

WorldVision

SUMMER/FALL 2016



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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.

We welcome your comments or address changes. Contact us at: *World Vision* magazine, P.O. Box 9716, Federal Way, WA 98063-9716. Email us: wvmagazine@worldvision.org. To request to be taken off our mailing list, email us or call toll-free 877.596.0290.

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CONTENTS

Jose Gustavo Benitez is working to make his hometown of Gracias, Honduras, safe for grandson Edwin.

LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION



ON THE COVER

Colorful face painting is just one activity for Syrian refugee children at a Child-Friendly Space in Lebanon.

JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

FEATURES

14

Childhood Lost and Found

In Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, thousands of Syrian refugees have made makeshift homes in tents and ramshackle buildings after fleeing civil war in their home country. Children are faring the worst, but World Vision's Child-Friendly Spaces provide an oasis of safety, learning, and encouragement.

26

Defying the Beast

Many young people in Honduras face a difficult choice: live in a place like San Pedro Sula, which has one of the world's highest murder rates, or leave violence behind for a dangerous journey north to the U.S. to find work. Through sponsorship and economic opportunity, families are bringing their communities together and giving the younger generation reasons to stay.

26

CONTENTS

DEPARTMENTS

6 FROM THE PRESIDENT

Imagine your own child living like a Syrian refugee. God calls us to look at “somebody else’s children” in the way he sees them, and love them as he does.

7 FRONTLINES

A California church commits to prayer; a blogger in Illinois fundraises to fight Ebola; a student at the U.S. Air Force Academy visits his sponsored child in Senegal; and our summer reading list.

36 WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A professional athlete in El Salvador got a boost early in life, thanks to sponsorship.

38 INSPIRATION

NFL offensive tackle Kelvin Beachum Jr., visits Honduras and learns that sometimes it only takes one thing to change a life.

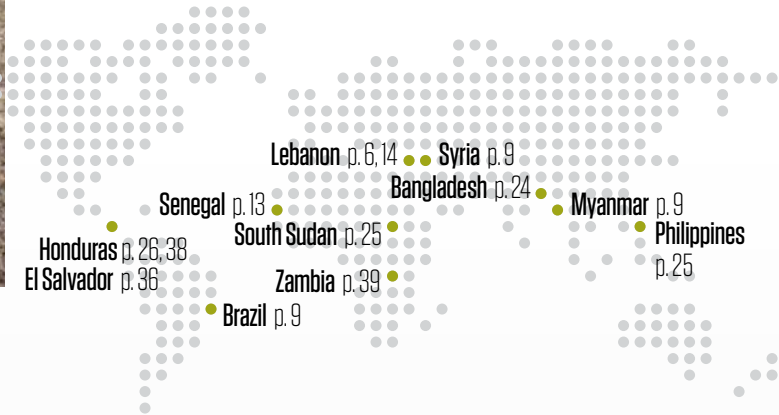
39 LIFE FRAMES

Rainstorms make for muddy roads—and rainbows.



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION

38



LETTERS



“I was ready to sever ties to my sponsored child until I realized the extreme need. So glad I read the magazine and God touched my heart.”
—a reader in Portland, Ore.

“I’m interested in learning about projects my church and others can participate in.”
—a reader in Okla. City, Okla.

See page 10 to be inspired by one church’s experience and page 12 to find out how to get a group involved with World Vision Kits.

“Can you feature people who actually visited their sponsored child?”
—a reader in Smyrna, Ga.
Yes! On page 13, meet Steven, who met his sponsored child in Senegal.

“Love the photography. A picture truly is worth a thousand words.”
—a reader in Knoxville, Tenn.
We agree—we love choosing photos for our “Where in the World?” feature online (and on page 7).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Send letters to the editor at editor@worldvision.org.



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.

GOLD MEDAL STORIES TO SHARE

As athletes from across the globe take center stage at the Summer Olympics in Rio, we’re celebrating the joy of games and sports in our August digital issue. Visit magazine.worldvision.org—and subscribe while you’re there—to enjoy these stories:



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

In Mongolia, a boxing club gives a teenage girl the confidence to knock out her insecurity.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Games kids play in different countries.



Olympic decathlete Ashton Eaton has partnered with Team World Vision.



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Picture Your Child

BY RICH STEARNS

If you're like most parents and grandparents, you have drawings on your wall or refrigerator created by the little ones in your life. They're probably not the work of a budding Michelangelo, but they depict your child's worldview and the things they're interested in: family members, pets, cars.

Recently I saw some children's artwork that shocked me. I was in the heart of a refugee tent settlement in Lebanon, where thousands of Syrian families live after fleeing war in their country.

World Vision's local staff welcomed me into a colorfully decorated room, alive with the voices and energy of dozens of primary-school-age children.

The girls and boys here had been asked to divide a piece of paper in half with crayons and draw their life before the war on one side, their life after on the other.

The left, "before" side featured generally happy drawings of well-dressed people, houses, flowers, and sunshine. The heart-breaking artwork on the right showed rockets, bombs, dead bodies, and bloodshed.

Can you imagine your own children or grandchildren bringing home drawings like these? Go a little further: Picture the child you love living through the chaos and violence of war, and now he or she is trying to survive in a refugee camp in a flimsy tent in the dead of winter.

Often we can't help feeling indifferent toward people who are distant from us emotionally, socially, or geographically. We just don't care as much about other people's children as we do our own. But God loves each of these children, no matter where they live. God's heart is broken for any child who suffers, because every one of them is *his* child.

And today, the greatest tragedy affecting *somebody else's children* is the Syrian refugee crisis. Of the 12 million people who have been displaced by the conflict, half are children. Children yanked from their toys, bedrooms, and friends now see their world as a very different place. They have lost loved ones and witnessed



CHRIS HUBER/WORLD VISION

A Syrian refugee boy shares his drawing with Rich Stearns at a refugee settlement in Lebanon.

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

—MATTHEW 25:40

Space in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, that I saw the children's drawings. Here, staff and volunteers provide a safe place for children to remember what it's like to be a child again.

Construction paper flowers and colorful posters festooned the walls. The volunteers—Syrian refugees themselves—gently guided the children through discussions about their feelings, encouraging healing after their traumatic experiences. There was also plenty of music, singing, dancing, and play. The kids take the games and songs they learn here back to the dismal tents or basement apartments they call home and share them with siblings and friends—extending the brief moments of fun. (Read more about Child-Friendly Spaces in Lebanon on page 14.)

These children may be 10,000 miles away from us; they may speak a different language and follow a different religion than ours. But none of that matters. They are precious in God's sight. God loves them, and he wants us to love them in his name. Because when we do, he tells us in Matthew 25:40, it's the same as loving him.

Picture these children feeling that they're loved by American Christians. Imagine how that could change their worldview. ●

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

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Take a guess where this photo was taken. As the sun rises in this African nation, two women make their way down a dusty, tree-lined path to begin their day. This bucolic scene is just one facet of life here. The others: unemployment, lack of clean water, high HIV rates, and drought.

