thanks to you

It has been a year of blessings, with God pouring out those blessings through your prayers and your gifts. Your support made so much possible in 2002. Millions of lives are being changed by the food and water, health care, education, emergency relief, and economic development that child sponsorship funds.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

—EPHESIANS 5:1,2

Financial Highlights, Fiscal Year 2002

Contributions and revenue (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>private contributions</td>
<td>$ 265.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private gifts-in-kind</td>
<td>$ 171.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public cash and food</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>other income</td>
<td>$ 5.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>total income</td>
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Program expenditures (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>program services and future comms</td>
<td>$ 464.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>fund raising</td>
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<tr>
<td>management and general</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>total expenses</td>
<td>$533.0</td>
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</table>

Sponsorship by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children benefiting worldwide</td>
<td>2.1 million</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
<td>1.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children benefiting U.S.</td>
<td>717,155</td>
<td>670,386</td>
<td>597,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

World Vision magazine has a new look! Our news section—Your World Vision—includes six more pages covering World Vision projects in the United States and worldwide. What hasn’t changed? Our magazine, a free subscription, continues to share stories of how your gifts are improving the lives of children and families everywhere. (Despite the changes, the publication still costs less than 35 cents to print and mail.) We welcome your comments to: The Editor, World Vision magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA, 98063-9716 or e-mail us at wvmagazine@worldvision.org.

Please send address changes at least 30 days before moving and enclose the address label clipped from a current copy or return envelope.

Charter Member, Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability
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World Vision Summer 2003 | 3
When a Child Dies

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. —Psalm 56:8

NOT EVERY CHILD HELPED BY WORLDVISION lives “happily ever after.”

One of the grinding realities we face each day in our work is the appalling statistics of child suffering and mortality in the developing world.

I know the statistics by heart: 1.3 billion people live on less than a dollar a day; 2.3 billion drink water contaminated with bacteria and disease; 740 million are severely malnourished; and—most shocking of all—29,000 children die each day of preventable, poverty-related causes. That equals 1,200 children dying every single hour of every single day! Even knowing these statistics as I do, they never prepare me to come face to face with one of the millions of families who have lost a child.

Tears flowed freely on that morning when I sat in the small home of Lesbia Arana Valiente in Guatemala, listening to the story of her daughter Marcia. Marcia, 12, had died of lupus just nine days before. She was the joy of her mother’s life, the eldest of three—a girl of remarkable strength with a sparkling and optimistic personality.

Through her grief, Lesbia recounted Marcia’s long and painful struggle against the disease. I felt the pain of parents who had no money, no insurance, and no access to medical care for the daughter they loved so much. After being turned away by doctors and clinics because they were poor, they finally turned to WorldVision.

While Marcia was not a sponsored child, her sister, 6-year-old Betzaida, is. Our commitment is to help all children in the communities we serve, not just the ones who are sponsored.

Marcia did receive the best medical treatment available thanks to WorldVision Guatemala staff. Marcia even told her mother that she wanted to write a letter to leave behind, thanking WorldVision for giving her hope. Sadly, she died before that letter could be written.

WorldVision’s goal in every community in which we work is, first, to preserve life. Only then can we implement programs that enrich children’s lives and allow them to reach their full potential. How did we fail in the case of Marcia? Was our effort in vain?

If we see this story through an earthly lens, Marcia became just another number for the statisticians. But I reject any such conclusion with all my heart.

No act of love and compassion done in the name of Christ is ever in vain. No triumph of the human spirit, ever in death, is a failure. Marcia’s life, her heroic struggle, and her unswerving faith in God allow us to rejoice and thank God, through my tears, that WorldVision could play even a small part in Marcia’s story.

Toward the end of this mother’s story of grief, my friend and colleague Scott Jackson put his arms around Lesbia and said through his own tears: “You did everything you could. She’s with the Lord now. We’ll take her story back with us forever in vain. No triumph of the human spirit, ever in death, is a failure. Marcia’s life, her heroic struggle, and her unswerving faith in God allow us to rejoice and thank God, through my tears, that WorldVision could play even a small part in Marcia’s story.”

If any of us that day doubted why we had chosen to invest our lives in the work of WorldVision, we had no such doubts as we said goodbye to the Valiente family. Forget Marcia’s story? No! I don’t think any of us will ever forget that day.

“WorldVision helped Marcia while she was in the hospital,” says Betzaida Valiente. “Now Betzaida’s sister, Marcia, is with Jesus.”

WorldVision Summer 2003 | 3

When the President

From the President

[reader services]

Find out how you can get involved with WorldVision

We’d love to share more information with you about our programs and about partnering with World Vision to care for the poor. Check the boxes on the form below, and return it in the envelope provided between pages 16 and 17. For more information, call (888) 511-6518 or visit www.worldvision.org

Share World Vision with your family

1. FAMILY SPONSORSHIP World Vision’s newest sponsorship program allows you to break the cycle of poverty by sponsoring an entire family in Ghana, Romania, Sri Lanka, or El Salvador.

2. WORLDVISION GIFT CATALOG On behalf of your loved ones, give unique gifts such as goats, bicycles, or medical supplies in need.

Bring World Vision to your church

3. 30 HOUR FAMINE Get your youth group or school involved in the fight against world hunger by participating in World Vision’s nationwide annual famine event, www.30hourfamine.org

4. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE Order “Planting Seeds of Hope,” a catalog of books, videos, and publications about urgent global issues.

