

# WorldVision

SPRING 2016



# Leap of Faith

*Making  
tomorrow  
greater  
than today*





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“It’s a double benefit. It gives me good income for life. And I like that the remainder can be used for things I care deeply about, especially helping to build clinics and schools.”

—World Vision partner Dorothy Samson, who established her first gift annuity with us in 1999

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90	9.0%

Your payment rate is based on your age at the time of your gift.

\*Rates shown are Single-Life Rates, effective April 13, 2015 (subject to change).

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**World Vision**, a free triannual publication, affirms people responding to God’s call to care for the poor by providing information, inspiration, and opportunities for action, linking them with children and families in nearly 100 countries where World Vision ministers. In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, this publication costs 47 cents a copy to produce.

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Sponsorship has changed the lives of children like Yuridia, 13, in Bolivia.

EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION

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**ON THE COVER**

Girls in Hamunyang, Zambia, jump for joy.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

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God calls us to work for a better world for children, one in which they can weather life's storms surrounded by strong families, safe communities, and thriving nations. Child sponsorship has been World Vision's way to fight poverty for more than 60 years. Learn about the elements of our community development model that promise to make tomorrow better than today.

- 16. **A Better World For Children:** Improving the local, national, and global picture.
- 18. **Clean Water:** Just add water, and lives change.
- 22. **Health:** Combatting preventable diseases.
- 24. **Food:** Fighting malnutrition in children.
- 26. **Education:** Removing obstacles to knowledge.
- 28. **Economic Empowerment:** Helping hardworking parents.
- 30. **Child Protection:** Safeguarding children's futures.
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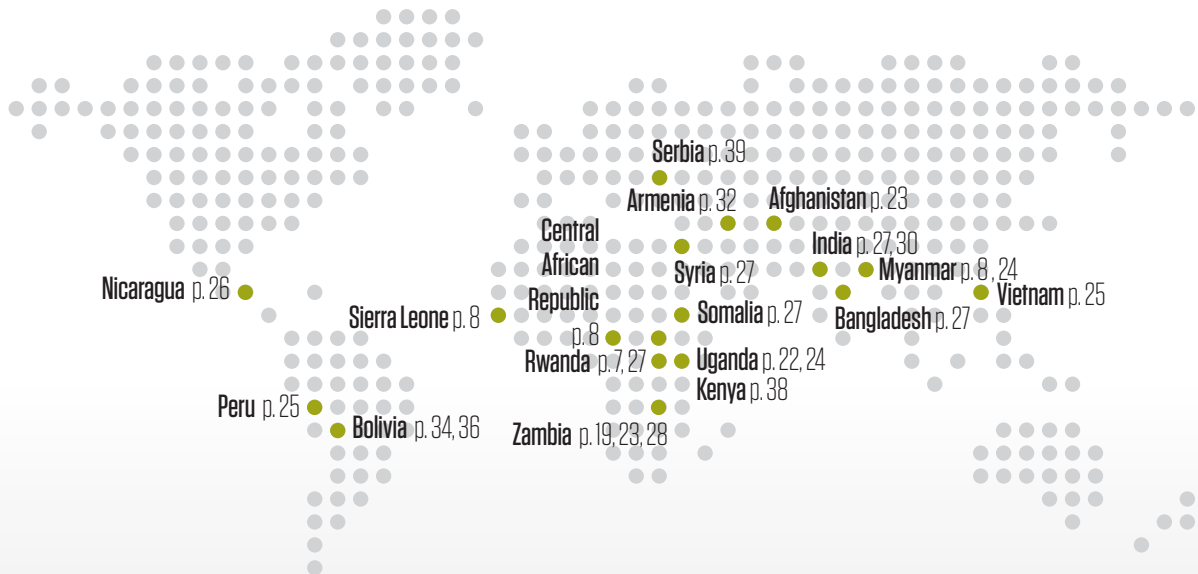
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### WHO WE ARE

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

### WHOM WE SERVE

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

### WHY WE SERVE

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

### HOW WE SERVE

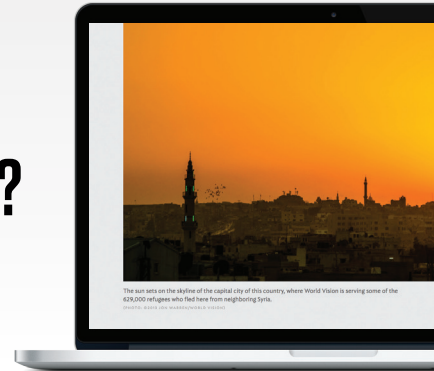
Since 1950, World Vision has helped millions of children and families by providing emergency assistance to those affected by natural disasters and civil conflict, developing long-term solutions within communities to alleviate poverty, and advocating for justice on behalf of the poor.

### YOU CAN HELP

Partnering with World Vision provides tangible ways to honor God and put faith into action. By working together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families who are struggling to overcome poverty. To find out how you can help, visit [worldvision.org](http://worldvision.org).

## WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Can you guess where these four photos were taken? Check the answer key at the bottom of the page to find out.



Put your geography skills to the test with our “Where in the World?” column in digital issues of *World Vision* magazine.

From Armenia to Zambia, World Vision’s photographers capture pictures and stories to inspire us to compassion and action. Follow them around the globe to learn about the places where World Vision works. Find the latest installment of “Where in the World?” at [wvmag.org/wherewithworld](http://wvmag.org/wherewithworld).

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[WVMAG.ORG/SUBSCRIBE](http://WVMAG.ORG/SUBSCRIBE)

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Answer key: A, Kurdistan region of Iraq B, Peru C, Zambia D, Philippines



# The Future of Poverty

BY RICH STEARNS

**T**he *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof called it “the most important thing happening in the world today.” Yet it is something few people talk about. Something almost no one knows about.

What is it? According to Kristof: “a stunning decline in poverty, illiteracy, and disease.” Whatever stories you read about in the news, watch on your video screens, or stumble across online, they often focus on disaster or tragedy. It isn’t front-page news that millions of people fly commercial airlines safely every day. So we may overlook one of the most astounding achievements in our time.

Consider that since 1990:

- 2 billion people have gained access to clean water.
- 156 million people are no longer hungry.
- Malaria infection rates are down by a third in Africa.
- Tuberculosis deaths have fallen by 45 percent.
- Maternal mortality rates have been cut in half.

These are incredible gains. The proportion of people living in extreme poverty is now half of what it was 25 years ago. And the United Nation’s new Global Goals for Sustainable Development have set a target of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030.

Despite the progress, that’s an incredibly ambitious goal. More than 17,000 children younger than 5 still die every day of preventable causes. Nearly 800 million people are chronically hungry, and 663 million people lack clean water.

If we are going to continue the progress made throughout the last 25 years, we have to work much harder to reach every last person in poverty. While child mortality rates fell in some countries, in others they barely budged. While some communities have solved their hunger problems, in others hunger never abated. Attacking the root causes of poverty is simply easier in some places than in others.

Putting it differently, the low-hanging fruit has been picked. To end extreme poverty, we have the hardest work ahead of us. In about 50 countries—characterized by conflict, natural disasters, poor governance, and other chronic issues—almost no progress



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

**Five-year-old Akuol Deng lives in South Sudan, one of the world’s most fragile countries.**

*“Go back and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.”*

—MATTHEW 11:4-5

has been made in defeating poverty. These marginal places will soon represent more than 50 percent of the world’s poor, even though they have only 20 percent of the world’s population.

Poverty in these fragile countries is deeper and more entrenched than elsewhere. They are the home countries of many of the world’s 60 million refugees. These countries are also home to:

- 77 percent of the world’s school-age children who are not in school
- 70 percent of the world’s infants who die of preventable causes
- 65 percent of the world’s people without access to safe water
- 60 percent of the world’s undernourished people

I believe Jesus calls us toward the places where pain and suffering is deepest. I like to think of the church as the body’s white blood cells. White blood cells travel throughout the body looking for wounds and infections. Then they attack, rushing to the hurting places to heal and mend what has gone wrong.

