

# World Vision

A young boy with dark skin and short, curly hair is smiling broadly, showing his teeth. He is holding two young goats. One goat is white with brown patches, and the other is solid brown. The background is a soft-focus green field under a blue sky.

WINTER 2021

## A thrill of hope

14

Children find joy in an  
outpouring of blessings

22

SPECIAL REPORT:  
EAST AFRICA  
HUNGER CRISIS



# A special gift sent with love

Send your love to your sponsored child through a Special Gift of \$100 or more. In the economic fallout from COVID-19, this extra support may be needed now more than ever. Our local staff will help the family purchase what they need most. And you'll get a thank-you letter and a photo.

## Share joy this Christmas!

Send a life-changing gift to your sponsored child.

Call **1.800.423.4216** or visit **myworldvision.org/SpecialGift**

To help ensure your gift goes as far as possible to help meet the unique needs of your sponsored child and their family, each Special Gift must be \$100–\$200. Any amount over \$200, and 25% of gifts under \$200, will go to help your child's community. Delivery time of Special Gifts varies and cannot be guaranteed by Christmas due to the many gifts given during the holiday season.

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### ON THE COVER

Mustafa, 10, a South Sudanese refugee living in Uganda, poses with the goats that helped save his family.

AGGREY NYONDWA KIKOBERA / WORLD VISION

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—Peter, 43, Zambia

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### EXPLORING OUR WORK

Each icon below corresponds to an area of World Vision's work. Use these to guide you topically as you explore this issue.

- Health
- Education
- Child protection
- Child sponsorship
- Poverty in America
- Christian faith
- Gender equality
- Economic empowerment
- Emergency response
- Disability inclusion
- Clean water
- Hunger and food security
- Refugees
- Prayer





Edgar Sandoval Sr. listens to a teenage boy share his story at a vocational training center in a Rohingya refugee camp in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

# The story I’ll tell

By Edgar Sandoval Sr.

**STORYTELLING IS AT THE CORE OF HUMANITY.** Our best stories are passed down from generation to generation. My mother often told me about watching news reels and praying, as a 10-year-old girl in Guatemala, while the world faced a historic moment of truth on D-Day. The story she told over and over made such an impression that one summer, I took my kids to Normandy, France. We looked down from the steep cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc where on June 6, 1944, American Army Rangers climbed up while Nazis shot them down. The Rangers’ mission was to begin to liberate Europe—and they did. Tragedy turning to triumph—that’s a plot twist we love. But it’s harder to shape a hopeful narrative in the midst of difficult times. That’s what we have been going through with the COVID-19 pandemic. We can learn from the people of Israel, who shared a particular kind of story with their children and grandchildren. As Psalm 78:4 says, “We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.”

That’s also the theme of one of my favorite worship songs, “The Story I’ll Tell” by Maverick City Music. It begins with angst and doubt that feels familiar to us in 2021: “The hour is dark/ And it’s hard to see/ What You are doing here in the ruins/ And where this will lead.” It goes on: “Oh, but I know/ That down through the years/

I’ll look on this moment and see Your hand on it/ And know You were here.” Yes! For followers of Jesus, there is only one story: God’s faithfulness. Our choice is to be part of that story or not. To be with God or not. To serve the people He loves—or turn away. Throughout the past year, God’s faithfulness has been especially evident in World Vision’s ministry. We see His hand of protection on us and His miraculous provision as staff responded to the needs of vulnerable people suffering crisis on top of crisis. Containing the spread of the virus in the world’s largest refugee camps. Rushing food to address the escalating hunger crisis in East Africa. Equipping communities hit by surging infections and variants. Addressing problems forcing Central American families to migrate. God’s faithfulness has been evident in you, too, as you reached out with love and prayers for your sponsored child or families in need. The pandemic may be straining your economic security, but you refused to turn away from those Jesus asks us to love as much as we do Him. The story I’ll someday tell of this time is still being written, but I already know that it is a story of hope. It’s about where we are placing our trust and what we did, in confidence of God’s faithfulness—helping more people than ever before. And most of all, it’s a story of joy. Even when the hour was dark and it was hard to see where things would lead—that’s when we looked and saw God’s hand. Yes, that’s when we knew that Jesus was there! As we celebrate with loved ones this Christmas season, let’s tell our stories not for our sake but for God’s glory, testifying to the unchanging power and unstoppable love of the Miracle Worker, Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, the name above all names ... Jesus Christ! 🙏



**Edgar Sandoval Sr.** is president and CEO of World Vision U.S. Follow him at [twitter.com/EdgarSandovalSr](https://twitter.com/EdgarSandovalSr).

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.  
—1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

# Embark

COME IN AND SEE THE WORLD

**PRAYER**

Great Shepherd, we thank You for Your goodness and ask that You fill our hearts with compassion for others this season.



**Guatemala**  
Marialita, 7, and her brother Yorbin, 12, love to snuggle with their woolly sheep, provided by donors through the World Vision Gift Catalog.





## Myanmar

Sponsored child Shaw Lu, 9, in blue, and his cousin, Kya Kyar, 8, delight in playing with the water buffalo World Vision provided to the family to help with farming.

SAW MOO KALE/WORLD VISION

IN 2020,

# 3.6M

CHILDREN BENEFITED THROUGH WORLD VISION LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS LIKE ANIMAL MANAGEMENT.

THIS YEAR MARKS THE

# 25TH

ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD VISION GIFT CATALOG.

IN FISCAL YEAR 2020, **135,000** PEOPLE DONATED MORE THAN **265,000** ITEMS FROM THE WORLD VISION GIFT CATALOG TO EQUIP FAMILIES AROUND THE WORLD—

## \$27M.

## India

World Vision reaches out to vulnerable families in India with the gift of goats. “I named her Thulasi and I take care of her every day,” says Balamnikandan, 9.

LUKE ASLAKSAN/WORLD VISION



## Guatemala

Samantha, 7, has this baby chick, donated through the World Vision Gift Catalog, eating from the palm of her hand.