5. LOVE LOAF Help your congregation learn more about world poverty as they collect offerings for your church and World Vision.

6. REACHING OUT TO THE POOR A World Vision staff person will call you with ways World Vision can help your church reach out to the poor.

Expand your world vision

7. EMERGENCY RELIEF RESPONSE Receive e-mail updates on how WorldVision is responding to emergency relief situations. Must provide e-mail address to receive these updates.

8. WOMEN OF VISION Join a volunteer ministry that serves the poor, learning from and advocating for women in developing countries; www.worldvision.org

9. WORLDVISION’S PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES Find out what WorldVision is doing for U.S. children through tutoring programs, inner-city youth initiatives, and other domestic ministries.

10. WORLDVISION ADVOCACY Learn how to be an advocate for the poor and those in need around the world. Go to www.worldvision.org/worldadvocacy.

Show World Vision to your company

11. MATCHING GIFTS Learn how your employer may match your contribution to World Vision.

12. DONATE GIFTS-IN-KIND Discover how your company can donate new, surplus inventory that can save lives in the United States and overseas.

13. DONATE SHIPPING DOLLARS Funds for shipping gifts-in-kind can leverage the value of sending products overseas.

14. CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS Your company can benefit by supporting WorldVision.

Share your resources with WorldVision

15. GIFT PLANNING Establish a legacy of hope by including WorldVision in your will or learn about other estate-planning options.

16. KEY CONTRIBUTORS Donate your car, boat, real estate, or recreational vehicle to WorldVision and receive a tax deduction for your contribution.

17. LPGA PLAYING PARTNERS Support WorldVision by supporting your favorite top female pro, tackling poverty through her game.

18. VOLUNTEER THROUGH WORLDVISION Volunteer through World Vision.

19. ARTIST ASSOCIATES Help Christian artists promote child sponsorship by volunteering at a local concert.

Know World Vision’s reason for hope

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

2. Show World Vision to my company

3. Share my resources with World Vision

4. Volunteer through World Vision

5. Expand my world vision

6. Know World Vision’s reason for hope

7. Phone ________________________ E-mail ______________________________________

8. City/State/Zip ______________________________________________________________

9. Address __________________________________________________________________

10. Name ____________________________________________________________________
IRAQ > Children are central in World Vision’s plans to help needy Iraqis. The trauma and deprivations of conflict have compounded children’s existing health problems, such as malnutrition. Through long-term programs in Iraq, World Vision aims to meet the range of children’s needs—physical as well as emotional.

“It's quite a disastrous situation children face,” says Dr. Doris Knoechel, senior World Vision relief officer based in Amman, Jordan. “Ten years of upheaval in Iraq has had its impact on children’s health.”

According to UNICEF, Iraq is among the world’s worst countries for child mortality—one in eight children dies before age 5. One third of Iraqi children are malnourished, and a quarter are born underweight.

As soon as security conditions allow, Knoechel and other World Vision staff will conduct an on-the-ground assessment in Iraq focusing on children and other vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and the elderly.

In response to malnutrition, World Vision plans to distribute food provided by the World Food Programme to 250,000 people. In addition, a relief shipment leaving World Vision’s warehouse in Denver in April contained nutrient-dense food especially for malnourished children, provided by the World Food Programme to 250,000 people. In addition, a relief shipment leaving World Vision’s warehouse in Denver in April contained nutrient-dense food especially for malnourished children, enough for 240,000 meals.

World Vision will also address children’s emotional well-being. Surveys of young people before the war revealed escalating fear and anxiety. Boys and girls not old enough to remember the first Gulf War worried about being left alone if their parents died. Some exhibited sleep disturbances, concentration problems, and depression.

“Some children have more resilience to deal with fear-filled situations; others do not,” says Heather MacLeod, World Vision’s child protection coordinator.

“Children need to know they have a safe place.”

In postwar Iraq, MacLeod and other World Vision staff are working with the Inter-Agency Working Group on Children and the Team on Children in Conflict. The organization is assessing children’s needs in refugee camps in Jordan and amid a large stockpile of relief supplies to help fleeing civilians.

When war broke out, World Vision was operational in refugee camps in Jordan and Syria that could collectively accommodate 70,000 people. Although the large-scale refugee outflow did not materialize, the aid is being rerouted to areas where it’s needed most in the region.

The situation in Iraq is highly fluid. For the latest news of World Vision’s response in the Middle East, please visit our Web site, www.worldvision.org.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) > Displaced families on the civil war’s front line received maize, oil, and salt in World Vision’s largest-ever food delivery to the country. Some 67,000 people in Ankoro had been hungry for three months while fighting kept aid at bay. Families had to scavenge in the bush to survive. In March, World Vision sent more than 600 metric tons of food to remote Ankor—a journey of seven days by rail and then boat, through rebel-controlled territory. Aid agencies have been all but shut out of this embattled region for three years. “People know World Vision is their only hope,” says Philip Atwill, World Vision’s relief manager in DRC.

Jordan > World Vision awarded the 2002 Robert A. Pierce Award for Christian Service to a priest in Karak, Jordan. Father Khalil Jaar launched a reconciliation project between Israeli and Arab students that teaches them to respect their neighbors of different backgrounds. Father Khalil has also worked with World Vision, including a partnership after the Gulf War to care for Iraqi and Kuwaiti refugees in Jordan. “I don’t expect people to thank me,” he says. “It’s my job to help and serve. This award was a reminder that I am a member of World Vision’s family.”