That’s World Vision’s mission. We go to the hurting places, the ragged edges of our world, because that’s where Jesus calls us. I believe this is the essence and example of Jesus’ life. When asked if he was really the Messiah, Jesus responded: “Go back and report . . . the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Matthew 11:4-5).

As we work to eliminate extreme global poverty, with the hardest tasks ahead of us, we know this has always been Jesus’ work. It is our privilege to join him. ●



**Rich Stearns is president of World Vision U.S. and a bestselling author. His books include *The Hole in Our Gospel* and *Unfinished*.**



# FRONTLINES



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

## STRENGTH TO FORGIVE

**On March 9**, International Women’s Day celebrates mothers, daughters, and sisters around the world.

Women do much of the hard work to make community development successful in developing countries. As U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon says, “Rural women number almost half a billion smallholder farmers and landless workers. If they had equal access to productive resources, agricultural yields would rise, relieving as many as 150 million people from hunger.”

But intangible strength—strength that fuels faith and forgiveness—is equally important.

Juliette Mukabanda has this strength. In 1994, Juliette was

one of the only survivors of a massacre at Murambi vocational school in Nyamagabe, Rwanda, during the country’s genocide. She escaped with her 1-month-old daughter, Pauline. The rest of her family died at the hands of a mob led by Emmanuel Nyirimbuga—a man she now counts as a close friend.

After Emmanuel served a prison sentence, World Vision peacebuilding programs brought Emmanuel and people like him face to face with the families of those they killed. Together, they worked through their pain and grief with the ultimate goal of reconciliation.

Juliette forgave Emmanuel. She’s a strong woman worth celebrating. ●





FRANCINE OBUWA/WORLD VISION

## SIERRA LEONE | EVADING EBOLA

None of the 58,000 children World Vision supports in Sierra Leone—nor any of their immediate family members—contracted Ebola during the recent disease outbreak in West Africa. With staff and programs in place across the country since 1996, World Vision quickly mobilized to equip community leaders to prevent Ebola. Other work included interfaith partnerships, involving pastors and imams in educating congregations to prevent spreading the disease, and training teams to provide safe and dignified burials for Ebola victims. Since March 2014, more than 11,300 people have died in the worst Ebola outbreak in history, according to the World Health Organization.

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC | DEADLY PROTESTS

With democratic elections held peacefully in December, Central African Republic (CAR) is looking to turn the page on two years of sectarian violence that have left almost one in five people displaced. Most recently, deadly protests last fall forced World Vision and other aid groups to temporarily suspend operations in the

country. World Vision has reached 152,000 people in CAR with food aid to schools and communities; operating Child-Friendly Spaces; and training community leaders in child protection and peacebuilding.

## MYANMAR | CONFLICT CLOSURE

Ahead of its national election last November, Myanmar's government

signed ceasefire agreements with armed factions of eight ethnic groups. Seven ethnic groups declined the government's ceasefire offer. Among the signers was the Karen National Union, which has fought against the Myanmar military for nearly 70 years. Conflict between the national military and ethnic minorities has thwarted the country's efforts at democratizing.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the past five years, Syria's civil war has triggered the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today:

- 13 million are affected by the violence in Syria—and nearly half are children.
- 4.6 million Syrians are refugees who migrated to other countries like Jordan.
- More than 700,000 Syrians and other migrants risked their lives in 2015 to travel to Europe.

World Vision has helped more than 2 million people in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq with essentials like food, water, household supplies, health services, education support, and Child-Friendly Spaces where children can gather, play, and learn. Some 70,000 migrants traveling on foot to Europe are receiving basic necessities and cold-weather gear. ●



**WORLDWIDE | EL NIÑO STRIFE**

Millions of people in East Africa, Central America, and the Middle East will face hunger this year because of the impact of particularly harsh El Niño weather conditions. El Niño's effects are especially difficult for countries already suffering from prolonged drought, food crises, or conflict. Here's how this weather phenomenon is affecting specific areas.

**SOUTHERN AFRICA**

An African regional climate forecast predicts that drought-induced food insecurity in the Southern Africa region—Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola, and Mozambique—will continue to worsen. Regional drought conditions since 2014 have rendered about 29 million people vulnerable to crop loss. Many have been unable to find enough food for their families. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network says the 2014 to 2015 cereal production in several of these countries is 15 percent below average. World Vision

has declared a regionwide emergency and is helping 366,000 children in its program areas to cope with the increasing stress on their families' livelihoods.

**CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA**

An estimated 3.5 million people in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador are experiencing severe drought, and dry conditions are expected to intensify this year. Last July, the Honduran government declared a state of emergency as the country entered its second year of extreme weather. Prolonged drought is severely affecting an estimated 155,000 people, including about 100,000 in areas where World Vision works.

**PACIFIC ISLANDS**

El Niño weather patterns are causing dry conditions in several Pacific Island nations. In Papua New Guinea, water shortages have affected 2.4 million people, forced schools to cancel class, and caused healthcare centers to scale down



ISRAEL CÁRCAMO/WORLD VISION

HONDURAS

operations. In Vanuatu, drought is leading to crop failure and hunger. In addition to addressing food and clean water needs in these countries, World Vision focuses on disaster risk reduction. ●

**WOMEN AT RISK**



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Mother's Day will soon be celebrated across the United States with gifts and gatherings. But millions of the world's women have few reasons to celebrate. As armed conflict persists around the globe, women and girls are often caught in the crossfire. These women have few resources to protect themselves, and frequently they and their children make up the majority of displaced and refugee populations.

**THE FACTS:**

**During conflict, more women die in childbirth.**

*Per 100,000 births:*

GLOBAL RATE: 210 women die  
CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT: 531 women die

**Fewer women have legal titles to land.**

*Percentage of women with legal titles:*

GLOBAL RATE: 19%  
CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT: 9%

**The number of girls enrolled in primary school drops.**

*Net enrollment of girls in primary school:*

GLOBAL RATE: 90%  
CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT: 73%

**Child marriages are among the highest in counties where conflict persists.**

*Women married before age 18:*

SOUTH SUDAN: 52%  
MALI: 55%  
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: 68%

# BEYOND BROADWAY

*A veteran actor and his wife live out their values through child sponsorship.*



JOAN MARCUS



COURTESY, BRYCE RYNESS

*“We are grateful to be part of the story that God is writing through the sponsorship of these precious kids.”*

—MEREDITH RYNESS

**E**ach night, Bryce Ryness brings a loathsome character to life as terrifying headmaster Trunchbull in the national tour of the play “Matilda the Musical.”

“As someone who has to tell stories every night, the greatest villains in most narrative structures are ones that are trying to be unloving and uncompromising at the same time,” says Bryce, who has appeared in many on- and off-Broadway shows.

But each night, he leaves his character in the theater and goes back to real life, where he and his wife, Meredith, fight unloving and uncompromising villains—poverty and oppression—as child sponsors.

“We have been called to love God and serve others with what we have been given,” Meredith says. “For us, World Vision is our partner in stewarding our resources well. We feel confident that the donations we provide

are making an impact, and we are grateful to be part of the story that God is writing through the sponsorship of these precious kids.”

The seeds of giving were planted in Bryce as a child growing up in Sunday school at his California church. It’s where he first learned about World Vision, and the desire to help others stayed with him.

“We felt convicted that as my career success in New York was going well and as our financial picture expanded, we wanted to reflect that in our giving,” says Bryce, who mentions World Vision in the “Matilda the Musical” program.

The couple sponsors three children through World Vision. And with three small children of their own—ages 6, 4, and 2—they’ve found their sponsorship experience rewarding.

“I sent a small box to our sponsored kids—it had stickers, some colored pencils,

and some other small items,” says Meredith. “I will never forget the thank you I received back from him that said, ‘I never expected to get such wonderful things in my life.’ I remember reading that note through tears. It was very humbling.”

Meredith and Bryce look forward to sharing more about sponsorship with their children as they get older. And now that their oldest is reading and writing, they want to involve her in communicating with their sponsored children.