ANDRÉ GUARDIOLA/WORLD VISION



COMMUNITY GIFT FUNDS  
RAISED BETWEEN OCTOBER  
2019 AND SEPTEMBER 2020  
RESULTED IN AN ADDITIONAL  
**\$2.3M**  
TO WORLD VISION'S  
SPONSORSHIP COMMUNITIES  
AROUND THE WORLD.



Armenia

The happy voices of children fill the air in Tchambarak. Now they have a place to play at recess and after school thanks to World Vision's generous sponsors. Community gifts are additional funds from sponsors and donors to specific area programs. World Vision staff and community members work together to expand existing program plans or respond to new and emerging needs. Greta Kirakosyan teaches fine arts and technology at the school. "The children in this village are deprived of many things," she says. But now this playground has become their joy. Greta says, "We are thankful to World Vision for providing this community gift. Finally, this playground is full of happy children and sounds so fun and noisy like it should."

GAYANE GALSTYAN/WORLD VISION





## Peru

Families in Cusco received school kits and tablets in May 2021. These donations help children continue to learn despite school closures caused by COVID-19.

CLAUDIA ZEVALLOS/WORLD VISION

IN 2020, WORLD VISION  
DISTRIBUTED

1,108,625

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS  
AROUND THE WORLD TO ENABLE  
OR SUPPORT CHILDREN'S  
REMOTE LEARNING.

## HUNGER PROBLEMS

Learn more about the East Africa hunger crisis on page 22, and hear from the head of the World Food Programme on page 12.

# Discover

EXPLORE THE ISSUES FACING PEOPLE IN POVERTY

"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."  
—MATTHEW 25:35

## Haiti

A magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck Haiti on Saturday, August 14, 2021, causing widespread destruction in the Caribbean country. More than 2,200 people died, and over 12,000 more were injured. Search and rescue teams raced to find survivors in collapsed buildings and rubble. While World Vision has worked to improve the lives of

children in Haiti for 30 years, our programs aren't near the southern quake-hit zones. However, we responded to help vulnerable children and families, reaching nearly 24,000 people in the first month of our response. Our goal is to help 240,000 people with life-saving assistance, including food, hygiene kits, and shelter.

GUY VITAL-HERNE/WORLD VISION



World Vision distributes food parcels for the most vulnerable families in the Nabaa area as part of the Beirut, Lebanon, explosion response.



MARIA BOU CHAAYA/WORLD VISION

# World watch



LUKE ASLAKSON/WORLD VISION

## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC Hope in spite of COVID-19

🏠 As India battled a devastating second wave of COVID-19, World Vision rushed to support overwhelmed hospitals, healthcare facilities, and community centers, protecting frontline healthcare workers by delivering over 10,300 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and more than 19,800 surgical masks.

We equipped healthcare centers with over 1,600 oxygen concentrators to help address a severe shortage of this critical resource. We also delivered more than 2,500 beds, along with tents and temporary structures, for COVID-19 patients and helped hospitals secure spaces for testing and administering vaccines.

We're continuing to support vulnerable families with cash and voucher assistance to ensure people can access food during restrictions. And our dedicated team is continuing to care for children and their families through our psychosocial support programs and by regularly monitoring their health and safety.

Through the generosity of our donors, we've helped 4.8 million people in India through our COVID-19 response since March 2020.

World Vision's COVID-19 response is the top priority in every country where we work. As of August 2021, we've supported over 66 million people—nearly half of them children—in more than 70 countries to combat the impact of the virus. 🌟 —Sevil Omer

## WORLD WATCH



LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION

Israelite Baptist Church in New Orleans distributed supplies provided by World Vision to a community hit hard by the high winds of Hurricane Ida. Widespread power outages left people without power in extreme heat.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE Updates

🏠 **Lebanon:** In the year since the August 4, 2020, explosion that killed more than 200 people, an escalating economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have pushed more people into poverty, creating worsening conditions for Lebanon's children, says Hans Bederski, World Vision's national director in Lebanon. We're working with community members to repair more than 600 homes and 10 schools that were destroyed or damaged in the blast. We're also providing psychosocial support to 4,700 children and their caregivers.

**Afghanistan:** World Vision is committed to stay in Afghanistan, aiming to help 1 million people over the coming months through proven programs in areas such as food and nutrition assistance, healthcare, child protection, and access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene.

**Uganda:** After five years of campaigning to end violence against children, World Vision celebrates the Uganda parliament's passage of two bills protecting children by criminalizing child marriage, the sexual exploitation of children, and human sacrifice. We will continue to work with the government of Uganda and stakeholders to help ensure that children are fully protected from all forms of violence.

**United States:** After Hurricane Ida lashed Louisiana on August 29, 2021, making landfall near Port Fourchon as a Category 4 storm, World Vision rushed truckloads of critically needed supplies to affected areas. Working closely with our church partners in Louisiana, we worked to reach the most vulnerable with resources including food, clean water, tents, sanitizing wipes, generators, flashlights, diapers, and clothing. Michelle and her 6-year-old son, Elijah, were among the families to get supplies from a World Vision-supported distribution at Israelite Baptist Church in New Orleans. More than 1 million people—including Michelle and everyone in New Orleans—lost power due to Ida, in late-summer heat. Michelle's grateful for the generosity of our donors. "Thank you very much. Every little thing helps," she says. "We're blessed." 🌟 —Sevil Omer

# Christmas in a refugee camp

Story and photos by Aggrey Nyondwa Kikobera



Esther is the youngest of six siblings and says she loves Christmas because she enjoys a special time of prayer and gets a new dress from her parents, Isaac and Charity. Isaac, who pastors a church in the refugee settlement, recalls his favorite things about Christmas as a child: "We would wait for [Christmas] the whole year, basically with three things to be excited about: eating a lot of good food, getting [new clothes], and going to church." But sometimes he didn't get new clothes because his parents couldn't afford it. It hurt to see his friends all wearing their new outfits, so now as a parent, he makes it a priority to give his children new clothes each Christmas. Charity carries on the holiday meal tradition by getting up at 4 a.m. to spend the day cooking chicken, goat, cassava, rice, and more for her family and the neighbors they will have at their house. "I use the best spices I can find in the market," she says. "A Christmas meal has to be special."