China > After a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck Xinjiang, China, World Vision relief officer Mei-mei Loong (above) comforts women who lost their sister in a collapsed house. World Vision responded to the Feb. 27 disaster by distributing flour to 10,000 survivors and helping to rebuild schools.

Average life expectancy in industrialized nations: 78
Average life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa: 48 (UNICEF)

Q. What is life like in these AIDS-affected communities?
A. Grandparents are reaching a stage in their lives when they should be able to reduce their own burden, when they can be cared for themselves and have a chance to rest. Yet because of AIDS, they must care for little children. It [also] worries me that children are losing their childhoods. When you see a 10- or 11-year-old child who is now head of the household, it really touches your heart.

Q. As a parent, what went through your mind when you visited the orphans?
A. These kids do not have an easy life. Life is reduced to the basics. But it struck me that despite the hardships, they are still happy. They sing, they dance, and they can still smile. They’re just like children everywhere. They want to play, laugh, have friends. Ugandan children are so special, so beautiful. I will never forget those beaming smiles.

Q. Should Americans be concerned about HIV/AIDS in Africa?
A. We should all be concerned about the needs of orphans. We should be concerned about anyone who suffers unnecessarily. There are children here who need our help.
Thank You  >  In Summer 2001, World Vision magazine recommended urging Congress to vote for the Clean Diamonds Act. Thousands of you responded, sending postcards to your representatives. The World Vision-supported legislation was signed into law by President Bush on April 25, 2003. The conflict diamond law stops the import of “blood diamonds” from rebel-controlled mines in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Congo.

In the Media  

Edwardsville, Mich.  >  About 23 years ago, Dorothy Skronski found a little blue camel figurine in a trash pit at the family cottage on Pine Lake.

She took it home, washed it and put it on her window sill. About a year later, she decided it needed company. Now, it has about 150 brothers and sisters, and the latest sibling is real.

At her surprise 70th birthday open house last Sunday, Skronski received a live camel... well, sort of.

A camel was purchased for $350 through the humanitarian organization, World Vision, which will deliver it to a family in a Third World country. Depending on the family’s needs, the camel will be used as a work animal or for transportation. Even Skronski has no doubt that the live camel, for which she has a certificate, is the largest in her collection.

“I thought it was a neat idea,” said Gail Dohse, who employed Skronski in her H&R Block tax business during the busy season, and who saw the camel idea promoted just before Christmas on the television program “The View.”

“I was for them he built the greenhouse.”

“The future. Only the present.”

Growing up, Jozsef Berki had two strikes against him: He was an orphan and a Gypsy. Dropped off at a Romanian orphanage as a toddler, he lived in institutions until age 17. Gypsies (or Romas) make up 5 percent of the population of Romania—although nonofficial figures are higher because people hide their ethnicity—and are the subject of much discrimination. Most hope just to be married one day. But not Jozsef. The first thing he did after leaving the orphanage was finish high school. He worked as a plumber while taking night classes, saving money by eating just bread, margarine, and yogurt. When he graduated, he returned to his birthplace, Cluj.

Jozsef, now 44, is married and has three daughters—the center of his life. It was for them he built the greenhouse.

“What are you going to do with all that stuff?” neighbors asked Jozsef when, through World Vision’s Family Sponsorship program, staff brought cement, tubing, metal arches, and plastic covering to Jozsef’s house. “They didn’t understand that a greenhouse can bring profit,” Jozsef explains. “They can’t see the future. Only the present.”

Jozsef had been planning with World Vision for the new greenhouse for months, taking agricultural training classes and meeting weekly with an agricultural counselor. Now, more than plants are in bloom. Jozsef is also leading the way in his community.


— Ioana Bindea

In the Media  

Glad You Asked

How does World Vision prepare to help in Iraq and with other humanitarian crises?

World Vision supplies bound for Iraq are loaded from a warehouse in Brindisi, Italy.

In the United States, more than 400,000 children received school supplies or tutoring from World Vision and its partners.

The Family Man

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— Ioana Bindea
Walking in Faith

You’ll hear Steve Stirling’s walk before you see him. Metal crutches and leg braces squeak lightly between heavy steps. In perfect rhythm, he swings his crutches, then his legs, as he walks down the hall. Balancing his briefcase and crutches, he opens the door for a co-worker.

Steve’s life has been a journey of learning to walk gracefully—and in grace. As vice president of marketing operations for World Vision’s U.S. headquarters, he oversees efforts to ensure that every donor’s contact through the call center and Internet is a positive experience.

Steve’s own experience with World Vision began more than 40 years ago, on the steps of a Korean orphanage. He was born Cho Myung Soon in 1956. At 15 months old, Steve was struck with polio. His first memories are painful visits to herbalists, faith healers, and doctors to help him regain the ability to walk. Nothing worked. So his parents left him, at 6, outside the local orphanage.

But God had a plan for Steve. In the late 1950s, World Vision founder Bob Pierce campaigned in the United States for people to sponsor, adopt, and help orphans from the Korean War. One couple, Harry and Bertha Holt, felt called to open an orphanage in Korea with World Vision’s support.

This was the orphanage that took in Steve. A few years later, Jim and Lynn Stirling visited the Holt Orphanage and adopted him. “He was the brightest little guy with a huge smile,” Lynn recalls. “At the end of our visit, we were headed up the hill from the orphanage. Because of his trouble walking with leg braces, we offered to help Steve, but he wanted to show he could do it himself. That has been his attitude all of his life.

