’ remains. He found personal effects such as a child’s ID bracelet and an unfinished letter from a man to his wife. He also helped uncover a space in which six police officers’ bodies were found. Joshua met the officers’ families, including a 6-year-old girl. “Her telling me, ‘Thanks for finding my daddy,’ just killed me,” he said. “She was tougher than I was. I was crying.”

Joshua broke the ice with New York firefighters at the site by bringing them food and snacks. His servant attitude opened doors to conversations with the men about God. “Everyone’s kind of a tough guy—they don’t need to talk to a chaplain, they don’t need counseling. But they talk to a fellow believer,” he said. “I thought people would be hard-hearted toward God but it was really neat to see that people’s hearts were open … that God is moving there.”

Today, the school has strong walls and pillars, a new roof, and a fresh coat of paint. “We are happy about the school now,” the children sang.

The children are thankful for their newly renovated classrooms.

www.worldvision.org
In Gujarat, western India, the soft scraping of a mortar-filled trowel against brick is a sound to celebrate.

World Vision and Habitat for Humanity are rebuilding what nature demolished: hundreds of new homes for people who—in seconds—witnessed the unthinkable. At 8:46 a.m. on Jan. 26, 2001, a massive earthquake struck near Bhuj, a city of 150,000. The statistics are grim: 20,000 people died; 170,000 were injured; and 600,000 lost homes. Three hospitals and 23,000 classrooms were reduced to rubble. The total damage: $4 billion.

Within six hours of the quake, World Vision was on the scene with life-saving supplies. Staff brought clean water, medicine, food, and basic essentials such as cooking utensils. It was the beginning of a long-term partnership—one sparked by relief and sustained through development.

Now, with Habitat for Humanity, World Vision staff and community members are building more than 650 houses in Shikra and Kumbharia, Gujarat villages located less than 50 miles from the quake’s epicenter. The $2.5 million project will provide 1,300 family members with new homes, jobs, and community centers.

Satubhai PrabhatSingh Jadeja, 50, and his grandson, Mahuabhai, 2, are thankful. Mahuabhai was at home with his father and an aunt and uncle. While Satubhai says he is “very grateful” for his new house, it cannot replace the sadness of losing his wife of 30 years in the quake. He lost his livelihood as well. Many buffalo and goats, used for dairy production, perished in the rubble. Mahuabhai’s mother had used her body to shield her small son. She was dead, along with her husband. Mahuabhai’s brother’s body was discovered in a collapsed school nearby.

This is not the first time World Vision and Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit Christian house-building organization, have joined hammerers and hearts. In Burundi, the Philippines, and Venezuela, the two organizations have built thousands of new homes for families like Satubhai’s.

I’d expected them to be timid and retiring, but the women clad from top to toe in burkhas are anything but. They chatter and giggle loudly when I board the bus and quickly boss me about. I should sit here, not there—no, there. Eventually everybody settles down, and we are off. The women swap seats regularly as they gossip with one another. “You’re not married?” they ask. “You’re how old? 38? Maybe you can find an Afghan girl. There are lots of beautiful girls here.” “But how could I possibly know?” I protest. Screams of laughter.

Perhaps one reason for the women’s bonhomo is that they have a real job to do. They are part of a city-wide survey in Herat, western Afghanistan, helping World Vision determine who is in need of a food distribution. World Vision will survey every single household in a city of 360,000 people, employing 250 local women to help. It’s obviously an empowering feeling. Years of Taliban rule confined the women largely to domestic service. Today they are out in the community, participating in a process to bring relief to this troubled city.

Our bus takes us to the oldest and poorest section of Herat. “There is so much misery,” says Faidosom Mohammad, 18, who is responsible for surveying this district. “So many factories were destroyed in the war, there is no place to work. Quite often the men have been killed in the fighting. Under the Taliban, women were not allowed to work with men, so they could not make much money,” he explains.

The city’s problems are compounded by an influx of people from the country, mostly fleeing drought. Some went to camps such as Maslakh, home to more than 200,000 refugees. Others disappeared into poorer quarters here in Herat, eking out a living, competing against thousands of others for a few cents a day.

Suddenly I am seized by the arm. “Come to my house—we have nothing,” says one. “Let me show you.” Then a cacophony of voices: “Our house is poor. Water poors in and we have to put straw down to soak it up.” “My child is sick. We have no money for medicines.”

“Please, we need food. Will you help us?” I visit their homes. Inside, a child or adult often is lying prone on the floor. There’s no money to take him or her to the hospital. Another woman says she and her husband watched their fields turn to dust in the drought. I’m especially touched by an elderly couple whose only son fled from the Taliban to Iran several years ago. He has not been seen since. In their two-room home, they reserve one room for his return. The woman, Fatamma, shows it to me with pride. But there is a desperate, plaintive note in her voice—maybe they will never see their son again.

To be honest, it’s a relief to clamber back on the bus and escape the stories of hardship and despair. But there is no easy exit for these poor people. Hopefully World Vision’s food distributions will bring some comfort.