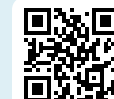


🏠 Millions of people worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes are living in refugee camps. During the Christmas season, many strive for a sense of normalcy and work to make it as festive as possible. World Vision, in partnership with the World Food Programme, distributes food to thousands of people in the Bidibidi refugee settlement in northern Uganda. The settlement is becoming so large it's almost like a mini city. Our staff also works to do a little more at Christmas by distributing clothes, shoes, toys, and other items. Our communications staff in Uganda traveled to Bidibidi, home to more than 239,000 people, to show you how refugees here prepare for Christmas away from home. 🌟

Vendors in the Bidibidi refugee settlement look forward to the Christmas season and often set up their makeshift shops close to food distribution points to increase eyes on their merchandise. Susan Nyoka sells over 500 pairs of shoes between November and December. "I wait the whole year to make such sales, but it is always worth it," she says. Another vendor, Jackline Apai, sells children's clothes, and says she sells more than 30 dresses every day this time of year. "During the season, we make some good money," she says. "We were worried [that] because of COVID-19, people will not have the money this time, but it turns out that they had saved it already, specifically for Christmas shopping."



Thirteen-year-old Assumpta leads the children's choir at her church. She gets really excited for Christmas. "My father always buys for us new clothes every year on Christmas," she says. "Last year I got a white dress, and I will be waiting for another one this year." She and her friends love singing Christmas songs and start practicing morning and evening when the calendar turns to December. She has had three Christmases in Bidibidi and her memories aren't as strong of the holiday back home in South Sudan. But Gloria, her older sister, more vividly remembers and says Christmas is never quite the same in the refugee camp. "In South Sudan, we would have all the freedom," Gloria says. "We could visit relatives during the holiday and [travel] as far away as we wanted because we knew so many people. The settlement is a bit confined, and most of our relatives are not here."



**SCAN THE CODE** to watch Assumpta and the choir singing "Joy to the World" and to see more photos of Christmas preparations.



DAVID BEASLEY ON:

# Hunger

By Edgar Sandoval Sr.



David Beasley

**In 2020, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for its efforts to combat hunger, promote peace in conflict-affected areas and prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.” For more than a decade, WFP and World Vision, its largest implementing partner, have been working on the front lines of emergencies, inspiring hope for millions of people around the world.**

World Vision President and CEO Edgar Sandoval Sr. interviewed WFP Executive Director David Beasley on fighting hunger during the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP’s partnership with World Vision, and what faith in action means to David.

**The first question, right off the bat: What was it like for you when the World Food Programme was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize?**

It was an amazing day because literally, I was in the middle of Niger. We were negotiating access to reach a certain people group

because if we couldn’t reach them, then you would have extremist groups using food as a weapon of recruitment. If we get access, they won’t fall prey to the extremists. So, we were in very intense discussions, negotiating this access, and all of a sudden someone comes busting into the room [saying], “Nobel Peace Prize. Nobel Peace Prize.” I was “Great who won it?” [He said,] “Well, we did! The World Food Programme; you did.” It was literally a speechless, “wow, wow, wow” moment.

I think the [Nobel] Committee was sending two very clear messages. One was a thank-you to the women and men out there putting their lives at risk every day to bring peace and stability by using food as a weapon of peace around the world. Number two was that the hardest work is really coming around the corner, and we’ll talk about that—how COVID-19 has created a dynamic rippling, devastating effect on already extenuating circumstances in many countries around the world.

**You have been a consistent voice for the most vulnerable around the world. In fact, you sounded the alarm of the potentially devastating effects of COVID-19, saying that it could create a famine of biblical proportions. What were the signs you were seeing?**

Prior to COVID-19, the number of people marching to the brink of starvation was 135 million. Now with COVID-19, that number has doubled to 270 million people. These aren’t just numbers. These are real people. And if we don’t reach those people, you’ll have mass starvation, destabilization of nations, and mass migration. I can assure you from historical experience, it is a thousand times more expensive to react after the fact than it is to avoid the icebergs when we’re heading to the open seas like the Titanic.

**Both World Vision and the World Food Programme have a lot of staff on the front lines. Could you share with us about the current situation?**

I got COVID-19 a year ago. I recovered from it, and I was then able to travel. We have millions of people who are dying out there, on the brink of starvation, and that has an impact globally. As I began going to these countries and bringing the attention and the awareness, people were like, “You’ve got to be kidding me!”

I know the American people. Historically, when they know there’s suffering, they respond. But if they don’t know, then they don’t respond. This is why we’ve got to get the message out about the reality of what we are facing and how bad it is.

We survey people [we serve] all the time—what are they thinking, what are they doing—and we get the reality. In fact, in the past few months, the number of people in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua now thinking about migrating has doubled from 7–8% to 15–16%. That’s 39 million people in that four-country area. Do the math: 15%, 6 million people.

The good news is if they get food security and some degree of hope, they don’t want to leave home. But if they don’t have food for their children, and they don’t have hope, they would do what any mom and dad would do on God’s green earth, and that is head to a place where they think they might survive.

**That is so true. I like to say, David, that people don’t want to leave the places they know and the people they love. They do so out of desperation. Can you drill deeper on the relationship between hunger and extreme poverty?**

It was one of the reasons that we received the Nobel Peace Prize, [the] relationship between hunger and peace and stability. If you have hunger, you’re not going to have peace and stability. And if you don’t have peace and stability, you’re going to have hunger. They feed on each other. Poverty is in the middle of all this. And, on average, where there is poverty, you generally do have hunger.

**“I don’t go to bed at night thinking about the children we saved. I go to bed at night weeping over the children we could not save.”**

—DAVID BEASLEY

For every 1% increase in hunger, there’s a 2% increase in migration. When you look out in the world today, 80% of our operations today are in areas of conflict. Imagine that. And that’s 60% of the people. Conflict is driving so much poverty, so much destabilization, displacement—unprecedented numbers around the world.

When you look at 200 years ago, there were 1.1 billion people on earth [and] there was 95% extreme poverty. Today [it’s] less than 10%. We’ve built systems, programs, and organizations over the past many decades that have reduced extreme poverty below 90%. That is very, very good news. Now, try telling that to the 10% we have not reached. That’s over 700 million people that still go to bed hungry. The answer is not tearing down the system that’s helping the 90%, because that would be catastrophic. The answer is continuing to improve, to reach those that we have not reached yet. That’s where we’ve got to be fixated, focused, and literally drive it home to reach every single person who is in need out there.