Situated in the south-central part of the continent, this country shares a border with eight neighbors. The needs are great, but there has been much progress—thanks in part to communities partnering with World Vision since the early

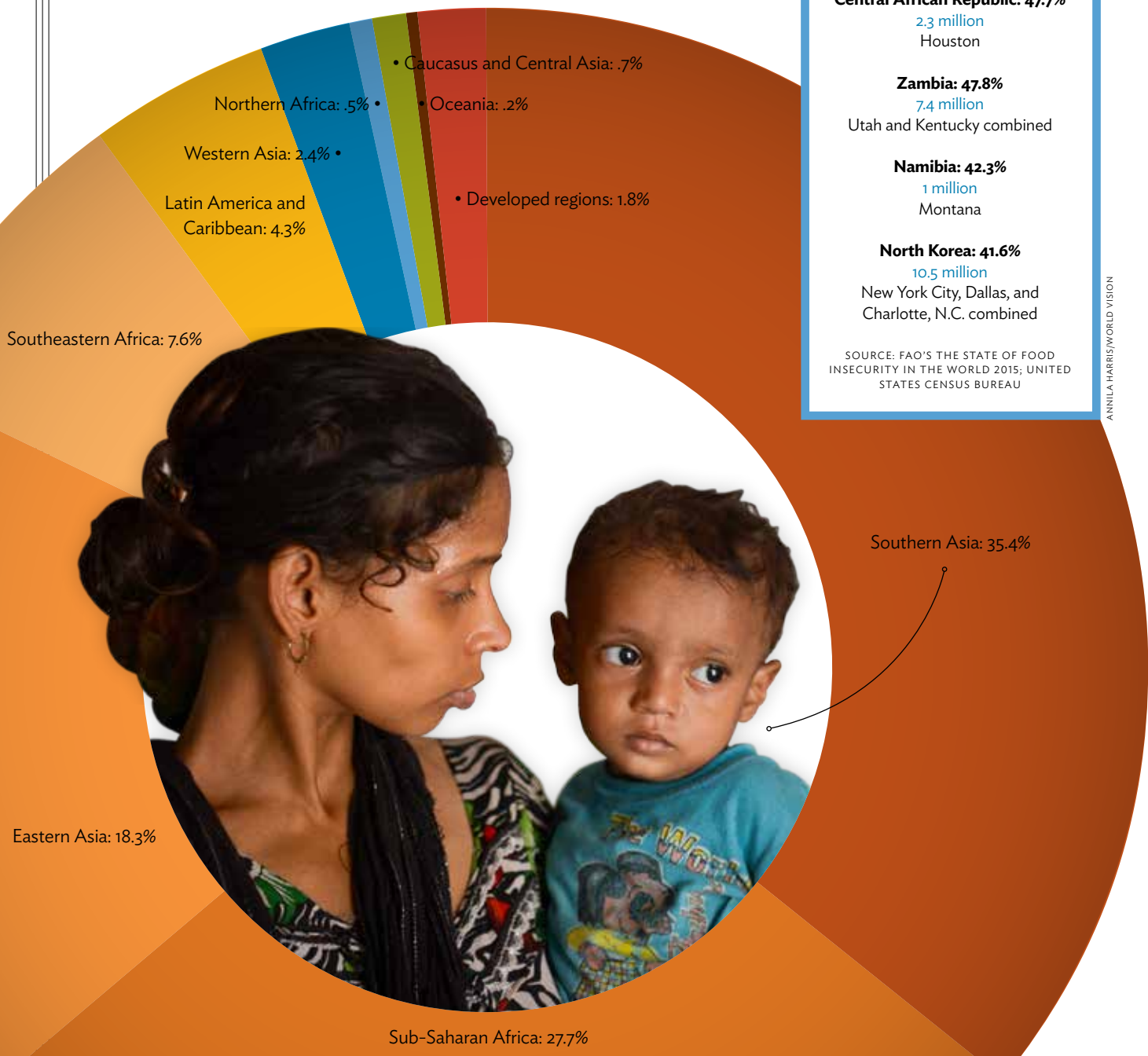
1980s. Child sponsorship paves the way for other work in microfinance, health, education, church partnerships, and water and sanitation.

Need another clue? The Zambezi River flows through the southwestern part of the country, creating Victoria Falls, the largest waterfall in the world.

Find out where in the world this photograph was taken—and see more “Where in the World?” photos—at wvmag.org/whereintheworld. ●

Who's Hungry?

Around the world, 793 million people are undernourished, which means a person doesn't have enough food to meet the daily minimum nutrition requirement for over a year. The good news: That total number is 167 million people less than it was a decade ago. **Here's a snapshot of which regions bear the greatest burden of the world's hunger by population:**



TOP HUNGRY COUNTRIES

Behind every percentage are real people when it comes to hunger. How does a nation's population of undernourished people roughly compare to the population of these U.S. cities and states?

(NOTE: REPORTING COUNTRIES ONLY)

Haiti: 53.4%
5.7 million people
Wisconsin

Central African Republic: 47.7%
2.3 million
Houston

Zambia: 47.8%
7.4 million
Utah and Kentucky combined

Namibia: 42.3%
1 million
Montana

North Korea: 41.6%
10.5 million
New York City, Dallas, and Charlotte, N.C. combined

SOURCE: FAO'S THE STATE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN THE WORLD 2015; UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU

WORLDWIDE | CAUSE OF DEATH

Preventable environmental factors are responsible for about a quarter of deaths every year around the world, according to the World Health Organization. Air and water pollution—which are linked to respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, and infant mortality, among others diseases—are the two biggest culprits. Africa and Asia have the highest number of preventable deaths. World Vision works to combat preventable diseases and deaths around the world by focusing on clean water and improved sanitation.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION



MARCELA ANDINO/WORLD VISION

LATIN AMERICA | ZIKA RESPONSE

In response to the Zika outbreak, World Vision is working with ministries of health in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to halt the virus' spread. Over a six-month period, World Vision will reach 433,000 people with mosquito nets and repellants, disease-prevention messages, and health services for pregnant women—crucial prevention efforts to combat the mosquito-borne virus.

MYAMNAR | POLITICAL PROGRESS

In March, democracy took a giant step forward when Myanmar inaugurated its first civilian president since 1962. President U Htin Kyaw, a former aide to National Democracy Party leader Aung San Suu Kyi, is tasked with tackling the country's widespread poverty and

ensuring peace in areas riddled with armed conflict. World Vision works with Myanmar's government to end child soldier recruitment, as well as rehabilitate trafficking survivors, bring clean water to communities, and provide microloans for economic opportunity.

U.S. | BANNING FORCED LABOR

As of February, a new law bans the import of goods produced by forced labor, keeping shipments of items commonly produced by slave labor—diamonds from Angola, matches from Bangladesh, and fireworks from Guatemala, among others—out of the U.S. The law prohibits goods from 74 countries from being imported, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. An estimated 168 million children aged 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor around the globe.



VICHHEKA SOK/WORLD VISION

SYRIA | COST OF WAR

Of 8.4 million Syrian children, a third of them—3.7 million—were born in the five years since the country's conflict began in 2011, according to UNICEF. Approximately 300,000 children were born as refugees. World Vision estimates that if peace isn't achieved by 2020, the cost of the war could reach \$1.3 trillion due to lost economic growth, education, and other factors. Read more about Syrian refugee children on page 14.

DID YOU KNOW?

WORLD VISION IN BRAZIL

From August 5 to 21, the world watches as Brazil hosts the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. World Vision has worked in Brazil since 1961, when sponsorship began at an orphanage in São Paulo. In addition to humanitarian relief following drought and natural disasters, World Vision's programs in Brazil range from providing healthcare and partnering with churches to training teachers and combating child labor. Today, more than 35,000 children in Brazil have American sponsors.

PARTNERING IN PRAYER

A California church challenges itself to go beyond giving.



COURTESY GRACE FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH

Nearly a decade ago, Doug Lee and Joyce West represented the congregation of Grace Fellowship Community Church and traveled from their San Francisco homes to see the work of a ministry partner in his native Nigeria. The trip came soon after the passing of the church's pastor.

"We were met by hundreds of widows. They heard about our pain and suffering in the illness and death of our pastor, and they had been gathering to pray—for us—every day," says Joyce, who leads the church's global ministries.

The women had few possessions and little money but traveled long distances to meet for prayer.

"I just had this overwhelming sense of how hollow I was in seeing how they were living out their faith," says Doug, an associate pastor. "I had this longing for us as a congregation to have thick faith and a thick Jesus and not just assume that all of our comforts and privileges meant that we

were doing well."

The experience challenged the team to intentionally and regularly lift others up in prayer.

"Persevering in prayer on behalf of folks is a gift that we have received and that we can offer," Joyce says. The congregation of about 200 people began to consider what God may have them care about.