“And he’s always been a smart businessman,” Lynn adds. “When he was in elementary school, the kids were playing marbles. He’d win all the games.”

Steve worked hard to excel. He feared that if he didn’t, he wouldn’t be loved. He won scholarships to college and later for his MBA. “I was charging forward. I was nice to people because I wanted their acceptance,” Steve admits. “I wanted to use them to get ahead.”

Steve’s motives underwent a radical change a few years later, however. One night, his wife, Sook Hee, who was a Buddhist, was praying to Buddha to become pregnant. “She opened her eyes and saw a light in the shape of a cross in our bedroom,” Steve says. “We knew we needed to go to church.

“In that church [16 years ago] we truly heard the gospel and became Christians,” he continues. “I realized I couldn’t earn God’s grace. Before, all the work I did was for self-gain. I got everything I thought I wanted, and it left me so unfulfilled.”

Then, in 1994 at a Promise Keepers event, Steve says, “God broke my heart again. I was making more money than I ever thought possible, but God said, ‘No—I want you to do something different.’”

God made the path clear when Steve was laid off as his company downsized in 2000. “I really felt that man,” Steve says. “And he’s always been a smart businessman.”

That’s when the hard-driving businessman put his talents to work for World Vision, the organization that helped start the orphanage that saved his life 43 years ago. He and Sook Hee now also have two teenagers, Richard and Rachael. When Steve reflects on his walk with God, “I feel like that man.”

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---Carlo Swanson-Gokteiro

Wishing on a Star

The World Vision Wishling is here!

This soft, huggable, plush toy was created from the imagination of a child: Hattie Straube (right), age 8 of Kalamazoo, Mich., won a national art contest for her design of the World Vision Wishling.

For every purchase of the World Vision Wishling for $7.99, Hasbro, Inc will donate $1 to World Vision to help children around the world. Available at CVS Pharmacies.

FYI

Get Involved

Women of Vision is a volunteer ministry committed to demonstrating tangible evidence of God’s love to oppressed and impoverished women throughout the world. Participants are women who want to make a difference and who are willing to use their resources to improve the quality of life for women and children living in poverty and despair.

Mark your calendar for the sixth-annual national conference for Women of Vision: “A Child is Waiting … Plant the Seed of Hope.” The conference, focusing on child and family sponsorship, will be held at the Seattle Marriott Waterfront hotel Oct. 9-12. Join Rich Stearns; his wife, Reneé; Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Women of Vision from across the nation. For more information, go to www.womenofvision.org.

Vision Youth trains youth outreach workers based in churches to mentor at-risk teens to make good decisions and set healthy goals for life. They also coordinate tutoring programs and mobilize volunteers for community outreach.

The Storehouse is a network of warehouses that distribute products—ranging from clothing, toys, toiletries, and household items—donated by U.S. merchants and manufacturers to churches and organizations, which give them to needy children and families.

Children in Need is a joint project between World Vision, the School and Home Office Products Association. SHOPA donates excess school supplies to World Vision for distribution to teachers in low-income public-school districts.

Tools for Transformation provides community networking and leadership training for local leaders, giving them the skills to develop visions and pull together the resources that make a lasting difference in people’s lives.

Emergency response programs mobilize churches and send aid to victims of storms, floods, and other U.S. disasters.

World Vision programs serving U.S. children and families

KidREACH offers hope and demonstrates God’s love by providing adult and young-adult tutors and mentors for students facing academic or social obstacles to learning.

Get Coats for Coat-A-Child

Get Involved

For more information, go to www.womenofvision.org.

Women of Vision in Honduras

SANDY HESS/WORLD VISION

KARI COSTANZA/WORLD VISION

Women of Vision in Honduras

Kids in Need

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Sponsorship starts with helping children. But it leads to so much more.

BY JANE SUTTON-REDNER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JON WARREN
THE WOODEN DOORS AND shutters of the ramshackle school are open wide, but there’s not enough breeze to relieve the stifling, damp afternoon heat. Inside, members of a tiny Amazon riverside community persevere to discuss the school itself—how to fix it up or rebuild it before the place falls on their children’s heads. World Vision’s project manager, Dorothea Luz, hands out blank pieces of paper and directs everyone to draw their ideas for a new school. The minutes pass; no one draws. A few people fan themselves with the paper.

“It’s not that they don’t care. It’s not even that they can’t do it, although most of these adults probably never studied beyond the fourth grade. One man explains, “We don’t want to feed a dream that might not come true.”

To Dorothea, this is precisely the reason World Vision works in the Amazon: to help people fight for their dreams. “Don’t believe people who say they can’t help because they can’t read, or say they have a pain in their leg so they’re useless,” stresses Dorothea, a petite, tough woman who never minces words. “There’s always something you can do.”

“You have a partner,” she concludes. “World Vision is your partner. But I will not carry you on my back. When you break your leg, you use a cane until it’s better. That’s what I am: a support until you don’t need me anymore.”

A support, not a carrier; a partner, not a parent—these are key ways to describe World Vision’s role in communities not just in Brazil, but across the globe. The process can take decades.

World Vision begins by helping families meet basic needs through sponsorship, focusing on children. In time, as sponsorship continues to cover children’s education and health care, parents learn how to improve their economic circumstances, with World Vision staff playing a consulting role. Eventually, communities can continue their progress on their own. It’s World Vision’s goal: to build a church and a school.

“The woodworkers and the painters work together,” José da Tapera, a Belo Horizonte resident, says. “It’s our own community, our own work. We build with our own hands.”