**How do you combat the thinking that there will always be hungry people in Africa and the poor places around the world?**

I don’t go to bed at night thinking about the children we saved. I go to bed at night weeping over the children we could not save.

Every human being is created in the image of the Almighty. Every single person on the planet. Jesus said “when you did not feed the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did not feed me.”

When any child suffers, we have a moral obligation. Jesus said to love your neighbor as your equal. Love your neighbor as yourself. That’s a moral imperative. That’s not a suggestion. That is what our life is all about if we truly are disciples and believers in the Almighty, who said love God, love your neighbor. When you love your neighbor, you are loving God. That’s what inspires me every single day.

If we could see things in that light—love your neighbor as your equal—it would end racism, discrimination, and so many of the other –isms.

I’ve been in some pretty hard places. You can be in the middle of a [war]-torn country and out from that rubble will come this child with bright eyes and so much energy and life that it’s like a flower in the desert. That is what we’re fighting for. To give that child some degree of hope so that they can have a future and hopefully a relationship with the Almighty. **+**

*This interview has been edited and condensed for length.*



# The game changer

• A gift of goats unlocks  
a floodgate of  
blessings

STORY AND PHOTOS BY

Tigana Chileshe



A simple gift of goats  
brought great joy to  
Billy and his family.





Clean water just five minutes from home gives Otiliya (in black) and Billy (in red) extra time to study.

**As the sun sets** in Mansangano village in eastern Zambia, leaving colorful patches of orange and red hanging behind the clouds, Billy, 8, and his brother Francis, 12, happily marshal their family goats to the barn. Of particular interest to the boys are two animals—a pregnant goat named Vision, and a 3-week-old kid named King.

The boys’ parents, Peter, 43, and his wife, Dorcas, 34, watch from a distance. Their 14-year-old daughter, Otiliya, looks up from her work cleaning plates in the family’s grass-thatched kitchen to listen to the exultant bleating of goats making their way to the barn.

For this family, goats are more than animals. They are the path to a better future.

“Owning goats is like having a bank where you can go in at any time to withdraw money when you have a need,” says Dorcas.

She vividly remembers the day three years ago that the family received their first goats thanks to World Vision Gift Catalog donors. “I can never forget August 11 because that’s the day our lives changed,” Dorcas says with a proud smile.

Along with the goats, Dorcas and Peter received training on how to care for them. Once the animals began to multiply, they worked with World Vision to share the blessing by gifting some

of their goats to another family in the community. It felt like a dream come true.

“For a long time, we wanted to do goat farming because we saw how [goats] were helping others, but we had no means to buy them,” says Dorcas.

The children were equally excited for the goats, and they wanted to name them immediately.

“We told them to wait, and that once [the goats] started giving birth and we did a pass-on, then we would name the goats that remained because those would be ours to keep,” Dorcas says.

In April the following year, the goats gave birth—and the family tradition of naming goats began.

“I named my goats Malyamiko (“thank you”), Passo (“gift”), Chinyebekezo (“we were waiting”), and King,” Francis says.

Billy jumps in, “My goats are named Vision, Takondwa (“we are happy”), Benefit, and the new baby is [also] called King.”

Asked why he chose the name King, Billy says it’s because “he was born big and strong.”

“That is called Benefit,” Francis says, pointing at a

## Impact fact

Through World Vision’s work, every 60 seconds a family gets the tools to overcome poverty.

brown male goat. With excitement, Billy also points to a white and brown spotted goat in the corner of the barn. “That one is called Agreement,” he says. It’s evident through the names how significant the goats are for the family. But to fully appreciate them, it’s important to know the full story.

## Season of little or nothing

Every parent’s wish is to see their children healthy and well taken care of, but for Dorcas and Peter, making that wish a reality had been challenging for the longest time.

A drought from 2018 to 2019 made things worse. Dorcas and Peter’s family lives in the Nyimba district, a predominantly farming area that relies on rainfed agriculture. Crops include groundnuts, sunflowers, and maize—a staple food for many.

“We had high hopes for a good harvest, but the rains stopped, and our hopes died with the crops,” Peter says. “Most of our maize only reached knee-level. The rest we managed to harvest was not enough to last us to the following season.”

That year they ended up with only 65 bags of maize, instead of the 180 bags they were expecting.

Peter is a resourceful man who desperately wanted to support his family.

“I had challenges sleeping. ... We had nothing at home,” he says. “I would frequent town areas to look for any kind of work so I could buy food for my children.”

But for most of 2018, the family struggled with hunger and debt.

“Life was hard, and the future was uncertain because we often lacked the money to buy food and pay school fees for all the children at the same time,” Dorcas says.

She and Peter decided to sell 30 of their 65 bags to have some money, and ration the rest so the family could survive.

“We sometimes only had one meal in a day,” Dorcas says. “The children would constantly cry, and it made me really sad as their mother.”

Some days Dorcas would go without her own meals so the children would have more to eat.

Billy, the youngest, says his stomach often hurt from being so hungry: “It was hard to play when I was hungry because I felt weak.”

Everyone in the family—Peter, Dorcas, Otiliya, Francis, and Billy—is now saving money in a savings group.



Dorcas’s memories of those troubling days are painful.

“Billy ... would come crying to me asking for food,” she says. “It was moments like those that broke my heart because there was nothing I could do but tell him to wait.”

Then there was Otiliya, who sometimes couldn’t attend school because it was nearly 2.5 miles away—too far to walk on an empty stomach.

That year, Francis was withdrawn from school because Peter and Dorcas couldn’t pay his school fees. Missing out on school made him sad.

“I used to feel bad whenever I was told to go home by my teachers because my parents had not paid school fees,” Francis says. “Whenever I asked my parents, they would tell me they would pay soon.”

## Life changes with goats

With the distribution of goats funded by donors to the World Vision Gift Catalog, farmers like Peter and Dorcas began experiencing life-changing transformation.