"We needed to grow in humility, and that really meant coming before him and asking him to tell us what we need instead of deciding that we knew what to do," Joyce says.

Several partnerships grew out of that period of prayer, and about three years ago they began to feel a burden for Syrian refugees.

"There's so much in Scripture that is so specific about Syria," Doug says. "Every time Scripture names Syria, it's just a reminder that God has cared about this part of the world for a long time and continues to care about it."

In the last three years, the church has raised \$20,000 for World Vision's work with Syrian refugees, but they also pray together weekly for an hour. One of those prayer times is specifically for partnerships like the refugee work. Prayer hasn't always come easily with life's distractions and discouraging news headlines, but it challenges their hearts to stay committed.

"It's an act of trust that this is in God's hands," Doug says. "We're participating in something we don't have a solution for. It's really an act of trust that God is big enough to care for these things, and we can stay in this not because we see improvement but because we're trusting that God has this." ●

—Kristy J. O'Hara

STRETCH your prayer life and sign up for Hope Prayer Team at wvmag.org/pray. Help World Vision respond to the refugee crisis at wvmag.org/refugees.



CHANGE AGENT

NAME Lowell and Marguerite Johnson

HOME University Place, Washington

PROGRAM Planned Giving; Child Sponsorship

THE BUZZ As a teenager, Lowell Johnson listened as his parents periodically played radio broadcasts from World Vision founder Bob Pierce. Their faithful tithing and passion for missions inspired him to sponsor a child in Korea while Lowell was a medical student in the mid-1960s.

After completing his internship, Lowell entered the Army as a physician stationed in South Korea for 13 months. His first Sunday in Korea, he attended a church where the pastor, Dr. Han Kyung Chik, was a friend and ministry partner of Bob Pierce. Through Dr. Han, Lowell met his future wife, Marguerite, who was a short-term missionary for the United Presbyterian Church.

While in Korea, Lowell went to several World Vision-sponsored orphanages on official duty to give vaccines. He also visited his sponsored child, who lived in Seoul with his mother; his father had passed away. As Lowell didn't speak much Korean, "communication was quite lim-

ited," he remembers. But the impact of sponsorship stayed with him, and after he and Marguerite were married, they began sponsoring another child.

Forty-five years later, the couple currently sponsors three children—and plans to continue helping children around the world by including World Vision in their will. "I'd like something of what we've been given to provide something meaningful for the kingdom," says Lowell.

Still mission-minded, Lowell has gone on short-term medical mission trips at least once a year for the last 25 years, mostly to the Dominican Republic. He's visited one of the couple's sponsored children there several times, a girl whose sponsorship they assumed from Lowell's mother when she was in her 90s.

"Like I would feel about my bank, my money is safe with World Vision," Lowell says. "World Vision epitomizes an arm of the church working the way that it should work." ●

HAVE YOU included World Vision in your will? If so, share your story with us. Call 1.800.426.5753 or email plannedgiving@worldvision.org.

"BUT THE MAN OF HONOR MAKES GOOD PLANS, AND HE STANDS FOR WHAT IS GOOD."

—ISAIAH 32:8
(NEW LIFE VERSION)

Have you planned for the future like Lowell and Marguerite have?

Creating or updating your will is one of the most important things you'll ever do.

1 SECURE YOUR LOVED ONES' FUTURES

An up-to-date will ensures that your loved ones are provided for—as you desire—after your lifetime.

2 CREATE A LASTING LEGACY

Whether you have little or much, you can use what you have to bless family, friends, and causes you care about.

3 MAKE YOUR WISHES KNOWN

Without proper planning documents, your wishes will not be known or carried out.

Want help? Our free guide, "Simple Steps to Building Your Lasting Legacy," provides valuable information, tips, and tools to help you plan, no matter where you are in the process.

Request your free resource today. Call 1.800.426.5753, or email us at plannedgiving@worldvision.org.

HANDMADE FROM THE HEART

A blogger and online shop owner in Illinois raises money to fight Ebola.



COURTESY MOLLIE JOHANSON

Mollie Johanson thanks her blog readers and shop customers for their contributions to her goal of funding Ebola Caregiver Kits.

In a world of mass-produced goods, Mollie Johanson knows there's something special about a handmade item. The blogger, Etsy shop owner, author, and World Vision sponsor also knows that those items—and the hands that made them—can change the world. So in early 2015, Mollie sat in a church service and came up with a plan to do just that.

“We were talking about places we see God’s kingdom on earth here and now,” she says. “What came to my mind was World Vision caregivers.”

The timing of Mollie’s plan was perfect. In communities where World Vision works, volunteer caregivers provide home-based comfort and care for neighbors living with AIDS and other diseases. In early 2015, Ebola was ravaging West Africa, and Ebola Caregiver Kits provided critically needed supplies like latex gloves, protective face masks and gowns, and disinfectant to caregivers on the frontlines of the epidemic.

Mollie’s shop on etsy.com, an online marketplace for handmade goods, sells whimsical embroidery patterns, stitching projects, and more. She blogs about the same topics at wildolive.blogspot.com, where she has raised money for World Vision kits several times with her readers. Mollie felt led to fundraise for kits again.

She decided to use any shop profits that came in during Lent to purchase kits. With a minimum of 50 kits to fund, Mollie put out the word through her blog and Etsy shop, unsure if she’d be able to raise the \$1,500 needed. “God made it clear that this is what I should do, so I just needed to do it in faith,” she says. “And so I set my mind to that.”

Within two days, a customer offered to match Mollie’s profits up to \$1,500, boosting her effort and enthusiasm. Forty days later, the revenue totaled \$1,800, and the customer agreed to double the entire amount—enough to purchase 120 Ebola Caregiver Kits.

Soon, pallets of medical supplies for assembling the kits arrived at her home in St. Charles, Illinois. Mollie, her five siblings, and parents got to work building boxes, packing them with the provided supplies, and handwriting notes to the volunteer caregivers who would receive each kit. Their front porch filled with boxes that were picked up and shipped to West Africa.

No doubt, a donation of \$3,600 to fight Ebola would have been effective. But, Mollie says, “Sometimes there’s a time for actually touching the stuff, putting your hands on it, and praying for the people who receive it. Sometimes that’s what you need to do.” ●

—Elizabeth Hendley

LEARN MORE about how your church, company, or group can build kits at wvmag.org/kits.

COURTESY STEVE BRANDT



WHY I LOVE BEING A CHILD SPONSOR

STEVEN BRANDT
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY | COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

Last summer, I was able to visit my sponsored child, Pierre, in Tattaguine, a small village in the arid plains of central Senegal. I went with three other students from my school, and it was truly an amazing day.

When we arrived with World Vision staff, my friends and I were moved by the welcoming spirit of Pierre's family and friends. Pierre was shy at first, but he immediately perked up when I pulled out the soccer ball we brought for him. He was an amazing soccer player for being only 8 years old!

We kicked the ball around after meeting his immediate family and several cousins. We found out that Pierre's mom had passed away just five weeks earlier from tuberculosis. This touched all of

us, as it seemed like our trip was made at just the right time to give Pierre hope and remind him that there were people praying for him and supporting him.

After visiting Pierre's school—which World Vision had built just a couple hundred yards from his home—we ended the visit by having lunch with Pierre's family. His aunt prepared *yassa poulet*, my favorite Senegalese dish. She had come to live with his family after Pierre's mother died.

Before we left, Pierre's father presented me with a traditional Senegalese tunic. Pierre and his family come from the Serer tribe, and it is Serer custom to give a handmade, black-and-white striped tunic to those who you consider family and your closest friends.

I was touched to be welcomed into Pierre's family. Now, I can say that Pierre is not only my sponsored child, but he is like a brother or cousin. I am so grateful for him and for the opportunity World Vision has given me to support and meet him. ●

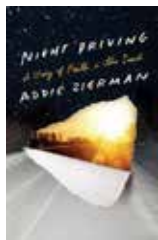
FOR INFORMATION on how to visit your sponsored child, go to wvmag.org/visit.