THE WORK BEGINS IN THE AMAZON

The Amazon region, where remote, has its advantages: plentiful fish and fruit, good rainfall, and the ability to live simply in a wooden house with a small plot of land and a canoe. The spectacular ecosystem of the river and rainforest enchants everyone, young and old. “In the Amazon, everything is so natural,” explains Shirley Siqueira Oliveira, 10, a World Vision-sponsored child. “You can touch the river, feel the wind, and see the trees. You can do anything in the river. That makes it very special.”

What’s missing are better educational opportunities; jobs, other than small farming; health services; and amenities such as electricity and phones. In pursuit of those things, thousands of families have already moved to the closest city, Manaus, only to end up in shantytowns lining the hillsides—trading rural frustrations for drugs and violence. Amazon riverside residents are beginning to realize they can have a better life, with World Vision’s help. They already know World Vision because of its medical boat, a partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Manaus. This boat has carried doctors and dentists to the region since 1992, serving more than 4,000 people a year with health care, agricultural assistance, and Christian witness. A donor gift

Sponsorship helps children like Elizara da Silva feel valued.

Water Is Life

A powerful partner helps World Vision combat chronic water shortages.

The horse-drawn wagon moves slowly down the unpaved road, kicking up reddish dust. It’s carrying precious cargo: wooden barrels filled with water from rivers miles away. This is how families get water here in São José da Tapera—a town in Alagoas state, northeast Brazil.

Water Is Life project teams continue to build family and community cisterns, rehabilitate artesian wells, and search for new water sources for farm irrigation—giving hundreds of families like Maria’s a fighting chance against the next deadly drought.

Above, Maria de Souza’s children pull up water from their new cistern, provided by World Vision and Swiss Re.
of three more boats in 2000 opened the way to expand World Vision’s relationships with these families, targeting 1,700 children for sponsorship.

Shirley’s mom, Neuri Sequeira, 33, recalls the day a staff member emerged from the boat and talked to the community about sponsorship. “It was wonderful. She woke up something in our hearts.”

Neuri, who is president of her community, observes, “People here don’t have any perspective of improvement. They get used to poverty and bad conditions. But when Regina came, people really bit into what she was saying. When she talked about sponsorship, hope was raised in us. Parents could have dreams for their children.”

Which is exactly where World Vision starts. Parents’ most-cherished hopes are not for themselves, but for their children—for education and a better life. Sponsorship fulfills these hopes, and eventually the spirit of improvement encompasses the entire community.

Dreaming has given way to action. World Vision taps local leaders like Neuri to fill in for staff between boat visits—making the rounds of all the sponsored children in their communities. World Vision trained Neuri in basic health care so she can help people with simple illnesses. She regularly teaches classes on hygiene and every month leads meetings to discuss the community’s most urgent problems and how to solve them.

She also teaches at the preschool World Vision started. Dorothea calls her “the best return on my investment.”


ALAGOAS: MOVING FROM SUBSISTENCE TO SUCCESS

“The northeast is our Africa,” explains one World Vision Brazil staff member about this arid region where World Vision is in the middle of its development phase. This region has the lowest life expectancy and the highest infant
mortality rates in the country. Nordestinos are mostly subsistence farmers, waging a constant battle with the elements to coax enough food out of the ground for their families. The window for planting and harvesting is slight, just about three months. In between, life is lean.

World Vision started sponsorship projects in Alagoas state in 1985. Staff first focused on these small farmers and their often-malnourished children. Slowly, nutrition education and agricultural assistance enabled the population to move beyond mere survival. Today, an energetic community association works alongside World Vision to reach to the next level: exploring income-generating innovations such as organic farming and free-range chicken raising.

One of those most impressive displays is on Ilha do Ferro (Iron Island), located on the San Francisco River—a lush, 30-acre farm sprawled between two hills. Twenty-five families (parents of sponsored children) farm here year-round, raising organic fruits and vegetables for meals plus selling more than 3,000 pounds of produce a month to local supermarkets.

Islanders say the land lay fallow a decade ago, when a hydroelectric plant lowered the river level and dried out the rice paddies. “There was nothing for us,” says Gilvania Teixeira Dias, 46, mother

of two sponsored children, whose husband, Aberaldo, is a farmer. In 1999, World Vision set up an irrigation system to draw water from the river, mix it with natural fertilizers, and pipe it throughout the farm. Staff taught farmers how to raise crops with organic methods.

Now farmers are starting to outgrow the rural marketplace. They must soon decide whether they can ramp up their yields to accommodate the city supermarket chains, which demand 13,000 pounds of produce a week.

The organic farm isn’t the only island landmark. A short walk away, Gilvania and a few dozen other women gather in a crowded patio, embroidering on linen stretched across round wooden frames. They sew intricate designs—techniques passed down mother-to-daughter for generations. Their murmuring mingles with the breeze from the river.

“I usually work here from very early in the morning until late,” says farmer João de Farias Filho, 58 (above), of the organic farm that World Vision supports in rural Alagoas. “I’m putting all of myself into it.” Joao’s motivation is his four children, all sponsored by World Vision.

The Oliveira sisters (right) are daughters of an Amazon community leader and are sponsored children: Shirley, 10, Giovana, 5, and Barbara, 11. Below left, a World Vision reading program in Alagoas ignites children’s imaginations. Nearby, embroidery (below right) has turned into an industry for mothers of sponsored children.
The calm industriousness of these women bordadeiras is fairly new. Before they organized into a cooperative to sell their products, the embroidery trade resembled a feeding frenzy. Co-op president Regina Souza Rodrigues, 36, explains, “When a tourist would show up, we would all run after that person, trying to sell our things for just 1 real [about 30 cents].”