Speaking to donors, Peter says, “You ... have no idea the kind of impact you have had in our lives and this community through the goats you have given us.”

The arrival of the goats helped his family recover from the devastating impact of the drought.



# “Owning goats is like having a bank where you can go in at any time to withdraw money when you have a need.” –DORCAS

“It brought me great joy when we received these goats. I used to admire from afar until the day we received them also,” Peter says. “I have seen that goat rearing is more profitable than crop farming because it’s cheap, and it does not require huge capital for expansion. My dream is to raise as many goats as possible.”

The training offered by World Vision in goat rearing and financial literacy over the last three years has been transformative for the whole village.

“If you go to all the 30 households who received goats [in 2018] in Masangano village, every one of them has passed on the blessing to other [local families],” says Nathan Phiri, a livestock expert for World Vision in the Nyimba area program.

“As we do community follow-ups, the families are all telling us the same thing: The goats have helped them to recover from the aftershocks of the drought, and ... they are also helping them pay for school fees for their children and buy basic farming inputs,” he adds.

This year, Peter and Dorcas had the resources to farm more of their land and harvested 250 bags of maize—a record for them.

The family spends a lot of money buying supplies, so the goats help save them some costs as well by providing fertilizer.

“This is where the goats come in handy,” Peter says. “The goat manure also helped to raise our yield, and as a farmer, I couldn’t be happier.”

After the first five new goats that they passed on to another family, Peter and his wife have raised 20 more, and the goats have made an entirely new enterprise possible.

“We sold five goats last year, and the money we got enabled us to start a business of selling weed killers,” Dorcas says. “The remainder of that money was [used] to buy fertilizer for the field to complement the goat manure.”

## Goats make way for new dreams

Dorcas’s sons are the best of friends, and they enjoy caring for the goats together. The boys share a common love for something else: school.

When the family was still struggling and Francis had to drop out, a local reading camp started by World Vision helped him continue learning until his parents could scrape together school fees for him the following term. The reading camp has proved to be popular among children. Kids who can’t attend school go to the reading camp every weekend because it’s centrally located and doesn’t charge fees.

Billy also attends the reading camp. “I enjoy going to the reading camp with my brother Francis. It is very nice, especially when it comes to reading storybooks,” Billy says.

The boys now attend the reading camp for fun instead of out of necessity. Because the family has more steady income because of the goats, Peter and Dorcas can afford to pay their children’s school fees.

Billy says his favorite subject is math, and he dreams of becoming a policeman when he grows up. Not to be outdone, Francis chimes in, “My favorite subject is technology, and when I finish school, I want to work as an engineer.”

Peter and Dorcas didn’t graduate high school, so hearing their children affirm these dreams gives them great joy.

## From despair to hope

BY EMMANUEL AMONE OKELLO

In 2018, as war in South Sudan spiraled out of control, 10-year-old Mustafa (on magazine cover) and his family fled the violence and destruction, leaving their home and crossing the border into Uganda. Mustafa, his parents, and his six siblings were then relocated by the government to Omugo refugee settlement in northern Uganda. Mustafa’s mother, 35-year-old Edina, recalls the desperation as she confronted the bitter reality of starting from zero. “We had over 18 goats and 20 cows, but we lost all of them during the war,” she says.

They now had nothing, and even hope seemed like a distant dream.

World Vision has worked in Omugo refugee settlement since 2017 with programs focused on child protection, resilience and livelihoods, and clean water, sanitation, and hygiene. In 2019, with funding from Gift Catalog donors, World Vision distributed two goats and 10 chickens to over 2,500 households in Omugo and Imvepi refugee settlements to help families improve their livelihoods and provide nutritious food for their children. Edina recalls her excitement when they first received their goats.

“We had lost everything in South Sudan,” she says. “I knew that these goats would help us rebuild for the future.”

The family named the nanny goat Iyete, which means “thank you.” Iyete is Mustafa’s favorite goat—

and really everyone’s—because she’s usually peaceful and calm, and also because of her incredible multiplication capabilities. Iyete has given birth to so many kids that the family now has 17 goats!

## Goats save the family from hunger

Every morning after brushing his teeth, Mustafa unties the goats and leads them to graze on a patch beneath Ucia mountain, the towering hill close to their home. As the goats wander, lost in their “conversations” with the grass, Mustafa runs back home and heads toward his mother’s kitchen, a grass-thatched mud structure that now smells of freshly fried pancakes.

There, Edina busies herself—picking up dough the size of a small fist, flattening it between her palms, then slipping it into a pan of boiling oil. It hisses as it makes contact with the hot liquid. There’s already a steadily growing pile of pancakes in a covered plastic bucket next to her. Mustafa joins his eager siblings, waiting to take a bite of the crunchy delicacy. Edina dips her hand in the bucket, fishes a few pancakes onto a plate, and places it before their delighted eyes.

Edina sells her pancakes on the side of the road, making between US\$2 and \$3 every day. Each week, she saves \$1 through a local savings group, which



EMMANUEL AMONE OKELLO/WORLD VISION

Mustafa’s sister Charity plays with Iyete and her kid.



AGGREY NYONDWA/WORLD VISION

World Vision helped start. Savings groups help people begin to save money and learn how to manage it as well as issue loans to their members. Savings groups provide life-changing support for members with lower incomes so they can grow their businesses and support their families.

“I have been able to ... get more stock to boost my business,” Edina says. “As you can see, the children are also eating well.”

Food is a critical need in the refugee settlement. Due to supply shortages, food rations for the refugees were cut by almost half in April 2020—and the COVID-19 pandemic that started a month earlier only compounded the problem. Food supplies now only come every two months. There is looming hunger in the settlement, but this won’t affect Edina and her family. She can easily sell one of her goats to buy more food. Each time they sell a goat, Mustafa is happy because he gets to eat different foods or receive new clothes. A single goat sells for US\$20 to \$28, which is enough to buy food that lasts the family several weeks.

“If the goats were not there, and with the current food rationing, the children could easily die of hunger,” says Edina.

Mustafa cradles one of the family’s goats that have helped them stave off hunger.