Bryce says, “It’s fun to open their eyes and open their minds that there are people in this world who are made of the same flesh and blood as you and I but don’t live with the same socioeconomic level, the same expectations, the same benefits, the same advantages and disadvantages. We’re all in the same family—they are not that much different.” ● —Kristy J. O’Hara





COURTESY ALIEDA STONE

## WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

**ALIEDA STONE AND TOM HELM**  
TOSTON, MONTANA

I was unable to have children, so my husband, Tom, and I adopted three children from Korea: Starre, Cascade, and Boone (pictured with us above). I had hoped for a family of six, so sponsoring a child through World Vision seemed to fill some of that need.

In 1999, I attended a Women of Faith weekend and felt drawn to our first sponsored child: Prapapan of Thailand. She was adorable at 18 months old. I kept her picture on the fridge each year until a new photo came. It reminded me to pray for her, her family, and her country. I have saved all the photos, artwork, and updates I received from her.

It was exciting to have Prapapan's family move beyond sponsorship and for us to be given another girl from Myanmar, May Thingyan. And last year, we started sponsoring Vilma Cristina, a girl from Guatemala. A friend of mine is adopted from Guatemala, so we wanted to share in her life by sponsoring a girl there.

I believe women can be a mighty force for improving lives. I hope these girls feel loved and empowered to make our world better.

Here is a poem I wrote about Prapapan, our first sponsored child:

*In Thailand a girl was growing, World Vision her picture showing.  
From Montana we sent our love, to a precious gift from above.  
To a new land we now had ties, as she grew up before our eyes.*

*So we look forward to growing, with a new girl we are knowing.  
Myanmar's the place she's living, and to her future we are giving.  
These girls filled our life with sharing: God's wonderful way of caring.* ●

**TELL US YOUR STORY.** Why do you love being a child sponsor? Tell us at [wvmag.org/mystory](http://wvmag.org/mystory).

## GIFTS THAT LAST

Keep an eye on your mailbox for World Vision's Spring Gift Catalog, which offers a life-giving opportunity to celebrate loved ones on Mother's Day, Easter, or graduation while changing children's lives in the U.S. and around the world. Your gift of clean water, livestock, education, and other essentials can be a family's doorway to a better life. ●



**GET HELP IN** selecting the right gift by exploring which gifts are most popular, which multiply in impact, which nurture children's faith, and much more at [worldvisiongifts.org](http://worldvisiongifts.org).

## REFUGEE CRISIS: YOUR CHURCH CAN HELP

**News coverage of** refugees fleeing war in their countries can seem overwhelming. How can Christians in the U.S. make an impact to help struggling people in dire circumstances half a world away?

Help your church understand God's heart for the most vulnerable by hosting a **Refugee Sunday**. World Vision's toolkit is filled with resources for pastors and congregations to hear stories of families forced to leave their countries, be inspired to pray for their needs, and learn how to make a tangible difference.

For more information on hosting a Refugee Sunday at your church, visit [wvmag.org/refugeesunday](http://wvmag.org/refugeesunday). ●



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION



# ADVENTURE OF LOVE

*A California family circles the globe and visits their sponsored children.*



GREG SCHNEIDER/GENESIS PHOTOS

**A**s Matthew and Lisa Owens arrived at their sponsored child's village in Zimbabwe, they were overcome with a sense of honor when they saw that the entire community had come out to greet them. The sight was just one of many moments that took their breath away as they visited four of their five sponsored children during a year-long, 19-country trip around the globe.

Matthew and Lisa, both teachers, had grown up traveling overseas. They wanted their children to also experience the world. So when their kids were 13, 11, and 8, the couple took a leave of absence from their jobs and spent a year traveling. They created assignments for the children along the way—the world became their classroom.

But for Matthew and Lisa, the point wasn't just learning about other cultures. They have a passion for World Vision and

its work, each having started sponsoring children in college. After they were married and started a family, they chose a sponsored child of the same gender and exact birthday as Jonah, Mia, and Olivia.

"To be able to connect with an actual person brings it to a heart level," Lisa says. "When our children's birthdays roll around, we're also praying for this other child. When their photos are coming to us, we're constantly looking at it from the lens of our own child's life as well. It's such a tiny step, but it's a step, and we're grateful that World Vision has helped us do that."

Visiting their sponsored children in Bolivia, India, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe changed the way Matthew and Lisa approach their relationship with the kids.

"Getting a glimpse into their community added so much more content to our prayers," Matthew says. "It really invigo-

rated our engagement."

The family felt a new sense of unity with other cultures as they realized how activities such as art and soccer were the same on opposite sides of the world. Those shared experiences go beyond activities and school lessons. "We have the same heavenly Father," Matthew says.

"Rather than look at a picture and say, 'Oh, here's a poor kid from the other side of the world. My job is to give them money,' instead, it's seeing the wholeness of this child," Lisa says. "They're loved. They're loved by their family, their community, and they're loved and provided for by God." ●

—Kristy J. O'Hara

**SEE MORE PHOTOS** of the Owens' trip around the world at [wvmag.org/owens](http://wvmag.org/owens).





*“My wish is that others would see how little it takes to make a huge difference in the life of a child.”*

— SARAH ROTHERMEL

## CHANGE AGENT

**NAME** Sarah and Chris Rothermel

**HOME** Tulsa, Oklahoma

**PROGRAM** Child Sponsorship

**Two months** after Sarah Coburn-Rothermel had her first baby in 2009, the family’s nanny donated a goat through World Vision in her honor.

“I didn’t know anything about World Vision, and she told us about the boy she sponsored,” Sarah says. “When you’re hormonal, exhausted, and in love with a newborn, the tears start flowing, and you start thinking about mothers who don’t have the resources we have.”

Sarah, an accomplished opera singer, and her husband, Chris, started sponsor-

ing four children. That number quickly grew to nine.

“My wish is that others would see how little it takes to make a difference in the life of a child,” Sarah says.

She says she’s amazed at how much families can buy with just a \$100 special gift. One child’s family received a new roof, clothes, and a sack of maize with that amount, which floored her, especially when she contrasted that amount with what they had recently spent replacing their own roof.

Her children, 6-year-old Katie Rose, 3-year-old Ruby, and a new baby, George, already see their parents’ generosity and are following suit.

Two years ago, after looking through the World Vision Gift Catalog, Katie Rose emptied her piggy bank to buy a mosquito net, Sarah says. “She realized she can be saving lives as a 4-year-old.” ●

## RUN FOR CLEAN WATER



**All year there** are new opportunities for people across the U.S. to reach their fitness goals—and help change the world at the same time.

Team World Vision invites new and experienced runners to participate in endurance races across the nation. As they walk, run, ride, and more, Team World Vision athletes raise funds to provide live-giving clean water, sanitation, and hygiene to people living in poverty across Africa. World Vision, the largest nongovernment provider of clean water in the developing world, reaches one new person with clean water every 30 seconds. World Vision provides the resources runners need to get started and finish strong. ●

**FOR MORE ABOUT** Team World Vision’s impact, 2016 events, and more, visit [teamworldvision.org](http://teamworldvision.org).



# Weathering







# ng *the* Storm

**CAN  
CHILDREN  
ESCAPE  
POVERTY?**

TON WARREN/WORLD VISION



**IF ONLY POVERTY** were a temporary condition, like a passing squall that quickly gives way to clear skies. It isn't in the development world. The lack of basic things—compounded by a paucity of profound things, like rights and dignity—consumes families for generations. They find themselves trapped by stubborn, interlocking circumstances. And one unexpected complication can wreak havoc on their lives like a Category 5 hurricane.

There is no easy escape from poverty. It is a gritty, in-the-trenches, face-to-face, long-term, systematic, and deeply human process. It requires much more than parachuting staff into a developing country to drill a well or drop a few bags of food. To free a family from poverty, all problems, and their root causes, must be addressed. That requires time, monumental effort, resources, passionate people, and above all, faith in a sovereign God who sent his Son to join the poor in ultimate empathy—"though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

God calls us to work for a better world for children, one in which they can weather life's storms surrounded by strong families, safe communities, and thriving nations. Child sponsorship has been World Vision's way to fight poverty for more than 60 years. Sponsorship rallies a community to work alongside development experts and solve the things that bedevil children: contaminated water, malnutrition, preventable diseases, lack of schooling, exploitation, economic hurdles for parents, and stifled beliefs. In the course of projects lasting 15 to 20 years, people become who God intended them to be: productive, self-sufficient, and resilient. And generations of children benefit.