TELL US YOUR STORY. Why do you love being a child sponsor? Tell us at wvmag.org/mystory.

SUMMER READING

Whether you're headed on vacation or commuting to work, check out these titles to expand your global perspective, enhance your spiritual life, and more.

If you're interested in...



...confronting unexpected darkness in your faith journey: **Night Driving** by Addie Zierman



...following God's call despite deadly risks: **Dangerous Love** by Ray Norman



...daily devotionals with a side of cake: **Savor** by Shauna Niequist



...teaching the children in your life about God: **God's Love for You** by Rich and Renee Stearns



...a theologian who took a stand when it mattered most: **Bonhoeffer** by Eric Metaxas ●

CHILDHOOD



L



Syrian refugee children in Lebanon are haunted by their losses. But those who attend **Child-Friendly Spaces** have **a chance to heal** and reclaim their childhood.

By Kathryn Reid | Photos by Jon Warren

OST



AND

FOUR



All smiles, Syrian refugee children end their day at a Child-Friendly Space in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.



about a dozen children talk excitedly and pick out drawing supplies for their next activity when 11-year-old Jouri's voice rings out above the hubbub. Her song of a refugee's solidarity with those left in Syria is as current as the daily news:

*In a tent in Bar Elias;
a refugee, but my head held high.
Nobody has seen me,
and I still love you brother.*

Classmates and teachers stop their chatting and surround her. They beat time to the rap-like rhythm and join in loudly on the chorus in Arabic.

The teachers, called "animators," at the World Vision Child-Friendly Space (CFS) can only marvel at Jouri's confidence and composure. When Jouri first joined the CFS, she was fragile: quiet, withdrawn, and often close to tears, says Huda, one of the animators.

"We realized she could read well, and with emotion, and was able to tell stories," Huda says. Jouri was named the class storyteller, a position she takes seriously. Now she participates in all activities with pleasure, especially storytelling, reciting poetry, and singing.

Her transformation seems near-miraculous.

At first glance, a Child-Friendly Space might seem like any kids' activity center. On

ND

the walls there are brightly colored construction paper cutouts of circles, squares, birds, butterflies, and flowers. The air is alive with songs and laughter. But here in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, just 30 miles from Damascus, Syria, the thud of bombs can be heard even closer. The warm and welcoming Child-Friendly Spaces and people who staff them provide an oasis in the bleak lives of thousands of Syrian refugee children.

During 2015, World Vision assisted more than 12,000 children in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq with child protection and education programs. In Lebanon, those services include not just Child-Friendly Spaces, but also early childhood education for ages 3 to 6, digital hubs for computer learning, early childhood development classes for parents, and outreach for children and families with psychosocial needs.

Animators go to tent camps and neighborhoods where refugees live in unfinished buildings, registering children for an upcoming three-month term at the center. Once the children arrive, the animators start the hard work of helping them see and understand their emotions.

As the class storyteller, Jouri draws on a deep well of emotion she had previously bottled up.

Sitting in their living room, Jouri begins her family's story by saying, "When I was a child ... " Her mother and grandmother listen as she recounts fleeing from town to town; the time a blast from a car bomb destroyed the balcony and blew out the doors of a house where they were staying; and how her uncle, who brought them to Lebanon, died after he returned to Syria.

Those horrific experiences would be enough to shake anyone's confidence. Jouri is haunted by a sense of loss and longing, her mom, Haisha, says. Jouri's father has been missing in Syria for most of the three years since the family came to Lebanon. When last seen, he was wounded. Jouri doesn't know whether he's dead or alive.

EXERCISING EMOTIONS

If there's any hope for a healthy future for children who've suffered loss and displacement because of the Syrian civil war, learning to identify, express, and

manage emotions is critical, says Alison Schafer, a World Vision specialist in mental health and psychosocial support.

"One part of the curriculum in Child-Friendly Spaces helps children to identify heroes in their lives who can inspire them to develop coping and problem-solving skills," Alison says. "The children are strengthened by warm, supportive relationships with their peers and caring adults."

Ahmad, an animator with Jouri's group, is the picture of caring. "How do you feel today?" he asks the children standing with him in a circle. They've just played a series of exercise games to warm up and start the day.

Ahmad turns the dial on a handmade "mood wheel" to reveal pictures of different facial expressions. One by one the children call out how they feel and why.

"Happy! I'm happy to be here with my friends," says one girl. "Sad," says another, "because we heard bad news from Syria." As Ahmad turns the wheel, the children name other emotions from the facial expressions pictured.

Ahmad and the other animators give the children opportunities to recognize and express feelings and to understand that feelings come and go. "We don't ask about the things that trouble them," says Bassima, the children's center supervisor. "We are here to support and encourage them."

Parents as well as teachers can participate in World Vision training on positive discipline, which teaches them to recognize their children's challenges and help them solve problems. "This approach builds a child's self esteem and belief that they can take care of themselves," says Elika Dadestan, World Vision's interim global education in emergencies specialist.

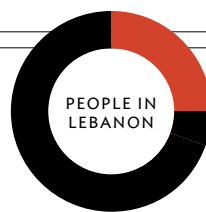
"If we are sad, [the animators] make us feel better," says Jouri. "Before the center, I didn't have courage, but now I do."

FAILING GRADE FOR EDUCATION

Jouri's emotional resilience—that courage she traces to the Child-Friendly Space—is equal to what's perhaps the biggest need and toughest challenge of her young life: getting an education. "Going to the space has made me a better student," she says. Jouri attends school in the morn-

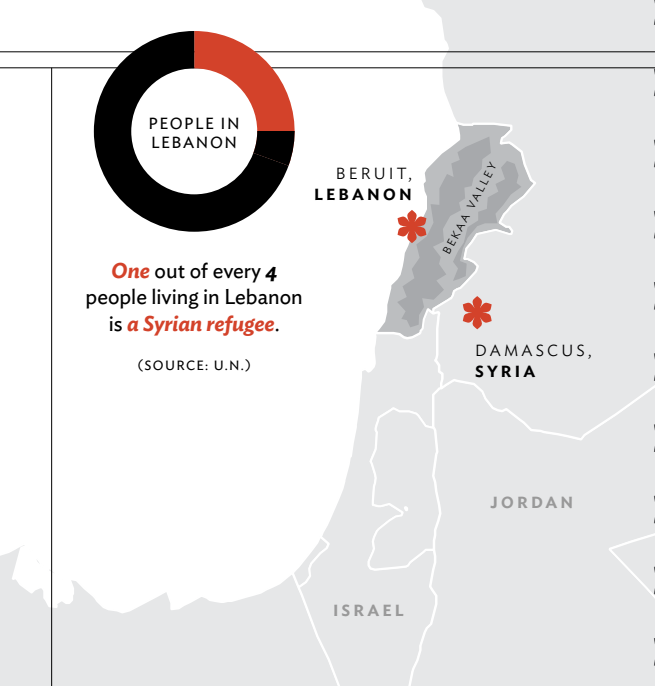


ABOVE: More than 365,000 Syrian refugees—many living in informal tented settlements—now call Lebanon's Bekaa Valley home. **RIGHT:** Jouri, 11, has flourished at the Child-Friendly Space she attends each day, thanks in part to animators like Ahmad, left.



One out of every **4** people living in Lebanon is a **Syrian refugee**.

(SOURCE: U.N.)



ings and the Child-Friendly Space each afternoon. She credits the center for much of her success in school, where she's just been named the top student in her class.

"Now I'm not so shy. I'm better able to answer questions and read aloud in class," she says.

Jouri is exceptional, not only because of her academic success, but because she goes to school at all. During 2015, less than a quarter of the 400,000 Syrian refugee children in Lebanon were enrolled.

As months and years pass, they find it harder and harder to return.