## Goats bring comfort

It’s soon midday. The goats need some water to cool down from the sweltering heat. Mustafa picks up a basin while his brother gets a jerrycan. They run to a water point near their home, collect some water, and take it to the goats. Edina hopes that in the future, as the goats continue multiplying, they can sell some to buy cows—to fully regain their lost herd as they rebuild their lives.

Edina often finds solace in prayer. It helps her forget some of the painful things she’s been through. As she reflects on her life, she’s very grateful for the goats from World Vision. “Mustafa and his siblings can go to a better school and have a better future as the goats multiply,” she says.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, income from the goats helped Edina pay school fees and buy other school supplies like books, pens, and uniforms for her children.

But Mustafa and his siblings are unable to attend school, like the rest of the children in the settlement. He misses spending time with his friends. “I want to go back to school,” says the second grader. “I miss my best friend too.” But in Iyete, he has found a new friend to keep him company. 🐐



“We will make sure that the children continue their education, and those goats that we own will pay their way through college,” Peter says. “Because goat farming is different from crop farming, the returns are also guaranteed.”

Students from Mansangano village walk up to 3 miles to the nearest school—a challenging distance, especially for younger children like Billy. This problem has brought parents like Peter together beneath a grove of trees on a sunny afternoon to discuss the construction of a community school, an idea birthed from the World Vision reading camp. The village leader, Kennedy Lungu, chairs the meeting. The goats have equipped community members with the funds to invest in better education opportunities for their children.

“Currently, the community is mobilizing resources so that we can begin construction,” Kennedy says. “So [with] whatever contribution the community give[s], we will start building.”

### Goats bring other opportunities

School kids aren’t the only ones benefiting from the changes brought by the goats. In the Nyimba district, World Vision is training people in business and financial skills through savings groups.

Savings group members create their own guidelines for their specific group, including how much each member will regularly contribute. For lower-income people who are denied access to formal banking services, savings groups offer a way to both save money and take out affordable loans to help with business and family expenses. At the end of the member-agreed time period, the group “shares out” among the members all the savings from their contributions and the interest received from loan payments.

“I am a member of a savings group, and this group offers me a chance to borrow and invest based on the needs the family is facing,” Dorcas says. “Savings groups are helping our family.”

All three children have also been introduced to a children’s savings group. The share-outs from the groups also supplement the family’s income. Otiliya is a member of a children’s savings group, and with the money she received in the last share-out, she was able to buy a beautiful red dress she had been eyeing, along with shoes, a school bag, and books.

“The group is nice because it’s just young people who attend it,” Otiliya says. “Whenever my parents give me some money, I take it to the group. Things I bought are just a testimony to how nice it is to save.”

Peter and Dorcas are thrilled to help their children gain financial skills while they are still young, something neither of them had an opportunity to experience. The lessons the couple has learned through these financial programs are what they credit for helping them get where they are today.

“After receiving the goats in 2018 and before the pass-on, we faced many temptations to sell the goats so we could meet the



After a busy day of reading, playing, and caring for goats, Francis and Billy pause to watch the sun go down.

“My wife and I are grateful to World Vision. Our lives have changed for good.”

—PETER

challenges we faced,” Peter says. “But we remained steadfast because of the knowledge we received through the training from World Vision.”

The simple gift of five goats from World Vision has brought peace of mind to Peter and Dorcas and secured a future for their children. Now the family can dream, the children can play and study, and everyone is healthy. It’s such a difference from how life was—one that they don’t take for granted. And as their family of goats continues to grow, the children will relish naming them as they continue to celebrate the blessings.

“My wife and I are grateful to World Vision,” Peter says. “Our lives have changed for good.” +



**Give the gift of a goat** to help another family change their lives. See the insert between pages 18 and 19, call 1.888.852.4453, or give online at [wvmag.org/givegoats](http://wvmag.org/givegoats).



## Impact fact

World Vision is working in six affected countries across East Africa. As of July 31, 2021, we've served 2,046,911 people, including 977,102 children.


# UNDAUNTED:

## THE HUNGER CRISIS IN EAST AFRICA

BY SEVIL OMER



MARTIN MULLUKA/WORLD VISION

 A fight against the spread of hunger is underway across East Africa, where 32.9 million people are experiencing a complex hunger crisis driven by conflict, the economic impacts of the global pandemic, swarms of desert locusts, and extreme weather conditions.

According to the United Nations, at least 5.3 million people in Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan are living under “emergency” conditions, with the threat of acute malnutrition and death. In South Sudan, 105,000 are living under “catastrophic” levels of food insecurity.

By air, land, and sea, World Vision teams are delivering emergency food supplies across the region—an area so vast it equates to more than half the size of the United States—in a race to feed hungry families living in some of the most dangerous and isolated places on earth.

“We are marshaling resources to support vulnerable communities across East Africa to avert

the catastrophic effects of hunger and loss of livelihoods,” says Joseph Kamara, regional humanitarian and emergency affairs director for World Vision in East Africa. “We are particularly concerned about the impact on children.”

The hunger crisis has exacted a heavy toll on the region’s youngest. Over 10 million children in East Africa are wasted, meaning they’re too thin for their height. Among them is 2-year-old Ocan of South Sudan, whose life has hung in the balance more than once.

“It has been a year and my child still suffers from malnutrition due to the dire situation caused by poverty, the COVID-19 pandemic, and now the hunger crisis,” says his mother, Elizabeth. “My [two other] children succumbed to anemia last year. One was twin brother to Ocan, who is now 2 years [old] but can barely walk due to poor health.”

## 5.3M

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN  
PUSHED TO EMERGENCY  
CONDITIONS

After receiving nutritional care from World Vision, Ocan started his recovery. “Two weeks ago, Ocan’s condition was upgraded. My son moved from severe to moderately malnourished,” Elizabeth says. “The [therapeutic food]

is doing great work in his body. He was able to play with his friends.”

World Vision is already at work in East Africa and has decades of experience helping hungry children in crisis.

“It’s heartbreaking that the lives of millions of children in East Africa are at risk due to a perfect storm of conflict, changing or unpredictable weather patterns, and the secondary effects of COVID-19,” says Edgar Sandoval Sr., president and CEO of World Vision U.S. “The long-term harm of malnutrition on children’s development hinders their ability to achieve their God-given potential.”