It’s going to be a big job. As the survey results come in, it appears some 70,000 families will need food aid (estimate as of December 2001). The World Food Programme will supply it and handle the shipping from Iran. World Vision will distribute the food to each family.

I pray things will go much further for these people—that the rains will come, that they will be able to return to the land, that peace will replace decades of war. “God,” I say as we make the ponderous journey home, “please give these people a break.”

World Vision is operational in two areas of war-torn Afghanistan. In the western region of Herat, in partnership with the World Food Programme and UNICEF, World Vision launched a $3 million project providing food and therapeutic feeding programs for the malnourished population. In Taluqan, northern Afghanistan, staff are distributing blankets, medicine, and other supplies to returning refugees.

World Vision correspondent James Addis traveled with a World Vision food survey team through the dingy alleyways of Herat, western Afghanistan. His eyewitness report follows.

Last year on Christmas day, while American families enjoyed feasts and holiday gatherings, World Vision correspondent James Addis traveled with a World Vision food survey team through the dingy alleyways of Herat, western Afghanistan. His eyewitness report follows.

BY JAMES ADDIS

world vision Today Spring 2002

方针 update: India

joining hammers with hearts

BY KARI COSTANZA

In Gujarat, western India, the soft scraping of a mortar-filled trowel against brick is a sound to celebrate.

BY KARI COSTANZA

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To be honest, it’s a relief to clamber back on the bus and escape the stories of hardship and despair. But there is no easy exit for these poor people. Hopefully World Vision’s food distributions will bring some comfort.

It’s going to be a big job. As the survey results come in, it appears some 70,000 families will need food aid (estimate as of December 2001). The World Food Programme will supply it and handle the shipping from Iran. World Vision will distribute the food to each family.

I pray things will go much further for these people—that the rains will come, that they will be able to return to the land, that peace will replace decades of war. “God,” I say as we make the ponderous journey home, “please give these people a break.”

World Vision is operational in two areas of war-torn Afghanistan. In the western region of Herat, in partnership with the World Food Programme and UNICEF, World Vision launched a $3 million project providing food and therapeutic feeding programs for the malnourished population. In Taluqan, northern Afghanistan, staff are distributing blankets, medicine, and other supplies to returning refugees.

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MY CHILDREN NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT shopping carts were not camouflaged space ships or rolling cribs, waiting to be docked somewhere. So when they saw Delsinore pushing her loaded shopping cart down the street far away from any store, they admired her. They asked me: How did she get the cart? Could she get one for us too?

When I explained that she was homeless, they wanted to know where she ate, where she slept, and if her kids had shopping carts too. So we approached Dels and talked with her. That began a friendship in which we would sit on park benches talking whenever I was out running errands. We brought her goodies to eat and she dug treasures out of her cart that we prized—candy bars, socks, and candles with decals.

Before my kids pointed her out, I’d driven past Delsinore many times without noticing her, but after our conversation I began spotting her immediately. My kids’ questions and gentle eagerness to be friends with Dels helped me see her for the first time. She had become a real person to me.

Seeing people this way is a skill that Jesus valued. He said that someday people who were observant of the down-and-out would stand on his right and hear him say, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Surprised, these sharp-eyed folks would ask, “When did we see you . . .?” (Matt. 25:35-37). Oddly enough, the inattentive people on Jesus’ left who overlooked the hungry, thirsty, sick or imprisoned would ask the same question. Yet they’d looked right through the needy and went on. Because of the first group’s observant eyes, they got to become the hands and feet of Jesus Christ here on earth.

Seeing people this way is not automatic in our hurry-driven world, but I’ve found that we can help each other with this. My kids helped me that day, and so did Delsinore. One time, we invited her to our home for dinner, but she didn’t come. The next time we saw her, I asked (a little exasperated), “What can I do to help you?” Her answer: “Sit here and talk to me.” All she wanted was for us to hang out with her. She taught me that seeing is about gazing into people’s eyes and forming relationships.

As we learn to truly see people who used to be invisible to us, we also learn to launch out and build relationships with them. Our family has since served holiday meals at street missions, talking with people and urging our kids to play with the kids of the guests. We’ve visited elderly folks in nursing homes, asking questions and singing songs together. When we participated in a Habitat for Humanity project, the best part was listening to the woman whose home we were repairing. Hearing from her about how it had been rocked off its foundation in the Northridge earthquake helped us see her and her needs. And we began writing to our World Vision sponsored child and praying for him at dinner every night.

Volunteering this way is changing all of us. We’re learning to value compassion, patience, and initiative over personality, flair, and sex appeal. We focus on giving more instead of having more. Offering cups of cold water also works against what I call “spiritual greed,” in which our relationship with God is mostly about me, myself, and I. Bedtime and mealtime prayers are not only, “Bless me—bless people I love—bless folks I know,” but also, “Bless Dels and her friends. Show us how to help.” And now in this panicked, post-Sept. 11 world, the compassionate love of God is casting out fear as we remember to see this world God so loves.

Children with Eyes That See

A child’s eye view of the world can make everything clear.

Jan Johnson is a journalist, retreat leader, and author of Growing Compassionate Kids and When the Soul Listens. She lives with her family in Simi Valley, Calif.

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