Ten-year-old Shiraz loved her school in Syria, but it was destroyed three years ago. She quit school in Lebanon this year after the principal chided her for talking in class. "I was out one day, and when I came back I didn't understand the instructions for a test, so I asked the girl sitting next to me," she says. "After that [humiliation], I didn't want to go back."

Asked what her parents thought about her leaving school, Shiraz just shrugged. "Parents never tell us where to go or what to do, except not to leave the tent at night," she says.

With no homework and little to do in the tent camp where she lives, Shiraz runs with a pack of kids, often teasing and chasing the little ones. She doesn't get along with her stepmother or feel close to her father. Her own mother left the family some years back.

Shiraz has two trusted friends, Iman and Bdour at the Child-Friendly Space who have similar stories. "I went to school, but it was far away, and the teachers yelled at us," says Iman. And Bdour said she registered, "but they never got back to us."

Parents who are struggling with their own losses and frustrations as well as financial concerns find it hard to navigate the education system and support their children to attend school. But not all parents understand their children's need for psychological support, and some don't see the connection between the program and the education they want their children to have.

"Some parents say their children don't have time to play and draw—they have to work," says Bassima, the center's supervisor.

Last term, a lot of children were absent. "They had to dig potatoes—the landlord requires it," says Huda. "Mostly girls or

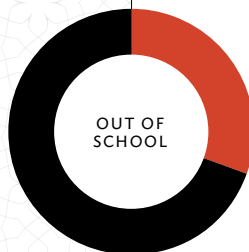


LEFT: Majd, 10, and Mohamed, 4, play "war" with toy guns outside their family's tent—not uncommon for children who have experienced conflict. Neither they nor their older brother, Ali, attend school. **ABOVE:** Ten-year-old Shiraz, in pink, explains a drawing she's made to Bassima, the supervisor of the children's center.



3 WAYS TO PRAY FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON »

- Pray for a swift end to the conflict in Syria.
- Ask God to protect the most vulnerable refugees and displaced people, including children.
- Praise God for churches in the Middle East serving refugees.



FAST FACT »

The number of children not receiving education due to the conflict in Syria totals about 2.8 million—more than if every child under 18 in Pennsylvania was out of school.

Almost a third of the 2.3 million Syrian refugee children in the Middle East are not enrolled in any form of education, and within Syria, more than 2.1 million aren't in school.



**“In the future,
I want to be a
teacher in Syria.
I’ll give gifts to all
the students.”**

— YASMIN, 9





LEFT: Yasmin, 9, and her friends sing and clap during an activity at the center. **ABOVE:** As they wait for the bus to take them to the Child-Friendly Space, children in a tent settlement play games they learned at the center.



MORE ONLINE »

See the photographer's additional photo galleries at wvmag.org/summer.

very young boys do the work, because they work cheaper.”

When parents visit the center, however, they see what their children do there and how happy they are. “They say, “This is good for my child. He is better behaved and happy. Please let them keep coming,” says Bassima.

As a parent herself, says Huda, “You have to be patient and work through the problems and support a child to go to school. It’s not easy.”

ALL WORK AND NO SCHOOL

Ali says he’s 13. His mother, Heven, corrects him, “12, but soon he’ll be 13.”

The point is more than academic. Ali considers himself an adult. He takes pride in being the breadwinner for his family. His father is being treated for a nervous condition and is unable to work, Heven says. The family depends on Ali’s income from selling tissues to passing motorists on the Damascus Road to pay the rent.

There is no oasis of a Child-Friendly Space for Ali, no safe place to experience emotions and build courage. No school days. War and loss have stolen his childhood.

“Being the oldest of his brothers, he wants to be responsible to take care of the family,” says Heven. “He wants me to think he lives a normal life.”

Ali steels himself to face daily rejection, insults, and bullying. Sometimes he cries from the strain. Heven’s eyes brim with tears whenever she thinks of what he’s missing.

Ali has been out of school since before his family moved from Syria to Lebanon. “He should be in school; he should be in grade 9 now,” Heven says, hanging her head.

Heven is adamant that education is what’s most important to her. “I don’t want them (her children) to work in construction like other Syrians do. I want them to get a degree and have a decent career,” she says.

The family struggles financially and emotionally. Beyond daily survival, Heven can’t see how to give her children the life she wants for them.

Three weeks after World Vision opens an early childhood education center

in the tent settlement where they live, Mohammed, Heven’s 4-year-old, is registered but not attending.

NURTURING WITH HOPE

This is Yasmin, like the flower,” says Huda, introducing a ponytailed girl with a blossoming smile. Yasmin, 9, sings with abandon, making big hand gestures and laughing with her friends. The Child-Friendly Space where she spends her weekday mornings is where she comes to life.

Children take home what they’ve learned at the center. They take the pictures they’ve made and hang them on the walls of their tents. They teach other children the games and songs they’ve learned. They share the lessons they’ve embraced about fair play and respect for others.

At noon, Yasmin rides the bus home from the Child-Friendly Space to the tent settlement where she lives. It’s dirty and depressing, in sharp contrast to the clean, colorful center. Yasmin walks cautiously along a muddy back alley between tents made of tarps and advertising posters.

“This is not a good place; not for kids,” says Ahmed, Yasmin’s father, as she enters the main living space of the tent. He and Yasmin’s mother, Khatar, try to make a good home, he says. He worries about conflict, crime. Feelings are raw within the camp, and locals are not always welcoming.

Ahmed feels fortunate to have a job. Most days, he drives a truck an hour from Zahlé to Beirut, through the mountains. He supports his own family as well as provides what he can for relatives who stay with him and others still in Syria. Finances are stretched. He makes enough, however, so that his children don’t have to work.

Khatar defies the dirt and disorder of the camp by keeping their tent as neat as a pin. She even made wall coverings from flour sacks scavenged from the trash dump. She washed and dried them by hand, then stitched them together and hung them.

Muddy shoes are left at the open doorway. There Yasmin, the eldest of five, plays school with the younger children or prepares a bottle for the baby while her mother makes lunch.

Then, in the afternoon, Yasmin and a few other children from the settlement ride another bus to a Lebanese school. Attending school challenges all of Yasmin's strength and spirit.

Sometimes students are harassed and the teachers are not always kind, she says. Yasmin's younger sister, Abir, won't go back since a teacher hit her hands. Often Syrian students struggle with subjects that are taught in English or French. In Syria, the classes were all in Arabic.

Yasmin, however, has the drive to succeed and the support she needs from her parents, teachers, and the Child-Friendly Space animators who encourage her.

"When it snowed [and school was closed], she wanted to go," says Khatar. "Her teacher says she is the second in her class; she needed just one more point to be first. That's out of about 30 children in the class."

A drawing Yasmin made at the center explains how she views the past, present, and future of her life: "That's my mother, father, and brother by our beautiful house in Syria. The day is sunny and there are butterflies," she says of the past. Her parents worked for years to build their dream home in Syria. Instead of moving in, they had to flee.

The high point of Yasmin's life in the present is the Child-Friendly Space she attends every day.

"In the future, I want to be a teacher in Syria. That's a cabinet with books in the classroom. I'll give gifts to all the students," she says.

Says her mother, "Our future is gone, but [the children's] future is our responsibility. We had our bad luck, but what we must do now is make a better life for them." *



BECOME A REFUGEE RESPONDER and help provide **Child-Friendly Spaces and other services for refugees.** Complete the form between pages 20 and 21 and enclose in attached envelope, or give online at wvmag.org/give.

SAFETY ZONES

By Elizabeth Hendley

Child-Friendly Spaces are programs that support children's well-being during emergencies. That can encompass risks of all kinds: conflict, natural disaster, or potentially exploitative situations. Here are three places where World Vision's Child-Friendly Spaces and the staff who run them are helping vulnerable children.



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

BANGLADESH * Barandipara slum in Jessore, Bangladesh, isn't a safe place for children. But the bright posters and balloons inside the Child-Friendly Space welcome children who wouldn't otherwise have a place to go during the day while their parents work. Their teacher, Ritta Israt Jahan, leads 37 children in art, numbers, music, and other activities, and she instructs them in how to stay safe from strangers—essential in an area where child trafficking is a harsh reality. Ritta helps parents understand the importance of education and encourages them to enroll their children in school after they graduate from the center.