We’ve launched an emergency response to help feed 7.1 million people, including 3.4 million children, across six affected countries—supplying families with nutritional care and screening children and pregnant mothers for malnutrition.

### Conflict aggravates hunger crisis

In Ethiopia, a food security analysis issued in July 2021 for the northern region of Tigray and neighboring areas showed

## 32.9M

PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED  
BY THE EAST AFRICA  
HUNGER CRISIS

that 4.4 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity, with about 400,000 already facing “catastrophic” conditions.

Even before conflict erupted in this region in November 2020, families struggled with decimated crops, food shortages, inflated food and fuel prices, and an overburdened healthcare system due to recurrent drought, desert locusts, and the spread of COVID-19.

“World Vision Ethiopia asks for your prayers and support at this difficult and challenging time, as we accompany the children of Ethiopia during the crisis,” says National Director Edward Brown.

World Vision is deeply concerned for the safety and well-being of children made extremely vulnerable by recent conflict. So far, we’ve helped over 1.1 million people in Tigray with services such as access to clean water, food, and emergency shelter.

Beginning in 2014, a series of successive droughts in Kenya led to poor crops and harvests. At least





A mother in South Sudan consults a World Vision health worker because her child’s health is deteriorating. The armband shows red, indicating the child is severely malnourished.

1.9 million people need emergency food supplies. World Vision is responding through food aid, water trucking initiatives, and treatment referrals for women and children facing acute malnutrition, as well as by helping communities grow gardens so they have access to nutrient-rich vegetables.

In South Sudan, World Vision, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), has deployed mobile response teams to reach the hungriest people in the most remote, isolated areas. Traveling by helicopter, mobile response teams register people for food aid and deliver food supplies by road, river, and airdrops.

South Sudan faces “catastrophic” levels of acute hunger, according to the “Hunger Hotspots” report from the WFP and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. Globally, World Vision is the WFP’s largest implementing partner.

“Our farthest work location delivering food supplies to people in need is around three hours by helicopter ride. Some areas are difficult to reach with no cellular networks, passable roads, available markets, and medical facilities,” says Benard Nyataya, food assistance coordinator for World Vision in South Sudan.

Through this partnership, 193,131 displaced people living in 19 different locations across three counties in South Sudan’s most remote corners have received the nutrition supplies they need to survive the lean season.

“I am proud to be a part of a team that is committed to reaching out to the most hurting communities, and suffering in extreme conditions where few would want to go to,” says Bernard.

10M  
CHILDREN WEIGH  
TOO LITTLE FOR  
THEIR HEIGHT

“Everyone is poor and hungry”  
In Uganda, hunger is pushing communities to the brink, with rising levels of food insecurity.

“I am hungry. I just want to eat,” says 7-year-old Evelyn, who hasn’t eaten in 20 hours. Sometimes she goes to bed hungry, having not eaten in days.

In her community, many families are being forced to reduce the quantity or quality of their meals—in some cases, both.

“The hunger crisis is widespread, but particularly dangerous for the refugee community who are already battling the effects of COVID-19. Most of them lost their small businesses and all income-generating activities, so, a reduced ration cut could only mean worse,” says Paul Mwirichia, cash and food assistance manager for World Vision in Uganda.

Refugees, the majority from South Sudan, have always had challenges with the amount of food they receive, but the WFP’s 30% ration cut last spring, amid a pandemic, was a devastating blow. With a continued decline in funding, the WFP announced further cuts in February 2021. Currently, refugees have to make do with only 60% of a full ration.

Evelyn’s father, James, used to earn wages by digging. New opportunities for labor are now hard to come by. Before the pandemic, he could earn 10,000 Ugandan shillings a day (US\$3), enough to buy food for a few days.

“It is sad to see that as a man I cannot provide for my family,” James says. “The situation wasn’t this bad before. ... But now, everyone is poor and hungry.”

Pastor Isaac Badai, a local church leader, is doing his best to follow Jesus’ words in Matthew 25: “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat”—offering help to James’ family and others as he’s able, on his meager income.

“So many people come to me asking for [something] to eat,” he says. “I mostly help those that are in much need like the elderly and widows who [cannot] feed their children. Many people now eat once a day, while others go for days without food.”

Pastor Isaac hopes that one day his community can gather around a table where everyone has enough food to eat.

“We understand that most of the people who support us were also affected by the pandemic, but we appeal to them not to get tired of helping refugees; God will reward them,” he says. 🙏

Aggrey Nyondwa Kikobera of World Vision’s Uganda staff and Scovia Faida Charles of our South Sudan staff contributed to this report.

FOOD  
AIRDROP  
FACTS



The World Food Programme makes an airdrop of much-needed relief food.



A mother returns from a World Vision distribution of World Food Programme emergency food aid. World Vision is the WFP’s largest implementing partner globally.

World Vision, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), is delivering hope to families facing hunger through airdrops of food supplies in South Sudan. Here’s a snapshot of how we’re responding to the need together:

19 remote locations serve as drop sites across three counties, Greater Nassir, Ulang, and Longuchuk, located in Upper Nile State.

193,131 internally displaced people, of whom 35,676 are children, have gotten food supplies during the lean season.

74,957 pounds of Super Cereal Plus, a fortified food product formulated to treat moderate malnutrition in young children and pregnant or breastfeeding mothers have been airdropped. Food parcels also contain vegetable oil and pulses, from dried peas and beans to lentils.

HUNGER  
PRAYERS

Please join us in praying for children and their families in six countries affected by the East Africa hunger crisis.

**SUDAN**

*Protect children and families who have fled violence. Restore their homes and stabilize their communities.*

**ETHIOPIA**

*We pray for real and lasting peace in this country: true shalom that includes not only the absence of violence, but also the presence of restored relationships and stability.*

**SOUTH SUDAN**

*Please provide the hungry with the nourishment they need to grow and thrive.*

**SOMALIA**

*Lord, end the devastation of locust swarms and restore the land for people to farm and improve their livelihoods.*

**UGANDA**

*Lord, we’re grateful for the life-saving gifts from World Vision partners for refugees in Uganda. We ask You to guard refugees’ health in the camps.*


**KENYA**

*Have mercy on these children. Protect their little bodies and give them strength. Allow them to grow up strong and healthy despite the hunger that now afflicts them.*



# THE GARDEN OF MARAFA

BY MARTIN MULUKA

 In the rural Kenyan community of Marafa, 6-year-old Beatrice Pendo stands with a radiant smile at the edge of her family’s garden. Her mother, Margaret, is busy harvesting cassava, cowpeas, green peas, and spinach.