Over the following pages, learn how sponsorship-funded programs bring community-wide improvements in clean water, food, health, education, child protection, economic empowerment, and Christian commitments. »

— Jane Sutton-Redner

# A Better World for Children

**The goal of child sponsorship is to change a child's life, for life, which means improving their local, national, and global environments.**





**1 CHILDREN** feel loved, valued, and valuable through sponsor letters, health checkups, educational stimulation, and more.



**2 FAMILIES** are ready and able to care for their children thanks to parenting skills, mothers' training, and school support.



**3 COMMUNITIES** are safe and strong, encouraging children's contributions through children's clubs, leadership training, and child protection.



**4 NATIONS** place a high priority on the well-being of children, ensuring funding for community services, birth registrations, and more.



**5 WORLD** becomes more just when those in power and influence make good choices for children and families.







## CLEAN WATER / JUST ADD WATER, AND LIVES CHANGE



## A Clear Difference

---

**FORMERLY FROM THE POND;** now from a *pump*. Once full of *parasites*—now *pure*. What used to *rob hours* of people's time to collect now *adds years* to their lives. With clean water, the difference is clear.

Building on decades of expertise and blessed by the support of child sponsors, World Vision is the largest nongovernmental provider of clean water in the developing world. By 2030, World Vision aims to ensure clean water coverage everywhere it works—because every child deserves clean water.



## BY THE NUMBERS: WORLD VISION'S WATER WORK

1 in 30

One new person currently receives clean water every **30 seconds**.

1 in 10

The goal, by 2020, is to reach one new person every **10 seconds**.

4 in 1

**Four new schools** are reached every day, on average, with clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.

2 million

**Two million** people reached with clean water in 2014 includes complete water coverage in **2,400 African villages**.

80 / 20

Nearly **80 percent of wells** built by World Vision in Ghana continue to function **20 years later**.



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION

## THEN AND NOW: DORCAS

The Spring 2015 issue of *World Vision* magazine shared the predicament Bulanda village, Zambia, was in as of July 2014: A dog had drowned in the pond that served as a primary water source for many families. Children like Dorcas Hamasamu, 9, had no choice but to continue to draw water from the contaminated pond. But on Oct. 22, 2014, Bulanda christened a new borehole well, established in partnership with World Vision. Since then, clean, disease-free water is flowing. Dorcas' life changed almost overnight. Before, she had lost weeks of school to sickness. Now the sponsored girl regularly attends school and garners high marks. Currently she's ranked No. 5 in her class—but she's aiming for No. 1.





## CLEAN WATER

# Solving for Sustainability

By Jane Sutton-Redner

The moment clean water first gushes from a pump or faucet is a joyous turning point for a parched village. But the right steps need to be taken before and after to ensure that the benefits last.



**Involve everyone, including even children:** Both men and women can serve on water maintenance committees—in fact, it’s the perfect opportunity for women to take leadership roles on an issue that deeply impacts their lives. Children are also key players in sustaining the success of clean water. In Ethiopia, for example, school children join clubs to create awareness about water, sanitation, and hygiene in their families and communities. Members of a club at Adadi School perform dramas to illustrate these topics, clean the schools’ latrines and compound, and raise funds to support their work. “We’ve been having an impact,” says club president Yeshe Derbie, 14. “We are transforming and transmitting knowledge to our families.”

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION



**Set up water maintenance committees:** Broken pumps and wells litter the developing world, left by well-intentioned groups that moved on without communicating the responsibilities the community must assume to keep the new water system working. Water maintenance committees, a core part of World Vision’s approach to clean water, ensure that communities take ownership of their water systems. Community members are trained to fix and clean pumps, and they collect money from their neighbors for repairs. These dedicated individuals are the reason World Vision-built wells still function 20 years later.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION





**Sensitize communities:** Rural people may not realize the connection between a poor water source and illness. “We just thought that diseases that kill our children come from God,” says Piarsou Wadaye, chief of Miskine village in Chad. Without this understanding, Miskine residents declined a government offer in the late 1990s to build a water point because they believed the cost was too high. When World Vision began working in the area in 2011, staff met with the community and explained why their children fell sick frequently and proposed a water system to combat it. Miskine villagers considered the cost in terms of saving children’s lives and readily agreed, collecting the money within a month.



**Prioritize sanitation and hygiene:** The acronym WASH acknowledges that clean *water* must work in tandem with good *sanitation* and *hygiene* practices to prevent disease: handwashing, using latrines and dish racks, and more. Without these, it’s possible to lose some of the gains of clean water. For example, even with a new well, children will still suffer from diarrhea if human waste finds its way into food via dirty hands or open defecation. In many African project areas, World Vision staff have introduced an ingeniously simple hand-washing device called a “tippy tap,” employing a water can and a bar of soap hanging from a tree. ●



# Health Heroes

By Kari Costanza

**Dedicated volunteers get helpful training and tips through a radio health program.**



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

**SARA NABUKEERA'S** specialty is saving children's lives. "I'm always ready," she says. "When a child falls sick, I am there. If a child has malaria, I know what to do. That makes me proud."

Sara, 50, is a grandmother, not a doctor. She has been trained as a village health team worker in her community in Kiboga district, Uganda—where just one overworked, underpaid medical doctor serves at the region's only hospital for a population of 350,000.

Unpaid volunteers like Sara have become the front line of health services for rural Ugandans. The government provides a five-day training, but it isn't enough to equip the workers who serve as walking mobile health units, helping pregnant women prepare for childbirth and treating common but potentially fatal diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia. These dedicated volunteers often make the difference between life and death.

In 2011, World Vision introduced Radio Distance Learning as a way to provide ongoing training for village health workers. Twice a week, volunteers gather around the radio to listen to an entertaining program called "Obbanywa," absorbing practical advice on how to recognize and treat diseases.

More than 9,000 volunteer health workers have been trained through the radio program. Sara used her skills to care for expectant mother Janet Namugga, 33, whose first child, delivered under the coffee tree in her yard, was stillborn.

Sara counseled Janet for months on her second pregnancy, dispensing practical advice such as sleeping under a mosquito net to avoid malaria and eating a diet rich in healthy vegetables. Sara also helped Janet prepare for delivery in a hospital. "Immediately after birth, put the baby on your breast," Sara says. "The baby will get colostrum. It will make the baby good and bright."

Janet is thankful. "This lady has done a great work in my life," she says.

Another village health worker, 39-year-old Vincent Kakooza, says the most significant thing he learned from the radio program is what to do when baby Remigio came down with a high fever in the middle of the night.

"He was sweating, he was crying," says Vincent. He knew to quickly test Remigio for malaria. The blood test came back positive.

"I got out the malaria medicine and gave it to him immediately," Vincent says. "By morning, his temperature went down. He stopped sweating. He stopped crying. I was overjoyed."

Overjoyed indeed. Vincent had saved his own son. But he treats every patient he sees with no less dedication.

While the health workers work for free, their pay comes in the form of the respect and appreciation they have earned after serving their neighbors and saving lives. ●





NARGES GHAFARY/WORLD VISION

## A Mother's Thanks

Rahima was 14 and illiterate when she was forced to marry a 50-year-old man in Afghanistan. After four of her children died of pre- and postnatal problems, she feared losing her son, Belal, to malnutrition. World Vision's health program saved him. Rahima dictated this letter of gratitude.