SOUTH SUDAN * At Pagai, a camp for internally displaced people in South Sudan, World Vision opened a Child-Friendly Space where children could play games, color, skip rope, and play soccer. In conflict areas, Child-Friendly Spaces are especially important for providing psychosocial care. Deng Maleuth, one of the teenagers at the center, walked for three months from his home to Pagai camp after losing his entire family. “I have no mother or father,” he says. “When I came, I had no friends. Now I feel comfortable. World Vision has made me feel safe.”



CHRISTY JOY A. FELISILDA/WORLD VISION

PHILIPPINES * When Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in November 2013, a key component of World Vision’s emergency response was Child-Friendly Spaces. Amid damaged homes, fallen trees, and dangerous debris from the storm, children here needed a safe place to go. After distributing food, clean water, and other essentials to those most affected by the storm, World Vision staff went to work setting up the centers. “Their school was destroyed, so we brought in tents, educational materials, and activities to facilitate their return to school,” says Arlo Ramos, the specialist who helped open the space. “We trained their own teachers in the Child-Friendly Space module and worked alongside them. These teachers will be able to carry on the work to help the children recover.” ●

DEFYING THE BE



AST



**CRUSHED BY
NATURAL DISASTERS,
poverty, and violence,
Honduras is cherished
by its people, who
nevertheless make the
dangerous, desperate
trek north to find
opportunity. World
Vision is creating ways
to give young people
and their families a
reason to stay—and
flourish—in the country
they love.**

BY KARI COSTANZA

PHOTOS BY LAURA REINHARDT

This mural in capital city Tegucigalpa says it all—the line between security, peace, and hope and insecurity, death, and violence is quite thin.

THEY CALL IT LA BESTIA



“The Beast.” They say it’s a monster that kills, maims, and separates families. “The Beast” rides on rails. It is the network of freight trains that people who migrate from Central America take north through Mexico to reach the United States. They sit back-to-back atop train cars for days. To fall asleep is to risk falling to one’s death.

Why take such a risk? Honduras, the country of origin for many people who migrate, has faced inordinate trials since the late 1990s. Hurricane Mitch left more than 19,000 people dead in Central America. Then-President Carlos Flores said it set Honduras back 50 years. After Hurricane Mitch, the numbers of Hondurans trying to reach the United States swelled, peaking at 523,000 in 2010.

Today, 62 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Single parents head most households—grandmothers or mothers, their husbands working, legally or illegally, abroad. Poverty created a breeding ground for drugs, gangs, and crime. Honduras does not produce cocaine, but it sits along the drug pipeline between South America and the United

Below: Jose Gustavo and his wife, Julia, treasure this photo of their beloved Maria Paula, who died tragically.

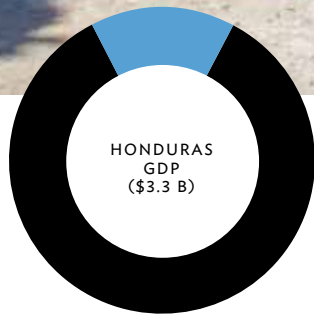
States. Drug trafficking and gang violence gave San Pedro Sula, the industrial center of northwest Honduras, one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Hondurans fear “The Beast” and love their country. That’s why World Vision is there—to give young people a reason to stay, assisted by child sponsorship and innovative economic empowerment and education programs.





Thanks to child sponsorship and powerful economic empowerment programs, Jose Gustavo and Julia's grandson, Edwin's, future will be different.



In 2014, 17 percent of Honduras's GDP—\$3.3 billion—came from **remittances**. The country's economy is heavily dependent on money sent home from migrants.

(SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH)



MISSING MARIA

Jose Gustavo Benitez, 66, and his wife, Julia, 62, are defying “The Beast,” working together to create peace and prosperity in their community because of what happened to their daughter, Maria Paula. Eight years ago, when she was only 13, Maria Paula and her boyfriend left for San Pedro Sula looking for work. “She took pills, and they found her dead,” says Jose Gustavo.

Jose Gustavo and Julia live outside Gracias, in western Honduras, in a place where you can hear the wind rustling through the trees. No cars muffle the sound of nature. Jose Gustavo and Julia care for daughter Anna’s children, while she works nearby as a teacher.

Grandson Edwin, 9, is sponsored. He loves to go to school, and he loves to take his grandpa lunch in the field where Jose Gustavo works. They eat and rest a bit, surrounded by bright red tomatoes, fat watermelons, or shiny green peppers—whatever his grandfather is cultivating that season.

“Isn’t everything here?” asks Jose Gustavo. It is: fertile land, passed down to Jose Gustavo from his father; water for irrigation; and a close-knit, 800-member community, 242 of whom are children sponsored by U.S. donors. They live together in peace. The community is crime-free.

“We are a team,” says Julia of her husband of nearly 40 years. “We have been in this together. It has to be an equal partnership. Between us, we will go until the end.”

Jose Gustavo is part of a 48-member group called Fountain of Life, started with World Vision. The group farms and saves money together. Beginning with nothing, after eight years of hard work, they have amassed \$26,000. Members can withdraw money to pay for home improvements, medical needs, or their children’s education.

Around the world, savings groups are banks for the poor. Financial institutions in Honduras may charge up to 75 percent interest, but savings groups decide their own lower rates—often 20 to 35 percent. Members hold one another accountable. World Vision has walked closely alongside the group, building a water system for irrigation, providing seeds and fertilizer, and training the farmers in the latest agricultural techniques and money management.



Left: Jose Gustavo (also below) and Julia care for their grandchildren while their daughter works nearby as a teacher.

Above: Because of child sponsorship and the Fountain of Life savings group, Marvin Cortez didn’t attempt the dangerous journey to the United States.

On March 1, 2016, Fountain of Life embarked on an innovative venture: encouraging the young people of the community to join their group. Every member invited a young person to join them, doubling the size of the group. Jose Gustavo invited his daughter Anna to join.

But it’s another daughter who has inspired this vision: Maria Paula, his daughter who died in San Pedro Sula. “She’s one of the reasons I want the youth to be involved in this program,” he says, “people like my daughter, who left for the city and never came back.”

MARVIN’S STORY

Like Maria Paula, Marvin Cortez, 26, considered leaving the community, even riding “The Beast” north, to find opportunity. A picture of strawberries growing in California enticed him—plump, ripe berries, stretching in rows to the horizon. In Central America, people pay “coyotes,” a network of human smugglers, upward of \$3,000 to escort them across the border. Some people make it. Many do not.

But Marvin stayed for two reasons. First, he found work alongside Jose Gustavo, cultivating tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, corn, and coffee. Now, armed with the latest farming techniques and a role in the savings group, Marvin earns the income he needs to support his family.

Marvin received a second boost from child sponsors in the U.S. after a major medical setback six years ago. Marvin had nearly lost his daughter, Lesly, to hepatitis

when she was a baby. “The doctors told us to wait for a miracle,” he says. “They said only God would save her.” The doctors’ words drove him to his knees on the hospital floor. “I made a pact with God,” he says. “I promised to get married and to serve him.”

Lesly, now 7, survived, and the young father kept his promise. Marvin married Lesly’s mother, Fatima, and they lived with Marvin’s mother, nursing Lesly back to health. But it was a stressful time. “I didn’t have a house. I lived with my mom,” says Marvin. “It is hard on a marriage. You don’t have privacy.”

That’s when Cliff and Myrna, sponsors from Michigan, stepped in to help the family build a house, traveling to Honduras to meet them. Today, the family has a sturdy new home. Marvin has a steady income that allows him to take care of Lesly and his three other children, who love to race around the house, chasing one another and laughing while Fatima watches, smiling. “God opened doors,” he says.