Working together, 48 women improved the quality—and the purchase price—of their tablecloths, handkerchiefs, beddings, and other items. Then World Vision helped them market their products, the embroidery trade resembles a program to combat alcohol abuse and worked with the government to improve services such as water and electricity. A decade later, hundreds of children are in school and healthy. A loan program helped adults expand businesses, which led to more jobs for the community. But local leaders worried about the transition. The residents of the Jardim Uchôa community are meeting this challenge as they have many others—with everyone pitching in. Since 1980, when many of the families first moved here, they’ve tackled community problems with help from World Vision and a local Presbyterian church. “World Vision motivated us to improve ourselves,” says Antonio Bezerra, a community organizer. While sponsorship funds helped their children, adults formed a program to combat alcohol abuse and worked with the government to improve services such as water and electricity. ---

Near Recife, a city on Brazil’s northeast coast, communities are getting ready for 2005, when World Vision will phase out of the area. Though this is World Vision’s goal everywhere it works, the communities themselves have much to do with the timetable for this transition. The residents of the Jardim Uchôa community are meeting this challenge as they have many others—with everyone pitching in. Since 1980, when many of the families first moved here, they’ve tackled community problems with help from World Vision and a local Presbyterian church. “World Vision motivated us to improve ourselves,” says Antonio Bezerra, a community organizer. While sponsorship funds helped their children, adults formed a program to combat alcohol abuse and worked with the government to improve services such as water and electricity. A decade later, hundreds of children were in school and healthy. A loan program helped adults expand businesses, which led to more jobs for the community. But local leaders worried about the transition. The residents of the Jardim Uchôa community are meeting this challenge as they have many others—with everyone pitching in. Since 1980, when many of the families first moved here, they’ve tackled community problems with help from World Vision and a local Presbyterian church. “World Vision motivated us to improve ourselves,” says Antonio Bezerra, a community organizer. While sponsorship funds helped their children, adults formed a program to combat alcohol abuse and worked with the government to improve services such as water and electricity. ---

One night he joins a group of youth performing the capoeira, a martial-arts inspired dance originating with African slaves brought over by Dutch colonists in the 1600s. The boys pair off in the center of a circle of chanting dancers. They jump, kick, and pivot with orchestrated grace and agility. The most limber boys turn back-flips, to cheers from the crowd. World Vision promotes capoeira to keep kids from street activity. But it’s also a powerful connection to the past that resonates with these kids, many of them descendents of African slaves. It gives them pride in their identity, belief in themselves. These are important messages for the poor in Brazil—or anywhere. When people start to value themselves apart from their circumstances, it transforms the self-image that poverty has distorted. In the words of Jairo Gomes Silva, 22, a young man sponsored by World Vision for 14 years, “There’s a purpose. We are not just here because we are born. We have a right to do something.” World Vision helps people find this purpose—the potential God intends for everyone. Starting with the helping hand of sponsorship, the support continues until communities are ready to walk on their own and reach for their dreams. ■

For more photos and information about World Vision’s work in Brazil, see our special feature on the Web at www.worldvision.org/magazine

Recife youth are prone to problems such as drugs, gangs, and pregnancy. World Vision’s programs—including traditional capoeira dancing (above left), clothing art, and carpentry—help keep kids out of trouble and encourage them to use their gifts.

Eliedson Machado da Silva, 16, works in a recycling center outside Recife. The project is a new income source for the community, as World Vision is phasing out in a few years. Eliedson, sponsored by World Vision, is a key member of the recycling team. He has been chosen for special training: “Eliedson is a good investment,” says community organizer Antonia Bezerra.

In 1992 they started vocational training for youth. Kids learned skills such as sewing, maintaining computers, photography, electrical work, and construction. Two of the courses—carpentry and broom-making—evolved naturally into actual businesses, employing former students. The youth earn a portion of the income, and the rest of the profits benefit community programs. This gave community leaders an idea with even greater promise: a plastic recycling business. When fully operational, the recycling center will sort, clean, and grind empty plastic containers into pellets that fetch four to five times more money from recycling companies than the original items. The potential income, says Antonio Bezerra, will sustain the communities after World Vision phases out. Eliedson Machado da Silva, 16, sponsored by World Vision, was chosen to represent the community at a professional recycling training course. The prestigious seventh-grader seems on track to be a local leader. He’s everywhere on his bicycle, chatting with everybody, unafraid to practice his classroom English on visitors. One night he joins a group of youth performing the capoeira, a martial-arts inspired dance originating with African slaves brought over by Dutch colonists in the 1600s. The boys pair off in the center of a circle of chanting dancers. They jump, kick, and pivot with orchestrated grace and agility. The most limber boys turn back-flips, to cheers from the crowd. World Vision promotes capoeira to keep kids from street activity. But it’s also a powerful connection to the past that resonates with these kids, many of them descendents of African slaves. It gives them pride in their identity, belief in themselves. These are important messages for the poor in Brazil—or anywhere. When people start to value themselves apart from their circumstances, it transforms the self-image that poverty has distorted. In the words of Jairo Gomes Silva, 22, a young man sponsored by World Vision for 14 years, “There’s a purpose. We are not just here because we are born. We have a right to do something.” World Vision helps people find this purpose—the potential God intends for everyone. Starting with the helping hand of sponsorship, the support continues until communities are ready to walk on their own and reach for their dreams. ■

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For Bruce and Darlene Marie Wilkinson, the journey began with a closed door. After 25 years as president and founder of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, Bruce Wilkinson sensed God’s call to something different. Convinced that God was about to enlarge his territory of influence through television and motion pictures, he decided to make the Los Angeles area his home base. So he and Darlene Marie flew to California to look for a house in April 2002. What should have been a routine trip took an unexpected turn when they couldn’t find the right house. If God was leading, why was nothing working out? The Wilkinsons temporarily called off the search that month to take a scheduled ministry trip to Africa. Bruce booked a flight back to California for June. But God had other plans.