*I want to thank you for contributing to the health of mothers and children in villages of Afghanistan. I am a mother who, one year ago, didn't have any hope for my young son's survival. I lost two children during delivery and two other children after delivery. I had lost my hope and thought I would lose Belal, my youngest child, because of malnutrition. I thought those were the last days of his life.*

*I enrolled my child in the World Vision nutrition program in the clinic. When my Belal came back to the house, he was much better, and mobile teams [came] to my house, advising me on important things like vaccines, deworming, food quality, clean water, and using the latrine. I learned a lot of things.*

*Today, Belal is alive and healthy because God sent you to help us in order to learn more about health. Some of our neighbors and relatives also have participated in the World Vision programs, and they are also happy like me.*

*May God bless and protect you in all that you do. Thank you so much for your willingness to serve needy people.*

## STEVEN'S SAFETY NET

Now that sponsored child Steven Mumbula, 7, has a mosquito net, he no longer suffers from malaria. The boy, who lives with his mother and four siblings in Hamaundu, Zambia, came down with the disease in 2009. "I was frightened," said his mother, Mercy, 27. "I thought he was going to die. We went to the hospital for two weeks." Steven survived, and that same year World Vision distributed mosquito nets in his village, which was part of a sponsorship project. Staff distributed more nets in 2014 to ensure that everyone could sleep under a net, stopping malaria in its tracks. Steven is back to his shy and sweet—and healthy—self.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



# What's for Lunch

Mothers in developing-world communities usually work with raw ingredients as they prepare meals for their families, so they don't have the aid of nutrition panels like those on packaged food in the U.S. to make wise choices.

In sponsorship projects around the world, World Vision provides a helping hand for hardworking moms. Nutrition workshops equip them to use readily available ingredients in cooking well-balanced meals for their families. Trainers explain the value of different nutrients in locally grown food and encourage the right mix of protein, carbohydrates, fats, and micronutrients.

Here are some of the mouth-watering results of these workshops.



## UGANDA

In Busia, Uganda, World Vision convenes mothers of young children to participate in the Positive Deviance Hearth program, which leverages positive local customs and foods. The women contribute the food they have, and trainers help them discover how to make the most nutritious meal for all their children. "In this community, people did not know they could improve their children's diets with local food," says World Vision-trained health assistant Evans Bwire. "Since we introduced this model, there is a very big difference." The healthy ingredients in this session include fish, cassava, eggplant, bananas, beans, tomatoes, and leafy greens—all of which are affordable and easy to find locally.



## MYANMAR

Every school day, 11-year-old Swe Lei Hnin Thwe's grandmother packs her a nutritious lunch. "I've been trained through workshops and talks from World Vision on how to include the three main ingredients in the meal—for strength, growth, and resistance," says Swe's grandmother, who is the only family for Swe since the girl's mother left three years ago. Swe's grandmother provides meat, greens, and starch whenever possible for Swe, a sponsored child. Today's lunch is a good example: potato with curry, fried watercress, and chicken with rice.



KHAING MIN HTOO/WORLD VISION

EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION





JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



## VIETNAM

Nine-year-old sponsored child Co Thi Sam comes home from school in Quang Nam province, Vietnam, to enjoy lunch with her mother and kindergarten-age brother. Sam's parents received World Vision training on a variety of topics: planting wet rice (a main staple), home gardening, nutrition education, and animal husbandry. All of which is reflected in today's lunch of rice, eels fried with ginger and citronella, boiled vegetables, "buffalo-horn" rice cakes, bananas, vegetable soup, sugarcane, and water from their gravity-fed water tap.



LE THIEM XUAN/WORLD VISION



## PERU

The secret ingredient in Faustina Jaimez' dishes? *Sangracita*—chicken blood—full of iron to combat anemia, a problem among children in Chancay, Peru. The mother of three (including a sponsored child) learned this tip in a World Vision nutrition workshop. Faustina prefers to draw the blood fresh from the chicken, boil it, and mix it into the makings of her spinach noodles and salad, served with chicken liver. Even her cupcakes with chocolate frosting have *sangracita* hidden in each delicious bite. "The kids can't tell," she smiles. ●



# First-Class Dreams

By Eugene Lee

**A father's options are limited by his lack of education. He won't let that happen to his children.**

**FIVE-YEAR-OLD** Dayana Mercado Narvaez thrives at her preschool in Cocibolca, Nicaragua. Standing on the sidelines cheering her on is her father—her biggest fan.

Dayana's teacher glows as she tells Miguel what a great student his daughter is. "I feel really proud of her," says Miguel. As a sponsored child, Dayana is on an educational path that wasn't open to him in his childhood.

In Nicaragua, as in many countries, lack of education isn't just a children's issue. Children who don't attend school grow up to be adults without basic education, which impacts their ability to hold a job or provide for their families.

Miguel knows firsthand the frustration of struggling to afford food and other basic necessities for his wife, Maria, and their children. He was forced to drop out of school in third grade to work. His parents "were not interested in having education for me," he says, because they needed the money he earned working in the fields.

Miguel's lack of formal education has had lasting effects—for him and his family. Though education laws in Nicaragua have changed for the better, most employers now require proof of primary school completion. Without this document, Miguel must make a living however he can. He works as a farm laborer; sells bread that his brother-in-law bakes; and, when times are especially tough, leaves his home and family for two or three months at a time to work on sugarcane plantations in neighboring Costa Rica.

But life will be different for Dayana and her brother, Jimmy. Dayana has been sponsored through World Vision for three years and has received school supplies and encouragement in her studies. Her mother attends a World Vision-run nutrition workshop, ensuring that Dayana is healthy enough to stay in school.

Dayana's brother, Jimmy, 17, will soon finish high school. "We're expecting him to go to the university," says Miguel, adding that Jimmy might study architecture. Miguel and Maria expect big things from Dayana, too. "I really hope all I was not able to fulfill, that she can do it," says Miguel. "That's really important."

He has enough knowledge to help Dayana with her homework each night. "She doesn't know all the numbers or vowels yet," he says.

Miguel isn't resigned to odd jobs and barely scraping by. He plans to take night classes toward his primary education certificate. At the end of the yearlong program, he'll "get a diploma and at least find a new source of a job," he says, such as steady work as a security guard.

As Dayana continues in school, supported by her sponsor, she, her father, and brother are setting a new family standard to embrace formal education—one that benefits them today and for generations to come. ●



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION





ANNILA HARRIS/WORLD VISION

# Access for All

## Solutions for those who can't attend regular school.

By Elizabeth Hendley

### 1. INDIA: SAFE PLACE FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN

In northwestern Delhi, World Vision's disability center is a bright spot amid hardship for physically challenged children and their families. The center offers weekly classes for boys and girls with special needs, like 9-year-old Badal, a sponsored child (pictured above). Disabled children are often stigmatized in Indian society, so a safe environment for Badal and his 11 classmates is necessary for learning. Through drawing, exercises, music, games, and alphabet lessons, they express themselves and gain new skills.

### 2. SCHOOL'S IN FOR SYRIAN CHILDREN

Five years of conflict in Syria has interrupted schooling for many of the 2 million refugee children. Filling the education gap is a top priority for World Vision in neighboring countries. In Irbid, Jordan, remedial education classes help refugee children integrate into society and catch up on learning. Students also receive a daily meal—for some, their only reliable food. In Lebanon, World Vision runs an Early Childhood Education program for Syrian children ages 3 to 5, teaching basics in preparation for formal school.

### 3. HOPE FOR BANGLADESH'S YOUNG WORKERS

On the busy, dangerous streets of Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, children dart between cars to sell flowers; others are out of sight, toiling in shops or private homes. For these children, World Vision's night school centers are

places of respite. More than 200 students attend classes at four schools. Some transition into regular schools, while others graduate to vocational schools.

### 4. TIPPING THE GENDER SCALES IN SOMALIA

In Somalia, families favor educating boys over girls. Women who never attended school can learn to read and write at World Vision's Candle Light Development Center (shown below). There are also informal education classes and skills training for unschooled girls ages 7 to 14, providing painting, tailoring, electronics, mobile phone repair, and carpentry. Graduating students can start their own businesses or receive job referrals, ensuring employment and education for their own children.



DANIEL LEE/WORLD VISION

### 5. RWANDA'S SCHOOL OF SUCCESS

Nyaruguru Vocational School provides classes in carpentry, electrical work, and plumbing, preparing youth from all over Rwanda to find work in these professions. Vedaste, 21, dropped out of school at 15 after his father died to support his mother and siblings. "I spent a year [working] in the tea factory," he says. "Then a friend told me about the vocational training school." Vedaste won a scholarship, graduated in December 2014 at the top of his class in carpentry, and now earns a good salary.





EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION

## Amazing Grace

By Kari Costanza

**When loans transformed a woman's life, she transformed her community.**

**THE BEST PLACE** to stay in Chongwe, Zambia, is Graka Lodge, a 31-bedroom hotel that boasts the town's only swimming pool. Dignitaries such as former President Levy Mwanawasa have rented the presidential suite.

The owner, Grace Graka, employs a staff of 24. She also owns rental properties, the local hardware store, and a small market. She has given back to the community by funding a women's ward at the hospital and by building girls' dormitories at the secondary school.

"Graka Lodge is God's lodge," says Grace. "The wealth I have and I am still getting is not mine; God is merely using me as a conduit to pass it over to others who are in need."

Given Grace's success, it's hard to believe that 21 years ago, she was in trouble. Her husband died, leaving her with nine children to care for. Then another blow: Grace had a stroke.

Still, she walked bravely into World Vision's Vision Fund office in Chongwe and asked for a small loan to purchase chickens to sell for profit.

As World Vision's microfinance institution, Vision Fund dispenses small loans for people to begin or grow their own businesses—everything from sewing equipment and capital to start a bakery to the chickens Grace planned to buy. In many communities where World Vision runs sponsorship programs, you'll also find a Vision Fund office.

The Vision Fund loan officers were reluctant. Grace was high risk: a single mother with nine children, no husband, no collateral, and no business experience. At first, they declined to give her a loan. But Grace was persistent, and she convinced them to take a chance on her.

With the first loan, she bought 100 chickens. She repaid the loan. Then she got a second loan, bought 200 chickens, and repaid that loan. Then she got a third loan, bought pigs, and repaid that loan.

At the same time, Grace started a guest house out of her home, calling it Aaron's Den in honor of her late husband. A steady stream of visitors paid to stay at Aaron's Den, but when they did, Grace and her children gave up their beds to guests and the family slept on the floor. She had a promising business, but no direction on how to grow it without her family paying a price.

"My small children asked me, 'Mummy, is this the kind of business you are talking about, and is this how we are going to live?'" Grace remembers. "I was perplexed. I looked at the child who asked the question, and I had no proper answer."

The question nagged at her. "That night I couldn't sleep," she says. "I kept crying to God and praying to him to lift me and direct me



to where he wanted me to be in this business so that I could have a proper answer to tell my children why I made them sleep on the floor.”

In time, their changed lives provided the answer. Grace’s son Aaron just graduated from the University of Zambia. Daughter Lillian is getting her degree in China, where Grace travels to buy materials for the lodge.

Though Grace’s children weren’t sponsored, the family lives in one of World Vision’s development areas, so they receive many of the same benefits, like access to Vision Fund micro-loans, that sponsored children and their families do. World Vision’s holistic development model includes everyone in the community, because what’s good for people in Chongwe is good for the sponsored children living there.

Grace remains humble. “Recently, the Zambian government chose me from all lodge owners in Zambia to speak to people in [other] countries where they took me such as India, South Africa, and a few others,” she says. “This is God’s will to inspire people, especially women, through me, not that I am the best.”

Next for Grace: a dream of taking in orphans. She never stops. This Grace is truly amazing. ●



## WAYS WORLD VISION EMPOWERS FAMILIES

—  
**Economic empowerment isn’t limited to small loans. World Vision’s sponsorship-funded work also:**

- Equips farmers with **skills and agricultural training** to boost production and increase incomes.
- Helps **smallholder farmers organize** and connect to larger markets, in most cases doubling or tripling incomes.
- Establishes **savings groups** where members contribute small amounts over time, then can take out loans for everything from their children’s university tuition to capital for a new business.







ANNILA HARRIS/WORLD VISION

## Fathers Fight Child Marriage

By Annila Harris

**Men in India are taking a stand against a harmful tradition that has tarnished the worth of girls for centuries.**

**VOICES CUT THROUGH** the bird chirping and the whoosh of the wind as members of the Men Care Group gather under a Neem tree near the north-central city of Agra, expressing dismay.

“Another case,” says one member, rubbing his forehead. The others exchange worried glances.

“It’s similar to Lalit’s daughter’s case, but this time it’s a widowed mother making the decision,” another member explains. The men know it’s time for action. The group’s leader, Jitender Singh, outlines a plan.

“I and a few men from the group will inquire about this family and the decision taken to marry their teen daughter,” he says. “Like we intervened in Rani’s case, we will speak to the mother of the girl and counsel her.”

Rani\* is a 15-year-old girl living in a nearby slum. Not long ago, her father, Lalit\*, had been convinced that traditional early marriage was best for his two daughters. If they married into the same household, he had to pay only one dowry. Rani was arranged to be married in November 2014 to her older sister’s brother-in-law.

“This custom of dowry,” Lalit says, “has been prevalent for generations and we, being the girl’s family, have to give, no questions asked. We have to give in cash and [items] like TV, coolers, utensils. If we don’t give, then the family is ridiculed and shamed.”

Society’s skewed understanding of a girl’s worth—merely as a profit-and-loss venture—temporarily blinded Lalit. Then he met with the Men Care Group, a World Vision program that educates and equips Agra’s men on the inherent value of women and girls.

Lalit came to understand that Rani is still growing and that early marriage could cause health problems. Marrying later also allows Rani to stay in school and become better equipped to



ANNILA HARRIS/WORLD VISION



be a wife and mother. The Men Care Group also urged Lalit to teach his son the same values.

Members of the group support one another as they lead their families with empathy and encouragement. Other World Vision-sponsored groups equip adolescent girls and boys to be confident in themselves and supportive of both genders.

As the meeting under the tree closed, the men are determined once again to convince a parent—this time a widowed mother—not to marry off her teenage daughter. Mangay Lal, a Men Care Group member, says the tradition of early marriage must be broken, and he's doing his part to keep girls from bondage.

“We have been made to believe by society that a girl is someone else’s property and will marry, so why should we invest in educating her?” Mangay Lal says, glancing at his daughter, Mahima, playing in the distance.

“World Vision came, they saw the darkness we were living in, they asked us to come to the light,” he says. “And that light is, with help of our understanding, creating a healthy environment where we care for our families and community and where our children—especially girls—can study to rise above and empower others.” ●

*\*Last names omitted to protect identity.*

EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION



## JUST SAY NO

In Soracachi, Bolivia, World Vision staff teach sponsored children and other boys and girls to protect themselves from potentially dangerous people. Children read colorful brochures that alert them to the risks of child trafficking, and they learn to do four things if approached by an adult intending harm: say “no,” run and find help, tell someone they trust, and report the person to a city official.



## WAYS WORLD VISION PROTECTS CHILDREN

- Raising awareness of risks in communities and working with local leaders to create safer environments
- Providing support and recovery to exploited children
- Helping child laborers return to school



# Gathering Place

By Nathalie Moberg

**Following decades of communist suppression, Armenia's apostolic church has resumed a central role in communities, engaging families to come together and learn about God.**



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

**IN AN ISOLATED** Armenian town that has seen better days, life's difficulties can seem insurmountable. Unemployment is high, infrastructure is crumbling, and most people live in poverty.

This is Gavar, a dusty enclave in east-central Armenia where multiple generations crowd into tiny houses. Opportunity is scarce. Many families cannot afford a car—or even running water.

The Soviet Union shut down Armenia's churches for 70 years, and even after communism's demise in 1991, remote towns like Gavar didn't have the resources to rebuild spiritual centers. Families had nowhere to foster community, especially stay-at-home Gavar mothers.

"There was a great need for women, especially housewives, to have a place to be together," says Hasmik Setaghyan, the wife of a local priest.

Recognizing this need, Gavar's apostolic church pastors and World Vision joined forces more than 10 years ago. In a move filled with irony, the church claimed an abandoned Soviet factory, just as the Soviet Union had taken over Armenia's apostolic churches decades earlier. World Vision helped renovate classrooms to create a place for Sunday school that would serve local young people, many of them sponsored children, and their families.

But this is no ordinary Sunday school.

Two times a week, dozens of women and children gather in refurbished rooms to share with one another, learn new skills, and grow in self-worth. Prompted by Hasmik, who runs the activities, faith is interwoven into their discussions—and their friendships.