LOOKING FOR PROSPERITY

God also opened doors for Janeth Rodriguez Aguilar’s family in nearby Yamaranguila. Three years ago, Janeth’s father, Hector Rodriguez Garcia, 45, joined a savings group called Looking for Prosperity. Life in western Honduras was hard. The family had no income. “We ate nothing else, only corn,” says Hector’s wife, Nolvía, 35. “I would make tortillas. Sometimes tamales. But we only ate corn.” Janeth and her sister became sick with pneumonia. “I thought they were going to die,” says their mother.

But leaving Honduras to find work was a frightening proposition for Hector. “There are people who go to the United States from here, looking for the American dream,” he says. “They come home without arms or legs.” He explains how a friend fell from the train, losing an arm. Others die from falling between train cars. “I want to change my children’s thinking,” he says. “They will work for the country instead of leaving.”

When the Looking for Prosperity group began in 2013, not only did Hector join—so did daughter Janeth. The first year, she took out a joint loan with her dad for \$1,000 to plant coffee after school. She



Above: In Western Honduras, successful coffee production is enabling Gennri and Marisol (more on page 34) and Janeth and her father, Hector (right), to defy “The Beast.”

was able to pay nearly all of it back herself with Hector’s contribution. The next year, Janeth borrowed \$250 all on her own. This time she quadrupled her earnings, making \$1,000 from her crop.

Janeth, 16, who has a World Vision sponsor in Puerto Rico, can now fulfill her dream to become a nurse. “I have a great father who supports me,” she says. “Most parents don’t have economic resources to send children to school.”

On a typical day, Janeth attends school and then tends to her coffee plants. Afterward she washes up, splashing her face with clean water provided by World Vision to her home. Then it’s time for homework and fun. “I love to cook,” she says. “Our diet has changed. Now we have chicken and tamales.”

Fourteen girls participate in Looking for Prosperity. They are different from other girls. “There are a lot of pregnant girls and young mothers [in Yamaranguila],” she says. In 2014, of the 190 pregnancies in the area, 170 were girls under the age of 17. None of the girls who belong to the savings group is pregnant. “We are interested in the future,” says Janeth.

LIVING TO LOVE

With World Vision’s support, Gennri





**HONDURAS /
A LEADING COFFEE EXPORTER**



In 2016, Honduras exported an estimated

6M BAGS = 45B CUPS

Ranking the country's coffee exports:

1
IN
CENTRAL
AMERICA

3
IN
LATIN
AMERICA

6
IN
THE
WORLD

(SOURCE: USDA)



Herrera, 39, and his wife Marisol, 42, are defying “The Beast” in a colossal way in San Marcos, on the western border of Honduras. Gennri (pronounced Henry) and Marisol have four children—three boys and a girl—three of whom have sponsors in the U.S. When World Vision began to promote savings groups in San Marcos, where the family lives, Gennri was interested. In 2004, he became part of a savings group.

Three years later, Gennri’s savings group bought a coffee-processing machine from Brazil for \$25,000. The massive machine sorts, washes, and dries coffee beans. The group, which began with nothing, is now a cooperative with accumulated savings and capital worth \$280,000.

Marisol began to volunteer with World Vision. It was an education for her. Gennri and Marisol had only attended school through sixth grade because until recently, that was all that was required. World Vision filled in the rest.

“My [education], my home, is all from World Vision,” she says. She went on to get a degree in business administration. Today, she is Gennri’s business partner.

They invest in their community, especially young people. The couple employ a dozen people and provide 125 farmers with a place to bring their coffee beans to sell. They are community role models, running a 20-member youth group in which they teach business skills. “We believe in youth,” says Gennri. Their children are now in college except the youngest, who is finishing 10th grade.

“What we want to do is stop the youth from migrating to the United States,” says Gennri. “I had opportunity. Friends said, ‘I will take you. I will get you a visa.’” Gennri refused. “The only way I will go to the United States,” he says, “is to negotiate for coffee.”

And that could happen. Gennri and Marisol ship beans throughout Honduras and export coffee to Starbucks through a broker. “Our goal,” says Marisol, “is to sell directly to Starbucks.” To achieve the necessary certification, they employ best practices: processing high-quality, organic, chemical-free beans; protecting the environment; and employing workers 18 and older.

“When we do things, and we do everything in this business the right way and hon-

3 WAYS TO PRAY FOR HONDURAS

- 1 / Pray for economic development opportunities for families.
- 2 / Ask God to bless the efforts of those working hard to change their communities.
- 3 / Pray for an end to the violence that engulfs many young Hondurans.

Gennri and Marisol’s coffee business is flourishing, as is their influence in the community.

Below: In Tegucigalpa, NFL offensive tackle Kelvin Beachum Jr., meets with children in an innovative technology program. Read more about his experience on page 38.

estly, we do it for God,” says Marisol. “God sees our work, God sees our purpose. Putting everything in God’s hands, that is success.”

IN GOD’S HANDS

Not far away, Jose Gustavo starts each day with prayer, putting his life into God’s hands. Saying goodbye to Julia, he goes to the field—his father’s land. Business people from the city want to buy the land, but he refuses to sell. “I don’t know where that money comes from,” he says. “I want my community to work here.”

After lunch with grandson Edwin, Jose Gustavo finishes his day. “I take care of my animals, a donkey and a mare,” he says. “I come home, we have dinner, and then I sleep. I don’t waste my time watching TV,” he says. “You’re looking instead of resting.” But before he slumbers, Jose Gustavo thanks God once more.

Jose Gustavo says that he and Julia are working to create a place of peace, where children can grow up away from the dangers of the city. Where they can learn, play, and worship. Where their parents can overcome adversity with opportunity. With Maria Paula in their hearts, Jose Gustavo and Julia are weathering storms, leading by example, and defying “The Beast.” ♦

Johnny Lopez, who works with World Vision in Honduras, contributed to this story.



TECHNOLOGY TAKES OFF

By Kari Costanza



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION



Last year, World Vision piloted an innovative project in Honduras's capital city, Tegucigalpa. Entrepreneurship and Employment with Technology gives children a boost with technology skills and new ways of thinking.

World Vision installed computer labs in schools and equipped 145 teachers to instruct nearly 1,000 students on how to use and repair computers. It was a first for many of the students, who had previously learned about computers just by looking at pictures. Today, students speak with confidence about programs such as Microsoft Excel, Adobe Dreamweaver, and Adobe Photoshop.

Enil Gomez, 15, a student at Carlos Flores school, says the program changed his life. "I

was on the wrong pathway," he says. "After the courses, I said to myself, 'I want to change my thinking and help others.'" Enil has become a positive role model for his four younger brothers. He has new dreams. No longer does he want to be a soldier, which he thought was his only option. Now he wants to become a teacher and work with young people.

One reason why: his teacher, Rebecca Sevilla, 54, is so enthusiastic about the project. "She loves to teach a lot," he says.

"Now I'm a technology teacher," says Rebecca with pride. Before, she says, she didn't have the tools she needed to teach technology. "Honduras did not give me the tools. World Vision did. It was like heaven," she says.

Rebecca teaches students entrepreneurial skills as well to expand their horizons and challenge them to think outside the box. The students started small businesses at school, selling candies and fruit.

"I really learned how a company works," says Nancy Mungia, 14. "[Before,] I didn't know how you can invest money and how to speak in public." The students learned to launch and market products. In the process, they expanded their mindsets.

"I didn't have a goal," says Eduardo Meraz, 14, "but now I want to study business administration." Eduardo hopes to own a car dealership someday, a dream for tomorrow spawned by everything he's learning today. ●



KATIA DALILA MALDONADO/WORLD VISION

CHAMPION OF CHILDREN

SPONSORSHIP HELPED A YOUNG ATHLETE REACH THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

BY KATIA DALILA MALDONADO

Delbyn Cartagena has a special place in the sports history of El Salvador. The 28-year-old professional long-distance runner has won dozens of medals, trophies, and national and international recognition.