The major newspaper in Johannesburg, South Africa, had big block letters for the headline: “Four million people dying of hunger.” It told stories of people dying of hunger and the traumatic devastation of AIDS. Well, like everybody in America, we’ve heard these things. But for some reason, it’s like God reached down and grabbed both of our hearts and squeezed them and then broke them, right there in our hotel room, totally unexpectedly. Not Hollywood, but Africa? Bruce needed confirmation. I asked the Lord: “Is that really what you want me to do?” Because if you open your heart in the least to all the pain and trauma in Africa, it will break. I asked the Lord, “Would you please confirm through the nationals in Nigeria that your call to my life is going to be here in Africa; and secondly, would you let me meet with the president of Nigeria and ask him a specific question—and will you have him answer yes to that question?”

From South Africa, Bruce traveled to Nigeria to talk to 10,000 Christian leaders for a week. He learned that pastors were fleeing from the north—the lives in danger; their churches being burned; Bruce asked the pastors to return north to preach— even if it meant death. Then he invited pastors to come forward to signal their willingness to go. More than 500 people moved forward. Afterward, Bruce talked to a bishop over 1,500 churches, asking him to interpret what had just happened. He said, “If you’d have said you were going to give a public invitation for people to move back north and had asked how many I thought would go, I’d have said, maybe five. If you’d have asked, ‘What would a miracle be?’ I would have told you 50. What happened in this room is unexplainable. Only God does this, and God used you in our nation as a turning point.”

When Bruce met with the president of Nigeria, he asked him if he would visit South Africa to discuss what the Bible says about HIV/AIDS in Africa. The president’s answer: “Yes.” Bruce had his confirmation. They would move to Africa. He called Darlene Marie.

“Are you sitting down?” I asked. “I believe God is calling us to Africa.”

“What? Africa? I thought we were moving to California!”

“I did too,” I said. And then I told her what had happened in Nigeria. “Will you follow me to Africa?”

“When I married you,” she said, “I pledged I would follow you to the ends of the earth, and it’s never changed in my heart.”

So that was the end of that. There was no argument.
There was no arm-twisting. Of course, we prayed and discussed it a lot, but ultimately we came as one person.

And God had prepared their teenage daughter as well. We have three children—two married and one in her teens—and Jessica had come with us to Kenya and Uganda last year. In Uganda, God got ahold of her deeply, and she fell in love with the people of Africa. On the way home she said, “You know, I left a part of my heart in Africa. It wouldn’t surprise me someday if I came back.”

Bruce knew that praying the prayer of Jabez would not guarantee an easy life. You know, Darlene Marie and I are not in our 20s, our 30s, or our 40s, and changing cultures has been a challenge. It’s been stressful. Praying the prayer of Jabez and living the prayer of Jabez is an extremely difficult way to live, because you need to follow God wherever he asks you to go. He doesn’t ask us—we proceed down the road of maturity—for just a little bit more of our life. If we keep pursuing him, and we get closer and closer to walking his footsteps for us, he asks for more and more.

And that prayer obviously isn’t magical. It’s just a way of putting into words the attitude God wants us to have. It’s a matter of praying day after day, week after week, month after month, “Please let me do more for you. Please increase my influence for you. Do whatever you need to for me and in our family so that we do not hinder you answering that prayer.”

Bruce knew that when you receive God’s answer to those prayers, you must follow. As we asked God to please expand our territory, little did we know that he would say, “Well, the territory I have in mind is Africa.” You can’t be praying, ever you need to for me and in our family so that we do not hinder you answering that prayer.”

Bruce’s message for American Christians? We must feel the pain of Africa. In America we hear the numbers about AIDS, but we don’t connect them with people. People are dying—and they’re dying to know what the Bible says about it. “What should I do? How should I feel? I’m dying of AIDS and I was never unfaithful to my husband. I never did anything wrong, and because my husband was with a prostitute while on the road, now I’m dying. Where is God in all this?” It wasn’t their immoral act that caused them to get AIDS. It was the immoral act of someone else.

So many say to me, “I don’t know what to do. I want to connect, but I can’t.”
Balinese Hero

His life was touched by sponsorship. Now this man of faith saves lives.

by Sanjay Sojwal and Andrea Swinburne-Jones

Born as I Nangah Wiadnjana to a high-caste Hindu family in Bali in 1956, Steven could have expected a life as a community leader. But when he was 10, his mother left his father. His new stepmother mistreated Steven and his five siblings, who were eventually sent to live with other relatives.

The family breakdown could not have come at a worse time. Three years earlier, in 1963, Mount Agung had erupted, spreading lava and ash over the sparse farmland and devastating the island’s already tenuous economy. Food and other commodities were scarce.

Steven recalls going to the forest to gather fruit, then struggling to sleep on an empty stomach because he had given his portion to a younger sister.