As a result, faith and esteem are flourishing in the midst of cooking classes for women and puppet shows, weaving, and other traditional arts for girls and boys.

On a Wednesday afternoon, the Sunday school rooms are filled with conversation and laughter. In one room, the stage is set for puppetry as children giggle behind a crimson curtain, waiting to perform a national folk play. This is no makeshift crew, but a group of young people who travel as far as Bulgaria with their puppets, garnering awards for their outstanding performances.

Down the hall, mothers and a few daughters are learning to create traditional Armenian dishes. Today they are making a pastry dessert. "Once I bought cakes, now I can make them and save money," one woman says with pride.

But the food isn't the most important outcome of the time the women spend together. "Besides learning to cook new things, we've become friends," says Anna Abagyan, whose two daughters participate in the puppetry group. "And now we want to be together in church and celebrate together."

Up the stairs from the kitchen, young people work at traditional looms, creating wool carpets. One of them, 13-year-old Armida, has discovered a new kind of joy working with traditional Armenian art forms. "I like being part of historical art by





EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

# Praying with God’s Heart for the Poor

By Denise C. Koenig

**The Bible is rich in wisdom about God’s love for those living in poverty—and about our responsibility to help. A sampling:**

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. —*Deuteronomy 15:7*

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. —*Luke 14:13-14*

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? —*James 2:5*

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. —*2 Corinthians 8:9*

These Scriptures can guide us as we support children and families around the world—loving them as God does.



To see a fuller list of Bible verses and guiding prayers, visit [wvmag.org/prayerguide](http://wvmag.org/prayerguide).

making these rugs,” she says.

Across the hall, girls are felting, rubbing llama wool with soap and water, carefully shaping dolls, flowers, even hats. Their award-winning craftsmanship has been on display in an Armenian folk museum. Others are painting eggs, weaving macramé, or learning English—skills that are useful to build young people’s self-esteem.

Ultimately, however, the activities are secondary to the goal of helping women and children to discover their identity not in crafts and cooking, but in Christ. Many of those who participate in the Sunday school had never been to church. Now they flock there.

“I try to teach them so they have direction,” says Hasmik, “so they are on the path to strong faith. We’ve seen it changing people.” ●



## CHRISTIAN COMMITMENTS

# A Father's Faith

By Eugene Lee

With each swing of his pickaxe, a farmer in Bolivia breaks the dry ground under his feet—and with newfound faith, he's breaking new ground in his community.



### LEADING THE WAY

Lucio Mamani Katari's family follows him back to their home after attending church together in Soracachi, Bolivia. Before World Vision came to Soracachi 17 years ago, Lucio, 52, was "a very poor man," he says. Through World Vision, he started learning to grow different types of vegetables and got supplies to build greenhouses. As his participation grew, his heart became open to new behaviors. "In the past, it was very different. We would go out drinking, my wife and I, and we would fight with everybody and everybody would fight with us. We would go from strife to strife," says Lucio. "When we became Christians, we started thinking about other people and helping other people."



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION



### FIRST FRUIT

Lucio, now a local leader in Soracachi, and his wife, Alejandrina, also live out their faith by giving their best produce to World Vision to distribute to less fortunate families. "They say to [us], 'You have to give this to those that need it,'" says World Vision sponsorship facilitator Maribel Limachi Bravo. "Despite the fact that it's a very big family and they probably have some needs, they continue to share with other people."





EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION (2)



## DOING WHAT'S BEST

Thirteen-year-old Yuridia, Lucio's daughter and a sponsored child, attends school in a different town, because Soracachi doesn't have a high school. Through child sponsorship, Lucio realized the value of education. He went against cultural norms and encouraged Yuridia to pursue schooling instead of considering marriage. "If you ask me, what you have to do is obey the Bible," says Lucio. "In the Bible it says that you have to love your children." ●



## DISTINCTIVES OF WORLD VISION'S FAITH-BUILDING WORK

**As a Christian humanitarian agency working in nearly 100 countries, World Vision seeks to share Jesus Christ wherever God opens doors. Learn what's unique about our approach.**

- We follow Christ to serve in the world's hardest places, even where Christians are a minority.
- As we share the good news with those we serve, we encompass all three dimensions of Christ's mission: proclamation, compassion, and justice.
- We seek to mobilize the whole Church, partnering with all Trinitarian churches (Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox).
- Bearing witness in nearly 100 countries, we have opportunities to show God's love to people of all the world's major religions.
- We seek to help people grow in Christian faith no matter where they are in their spiritual journey.
- Because children are a priority, we provide context-sensitive spiritual nurture for more than 4 million children living in the communities where we work.
- We partner with Christian churches to serve other faith communities as a witness to Christ.
- Our staff work in project communities for years, intentionally demonstrating Christ's love through their character, words, actions, and dedicated presence.





COURTESY RAQUEL FEAGINS

## A GREATER PLAN

THANKFUL FOR HER SPONSOR'S INVESTMENT, A FORMER SPONSORED CHILD DEVOTES HER LIFE TO OTHERS.

BY KRISTY J. O'HARA

**Growing up** in the valley city of Cochabamba, Bolivia, Raquel Feagins enjoyed natural beauty and temperate weather. But political unrest increased during the late 1970s and early 80s. Raquel's strong family and child sponsorship protected her in those formative years, and today she's a chaplain committed to living out her faith.

Life was not easy during Raquel's childhood. Bolivia experienced coups, counter-coups, and caretaker governments, giving way to nine presidents in six years. Hyperinflation caused families to stand in long lines for basic necessities. People responded by

demonstrating and holding strikes in the streets. Her parents, who worked in ministry, did their best to protect Raquel and her three siblings, raising them in a loving home with a foundation built on Christ.

"I was very little at the time, but I remember hearing adults talking about the government instability," says Raquel, now 40.

In the midst of the chaos, Raquel and her older sister, Dani, both became sponsored children through World Vision. Her sponsor was a single woman who worked as a teacher. Raquel received letters, which she remains grateful for, knowing how



*“I’m thankful for the things I’ve been given and all the ways people have invested in me, and I want to give that back. All of us are called to be transformative presences. We don’t exist in a vacuum.”*

—RAQUEL FEAGINS

**Raquel with her husband, John, and sons (clockwise from top) David, Victor, and Vincent.**



COURTESY RAQUEL FEAGINS

hard it was to get mail during the unrest. Sponsorship provided school fees, uniforms, and shoes. But most of all, sponsorship allowed Raquel and Dani to attend a Christian school.

“It provided me with stability and reinforced the Christian upbringing I had at home, and I was able to go to school every day with no interruptions,” Raquel says. “That was a gift, because I knew kids that didn’t go to school for months because teachers were on strike.”

When Raquel was 10, her father received a scholarship to come to the U.S. Her family moved to Texas, where her sponsor’s initial support continued to bless her life.

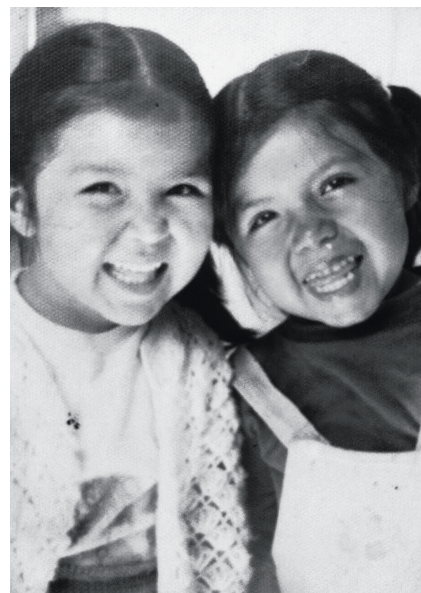
“I was able to come into the American school system without any problems—I knew all my basics,” she says. “If I had not had that sponsorship, it may have been possible to catch up through remediation, but everything I have is because of that education I had in Bolivia.”

Her family stayed in the U.S., and Raquel went out to earn a scholarship to Harvard, where she studied English and American literature. During her time there, she began to sense God calling her into ministry.