Discipline, effort, and determination have had a great deal to do with her success, but Delbyn credits sponsorship for providing access to competitive sports. “I am an athlete thanks to World Vision’s sponsorship program,” she says. “I am so thankful for those sponsors who give opportunities to children.”

She was one of many girls and boys to enjoy new opportunities

in San Ignacio, a town in the mountainous region of northwest El Salvador. “There were hundreds of sponsored children in my community,” Delbyn says, recalling the Christmas and Children’s Day celebrations.

Sponsored for 12 years, Delbyn received school supplies, shoes, and medical care—a big help for a girl with 10 brothers whose father migrated to the U.S. She remembers making cards and drawings for her sponsor, and in return, “I received special gifts that let me know someone special cared about me.” She loved participating in children’s rights activities; as an adult she

“I can testify that sports are an important tool for society that keep youth from criminal associations and pregnancy at an early age.”

—DELBYN CARTAGENA

As a sponsored child, Delbyn Cartagena’s love of sports was encouraged and nurtured.



KATIA DALLA MALDONADO/WORLD VISION

continues to talk about those topics.

But it was through the Betania Club, a World Vision group encouraging sporting talent, that Delbyn “discovered what I wanted to be.”

Betania Club invited about 100 children to train at a facility a little more than a mile away, but the budding athletes had to cross two rivers to get there. Despite that and the occasional rainstorms, the runners loved being in the natural environment, among the pines and coniferous trees.

“My love for sports started there,” Delbyn says. “There were two training shifts, morning and afternoon. It was a pleasant climate, and we had fun. The older [children] encouraged the younger ones.”

The Betania program helped an entire generation of children in the La Palma municipality avoid violence and vices in order to pursue study and sports. Delbyn says, “I can testify that sports are an important tool for society that keep youth from criminal associations and pregnancy at an early age.”

In 2003, La Palma stood out in competition, and Delbyn and her brother traveled to the capital, San Salvador, for training and races. Then the coaching group that partnered with Betania selected Delbyn

for a scholarship to study in San Salvador. Through hard work and juggling academics and a job, she earned a degree in physical education.

Since then, Delbyn has visited many countries, but the most memorable competition was the Central American Games in Costa Rica in 2013, in which she won the bronze medal in the 10,000 meters race. “I was injured during the competition, but I had to go to represent my country,” she says. “I prayed to God for strength because I really wanted to win that medal—it is a national responsibility. I made the effort and won, despite being injured. I was pleased that I made it with the help of God.”

Even as a victorious athlete, training at the National Stadium in San Salvador, Delbyn remained humble and concerned for others’ needs. She has donated her trophies to fund races in La Palma, supported women’s and children’s causes, and helped with housing projects and health centers. She also trained people with disabilities, including Gabriela, a sight-impaired athlete who participated in the Special Olympics.

Her ultimate goal was to go back to La Palma and coach youth to help them discover their athletic skills—passing on the support that made the difference for her as a sponsored child. The impact of that work continues today, she says: “Although the [sponsorship] program already ended, people keep saying that World Vision helped children’s development in San Ignacio.”

In 2015, Delbyn moved back to La Palma to work as a children’s coach with the National Sports Institute of El Salvador. She married, and she’s now happily expecting her first baby. She will never forget the boost that allowed her to reach her dreams. “World Vision’s cause is amazing,” she says. “I do not want to imagine a country without organizations like this one.” ●

TO SPONSOR A CHILD fill out the form between pages 20 and 21 and enclose in attached envelope, or go to wvmag.org/sponsor.

Forward Pass for Progress

BY KELVIN BEACHUM JR.

As a pro football player, husband, and father, my offseason months are precious. So when I traveled to Honduras to see some of World Vision's work, I wanted to make the most of my time. I knew Lord was going to do something in me during the trip.

What I didn't know is that he would give me a clue before I even got on the plane. I arrived at the check-in desk at the airport—without my passport. If I was a preacher, I would say a mini sermon came to me: What's the thing that's preventing you from accessing what God has for you?

For me, it was my passport. A quick trip back to my house solved my access problem. For the kids and families I met in Honduras, their access problem was more complicated. But I saw how World Vision is investing in communities to give people access to education, economic opportunity, clean water, and other ways to live full lives.

On my first day in Honduras, I visited an urban school to see a technology project, which focuses on entrepreneurship and tech skills. (Read more about it on page 35.) The students had made tremendous strides in computer skill development, programming, creativity, and learning about business.

Though they only have a couple of hours of computer time per week, they would have none if wasn't for this program. These kids are intelligent, and access to technology and the internet—something we often take for granted—can be the difference between a life of poverty and a life with educational and employment opportunities.

I also visited a rural school in the mountains. Some students walk three hours uphill on dusty roads to reach school, a testament to their enthusiasm and commitment. At a peer-to-peer tutoring session, a 9-year-old named Kevin was helping his classmates with math problems. He has so much potential, and I decided to sponsor him—because what better way to help Kevin access what God has for him?

Kevin's community's water tank system was what impressed me most. It's part of a World Vision water project and was built by the parents of students, family members, and other community members. The kids took a lot of pride and ownership in that. Now



EUGENE LEE/WORLD VISION

“...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

—PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Ten-year-old Kevin Ariel gets a ride from his new sponsor, Kelvin Beachum Jr.

8,700 people up and down the mountain have access to clean water. Eventually the project will reach more than 200,000.

The sacrifice of those who worked on this project is unbelievable. For months, they slept nearby and worked during the day, all to produce a better life for the young people. Growing up, my dad would wake up at 4:45 a.m. to run his automotive business. When I got older I asked him why he did what he did—long hours, sacrifice, no sleep, little food. He said, “Because I wanted a better life for my kids.”

The people who built the water project not only gave their children access to clean

water but access to a better life. Clean water provides ways for people to thrive; it trickles down into all aspects of life.

My last day in Honduras, I visited a community that had come a long way from where it was when World Vision started working there. It showed me how World Vision starts with the very basic needs and then expands the breadth of programs to the extent that people are now starting businesses.

They have an economic development project which provides savings plans; education for the kids and teenagers; clean drinking water for the entire community; and water for agricultural irrigation. A group of business leaders have opened three locations of a coffee shop and serve amazing food—the hot chocolate was delicious, and the cornbread cake was to die for.

Several years ago, that might not have been possible. But the potential was always there. The people are hard-working and intelligent. They wanted better things for their kids. So when World Vision planted the seeds, the people did the rest. They just needed access to ideas and opportunities in order to tap into their God-given potential. ●



Kelvin Beachum Jr., is an offensive tackle with the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars. He and his wife, Jessica, have a daughter and live in Jacksonville, Florida.

LIFE FRAMES



ZAMBIA

Bad weather leads to good photographs. I remind myself of this every time the weather turns terrible when I'm on assignment in the field. The challenge is getting out there to cover it.

That's when staff drivers, like Davison Phiri in Zambia, come in. World Vision has a penchant for choosing to work in the most remote, inaccessible locations. Our drivers take us there. So while I may be anxiously watching the sky as rainstorms sweep through the area, Davison isn't bothered at all when the road turns into a muddy river.

And then I receive a gift—a rainbow appears.

Davison patiently agrees to let me out of the vehicle so I can photograph the 4x4 as he splashes past. I choose a 15mm fisheye lens to capture as much of the scene as possible, holding it close to the ground and using the motor drive to increase my odds of getting a frame where the splashes are just right. ●

Written and photographed by Jon Warren
Nikon D750
15mm Sigma fisheye lens
1/1000th at f/8
250 ISO

**LIFE
FRAMES**

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JON'S REFLECTION FROM ZAMBIA,
AT WVMAG.ORG/LIFEFRAMES.

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simply be kids.

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oppressed, a stronghold in
times of trouble.*

—Psalm 9:9



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Published by
World Vision, Inc.
P. O. Box 70172
Tacoma, WA 98481-0172

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