“As my ancestors used to climb coconut trees and gather the juice to make alcohol. Maybe I would be doing that instead.”

Steven touched many lives that day. But without World Vision sponsorship, he believes he wouldn’t have been in a position to help. His sponsor’s support was critical in his journey from rural poverty to a successful career and a life of faith.

“I believe those words came from God, so I keep them in my heart,” Steven says. “They are always at the back of my mind when I am seeing my patients.”

In 1973, Steven enrolled in medical school at Bali’s best university, Udayana. After graduating in 1982, he served his internship on a neighboring island. That year, he also married Carmela, whom he had been dating for several years.

Steven later returned to Udayana to specialize in general surgery. In 1993 he was the first surgeon to graduate from the university. Eight years later, Steven became an oncology specialist after intensive study in the Netherlands. Now he works in hospitals and in his own practice.

“I treated scores of victims from dawn until noon,” says Steven Chrisman, 47, a Balinese surgeon. “One of them was from Australia, a young man about 20 who had burns to his back and a shrapnel wound to the neck.”

Steven had been prescribing medicine and first aid to the victims, but when one patient was rushed into the hospital, he realized he would need training in surgery.

Steven’s brothers and sisters are also well-established professionals and devout Christians. His parents have even reunited—another of many answered prayers.

Steven’s life was touched by sponsorship. Now this man of faith saves lives.
A Cookie for J.P.

My mom and I were running errands the other day with my 2-year-old son. I stopped in to Starbucks® for a coffee and got a chocolate cookie for J.P. Chocolate is his favorite thing. When I got back to the car with that cookie, Mom said, “Isn’t it just wonderful that you can do that? Think about how much the Lord has blessed you. When you want to, you can get your little boy a treat. And yet, so many people in the world can’t.”

I immediately thought of my experiences with World Vision in Honduras, and meeting my sponsored child, Élan. Through World Vision, Élan’s house has improved and his life is better, but the day I was there, I certainly didn’t see any chocolate cookies. Élan’s mother told me that sometimes there was barely enough rice and beans to survive. Chocolate cookies were the furthest things from their minds.

The Lord has blessed us in our country. I know we feel at times that we have to stretch things to make it, but I also know that God has blessed us. I look at J.P.’s little nursery with stuffed animals and probably too many toys and think, How can I help him understand that every little boy in the world doesn’t live like this? It’s not some God-given right because he’s special.

God has blessed J.P. immensely. As a mother, I want my son to be obedient to the Lord and bless others in any way he can. But how?

The answer for our family is a no-brainer. It’s through child sponsorship. I want to find ways, as J.P. gets older, to involve him. It may involve picking out a Christmas present from World Vision’s gift catalog or earning money from chores to sponsor another child. I want J.P. to offer his own chocolate cookie to the world.

Jesus showered us with treats. By his example he showed us the kind of people he wanted us to be. People who serve. People who are generous. John, in his Gospel, writes the precious story of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Peter is indignant at first, telling Jesus not to wash his feet. But Jesus prevails, kneeling before them and washing their feet one by one.

At the end of this beautiful story, Jesus tells his disciples the meaning of his actions: “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things you will be blessed if you do them” (John 13: 15-17).

We are blessed when we kneel at our neighbor’s feet and wash them. Or reach out to a child, offering hope. We are blessed when our giving is sacrificial, whether it’s to World Vision or another mission’s project.

We are blessed when we give generously of our time to someone who may not be all that fun, but who needs a friend. As my dad is fond of saying, “Blessings sneak up on us when we’re not looking and overtake us.”

Proverbs 22:9 tells us, “A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.” The beautiful paradox is that when we choose sacrifice for the sake of obedience, it doesn’t feel like sacrifice. It feels good. And warm. And sweet. Kind of like a chocolate cookie.

The Lord has blessed us in our country. I know we feel at times that we have to stretch things to make it, but I also know that God has blessed us.


A sponsored child, Edward lives in Senzani, Malawi, along with some 3,000 other sponsored children.
Get a kick out of sharing

You can put a soccer ball in the hands of a needy child around the world! Participate in our Get A Kick Out of Sharing program and you'll be joining a nationwide effort to obtain donations of 250,000 new and gently used soccer balls for children in need.

Children love soccer. Many have only rounded wads of trash or rag balls to kick and play with. They have never played with a real ball.

You can share the joy of soccer and give these children hope by being a Get A Kick Out of Sharing teammate. Cash gifts enable the purchase of new balls and cover the costs of transporting the balls to needy children worldwide. In fact, a gift of just $50 will provide soccer balls for five children.

To make your contribution go even further, check to see if your employer will match your donation. Your human resources department can tell you if your company offers matching donations and if World Vision is an eligible recipient. If so, complete the form below and send it to World Vision along with a completed matching gift form (provided by your employer).

For more information, call 1.800.642.1616 today, or visit www.worldvision.org/soccerballs

Yes, I want to help!

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World Vision, International Distribution Center—Soccer Balls
210 Overlook Drive, 79 North Industrial Park, Sewickley, PA 15143

☐ Please accept my cash donation of:
☐ $50 to provide soccer balls for 5 children.
☐ $150 to provide soccer balls for 15 children.
☐ $500 to provide soccer balls for 50 children.
☐ Other: $________ (indicate amount)☐ I would like my gift to be matched by my company. Please see attached form.
☐ Please send me more information about the “Get A Kick Out of Sharing” program.
☐ Check (please make payable to World Vision)
☐ Please bill my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

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