She moved to the Texas-Mexico border and taught high school in an impoverished community for five years before enrolling in seminary at Southern Methodist University in 2003. Raquel graduated in 2007 and began serving as a pastor. She currently works as a chaplain at a local hospital. Through her ministry journey, she met her husband, also a pastor in the Methodist church.

“I’m thankful for the things I’ve been given and all the ways people have invested in me, and I want to give that back,” Raquel says. “All of us are called to be transformative presences. We don’t exist in a vacuum.”

Her sister, Dani, also is giving back by working as a reading specialist with children living in poverty along the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Raquel says she can see God working through both



COURTESY RAQUEL FEAGINS

**Raquel Feagins and her sister, Dani, as children in Cochabamba, Bolivia.**

sisters’ experiences and callings.

“Having a strong Christian family and a strong foundation in this Christian school made possible by the sponsorship of World Vision really shaped me,” Raquel says. “God’s plan is so much greater than what we plan for ourselves, and God can transform anything for our good.”

Raquel encourages World Vision sponsors to continue in their prayers and support.

“Continue to love your child that you’re sponsoring,” she says. “Encourage them. Pray for them. God acts in ways that we don’t anticipate. God uses the gift that we give and multiplies it and uses it to transform a child’s life and a community.

“Some people don’t want to get involved in things like this because they think, ‘What difference does it possibly make?’” she says. “But you do make a difference in that child’s life, and it’s transformative for the rest of that child’s life.” ●

**TO SPONSOR A CHILD** fill out the form between pages 20 and 21 and enclose in attached envelope, or go to [wvmag.org/sponsor](http://wvmag.org/sponsor).



# Tears to Transformation

BY DAVID JOHNSON

**John 11:35** tells us that Jesus was moved to tears when his friend Lazarus died. But he didn't just cry, he acted, raising Lazarus from the dead. Life out of death—this is transformation.

My tears for Africa began at a Promise Keepers rally for pastors in Phoenix in 2003. Well-known author Bruce Wilkerson spoke of the AIDS pandemic in Africa and challenged us to go see for ourselves. In tears, on my knees, I was moved to act. I said, "OK, Lord, I'll go!"

I will never forget the tears as I left my family to travel to the other side of the world with a team from our church. Little did we know that my life, my wife, our children, and our church would never be the same.

We landed in Katito, Kenya, a brand-new World Vision community development area. Hundreds of children and adults welcomed us, and my heart was so stirred that tears welled up as I tried to speak. That day, I met Mark, a little boy wearing a shirt with a motorcycle on the front. He became the first of our six sponsored children.

When we returned to my congregation, we showed pictures and shared stories. Tears flowed, and children were sponsored. But this was only the beginning.

Tears also have broken down barriers between local pastors in my town of Mountain Home, Arkansas. One pastor introduced me to a church member who, upon hearing my heart, started what is today the White River Marathon for Kenya. The run has raised thousands of dollars over the last 12 years and is now a qualifying race for the Boston Marathon. The funds were used to dig several wells that provide clean water and new health for Katito. It's amazing how water in the form of tears can ignite fires of transformation.

On return trips to Kenya, teams have continued to embrace the entire Mountain Home faith community. Our last trip included a doctor, a physical therapist, two elementary school teachers, a pastor, and a social worker. And, again, each of them were moved to tears: tears of joy upon meeting their sponsored children, tears of love when exchanging parting gifts, tears of sadness when saying goodbye, and tears of thankfulness while



COURTESY DAVID JOHNSON

*"Jesus wept."*

—JOHN 11:35

**Pastor David Johnson and his wife, Roxanne, experience what it takes to carry water in Katito, Kenya.**

sharing their stories back home.

Hundreds of children have been sponsored, not only through our church but through the Body of Christ here in Mountain Home. One man committed his entire raise one year to sponsor 13 children in Katito.

In 2007, my third trip to Katito was cancelled when I was injured in a motorcycle accident on the eve of our departure. Those in the emergency room mistakenly

believed my tears were the result of pain from shattered bones. They actually were from a fractured heart when the doctor said I would not be going back to Africa for a while.

My 24-year-old daughter went in my place to co-lead the team. Adrienne's first words upon returning: "Dad, you won't believe Katito. It's not the same place it was three years ago—the change is incredible!"

After 10 years of "staying and praying," my wife, Roxanne, accompanied me to Kenya in 2014 and fell in love with the people, our sponsored kids, and World Vision's Katito staff. This time the tears were hers. Another heart was changed.

This year, World Vision invited Roxanne and me to return to Kenya to focus specifically on maternal and child health. God is now turning our tears into passionate conversations with U.S. congressmen as we advocate for mothers and children around the world, asking lawmakers to co-sponsor transformative legislation that will save and transform lives.

Now my dream is for our entire family to return to Katito together. Nathan, my 28-year-old son, has not yet been to Africa, but he has seen our family's tears and is sponsoring a boy growing up in Katito.

May our hearts never grow cold nor our tears cease to flow as we follow Christ into the world's places in greatest need. ●

**David Johnson is founding and senior pastor of Christ Community Church in Mountain Home, Arkansas.**



THE STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

# LIFE FRAMES



## SERBIA

**Often, in the most heartbreaking** of circumstances, I find moments of the greatest joy—like last fall, when I covered the refugee crisis spilling into Europe.

When I met Paez's family, he and his wife and three small children had been on the road from Kabul, Afghanistan, for more than a month, making their way to Germany. They traveled with another family because they thought they'd find safety in numbers. Instead, they discovered a closed Hungarian border and a deceptive smuggler who promised to take both families safely into Hungary but disappeared with the last of their cash. So they were stuck waiting—trying to figure out how to continue on to Germany and its promise of a better future.

Still, for a moment, the lines of discouragement and fatigue disappeared from Paez's face as he beamed at his 7-month-old son, Yazdan. ●

Written and photographed by Laura Reinhardt

Nikon: D600

Lens: 24-70mm (shot at 70mm)

ISO: 400

Aperture: 2.8

Shutter: 1/1600

**LIFE  
FRAMES**

READ MORE REFLECTIONS BY  
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# An easier way to write your child

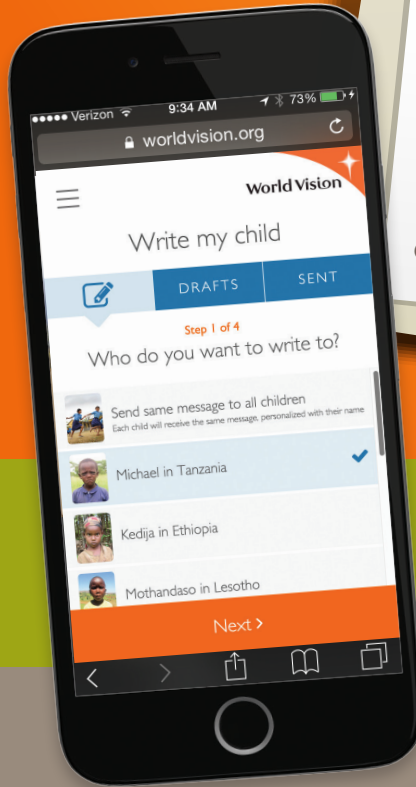
You asked for a better experience when writing to your sponsored child online—and we heard you.



You're going to love the enhanced features and experience!

- » A wider variety of colorful letter designs
- » More Bible verses to add if you like
- » Add a photo of yourself or your family

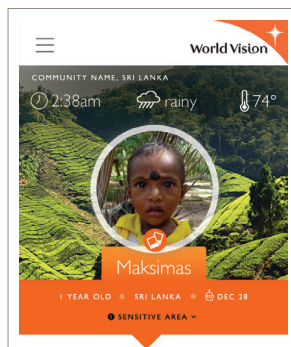
## COMING SOON »



**NEW**

*If you sponsor more than one child, you'll be able to write to all of them at once!*

## ALSO COMING SOON: the next generation of My World Vision



Updates being launched this spring at **myworldvision.org** will offer you a new and improved experience! Soon it will be easier than ever to interact with your sponsored child and see photos, videos, updates, and news from their community.

Stay tuned to learn when updates will be unveiled!

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