“I like eating vegetables because they are sweet,” says the child, who prefers to go by Pendo, which means “love” in Swahili. “My best meal is sima (cornbread) served with fried vegetable[s]. My mother gives me more because she says I need to grow big to help her water the vegetables.”

Pendo is thriving because of child sponsorship—funded programs in her community. Her neighbor, 14-year-old Maria, a World Vision sponsored child—who also sports a big, bright smile—has branched off to cultivate her own fruits and vegetables.

Their flourishing kitchen gardens are a living testament to their hope against the spread of hunger.

In Marafa, sponsorship builds resilience against hunger. Because of World Vision’s community-focused solutions, for every child you help, four more children benefit, too. With more than 3,300 children sponsored in the community through World Vision, over 13,200 more children are being cared for.

Through sponsorship, Maria’s younger sisters, Eunice and Shaleen, also have been spared the ravages of malnutrition, which remains a threat to millions of Kenyan children under 2. When not addressed early, the effects of malnutrition are damaging and can be irreversible.

“Before this garden was planted, it was difficult to get fresh vegetables because this area is dry, but now, we enjoy eating the vegetables—especially my 8-month-old sister, Shaleen,” says Maria. “From the skills of maintaining a kitchen garden, I decided to try planting bananas, and I am happy because they are doing well.”



Juliet (left) and Tuva harvest tomatoes from their garden in Marafa, Kenya, where small farms and gardens are bringing joy and better nutrition to families.



Six-year-old Beatrice Pendo and her mother, Margaret, harvest vegetables from their kitchen garden in Marafa, Kenya. Located behind their home, the garden is planted in portable sacks filled with soil and yields fresh vegetables.

Despite Marafa’s proximity to the Indian Ocean, the region has suffered from drought and critical water shortages.

To address this challenge, World Vision has drilled boreholes to help people in Marafa access groundwater. In 2018, we extended three main water pipelines in Kenya’s Kilifi County. We also constructed and connected 19 automated water kiosks to the pipelines that now help more than 12,800 people access clean water.

Pendo’s mother, Margaret, also draws from those waters to feed her garden. “This project has helped me a lot; nothing makes me happier than the ability to provide for my children,” says Margaret. “Food was not regular [before] because I had to buy and sometimes borrow from neighbors. World Vision brought me this garden and cassava that is drought-resistant to plant. The yield is good and now my life is better because I have enough vegetables to eat.”


In neighboring communities, sponsorship is helping cultivate a new generation of farmers.


Emma is one of 540 people who are enrolled in a World Vision savings group. Through the program, farmers are trained in basic financial literacy—including how to save and invest—and families increase their food security through agriculture training and support, and financial services for business development.

With her earnings, Emma says she’s been able to pay for her two children’s future education.

“World Vision has supported us by providing resources and training,” she says. “I cultivate vegetables and now, I have ventured into banana farming. I decided to farm bananas because the price is good at the market and my children love them too.”

Ramsey, Emma’s 5-year-old son, couldn’t agree more. “I like mangoes and bananas, and that is why I like going with mum to the farm,” he says. “I want to grow tall so that I can reach the fruits when she is busy at the market.”

For Ramsey and other children, like Pendo’s and Maria’s sisters, reaching their fullest potential is now within their grasp. 



Help World Vision provide critical food aid for children in Africa. See the insert between pages 18 and 19 for more information.

Download the new My World Vision app to more easily connect with your sponsored child and their community. Learn more on page 34.

# Inspire

MOTIVATING YOU TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PRAYER

King Jesus, teach us to seek and rely on You. Reveal Yourself and Your glory to us in new ways this Christmas season.

## IN THE KITCHEN: Tahinov hatz

By Laura Reinhardt




SCAN THE CODE to get the recipe.

Bread and hospitality go hand in hand in Armenia. A meal isn’t complete without a variety of bread, or hatz (pronounced “hots”), on the table.

An Armenian World Vision staff member recalled a visit to a neighboring country and going to a restaurant for dinner. The waiter brought out a small bread basket with a couple of the same kind of rolls. The staff member expressed their surprise and explained to the waiter that in Armenia, bread is served in quantity and variety, which includes breadsticks, several kinds of rolls, and the nearly paper-thin lavash.

Between 1915 and 1916, many Armenians were forced from their homes or fled growing persecution.

That diaspora took them all over the world, and in many places, they settled in Armenian enclaves—keeping their culture alive. And of course, that culture included their many types of bread.

One of the recipes they carried with them was for tahini rolls called tahinov hatz. Tahini (a paste made from ground sesame seeds), sugar, and cinnamon fill pastries made of pita dough. This treat is usually reserved for Lent. In the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Lenten fast means no meat, fish, eggs, or dairy products. And while it fits the fasting requirements, this recipe tastes like anything but a deprivation. It takes a bit of work, but it’s well worth the effort! 

LAURA REINHARDT/WORLD VISION





# Igniting a passion for the world

Story and photos by Laura Reinhardt

**NINTH GRADE STUDENTS** at The Woodlands Christian Academy near Houston, Texas, embarked on an exciting adventure in the 2020–2021 school year.

Their school has begun a partnership with World Vision Ignite, which provides students with an experiential learning opportunity designed to help them grow into global leaders with a biblical worldview. The school is pairing the deep dive into issues surrounding global poverty with the chance for each student to be chosen as a sponsor by a child in Zambia.

Julie Ambler, head of school, says of the academy's vision for the students: "Socially we want them to foster relationships for God's kingdom. A large part of that is understanding and appreciating the dignity of other people and having a heart for service. That's where the Ignite program fits in so well with our mission."

At a reveal event on October 1, 2020, students learned which child chose them. +

To learn more about Ignite for your school, visit [wvmag.org/ignite](http://wvmag.org/ignite).



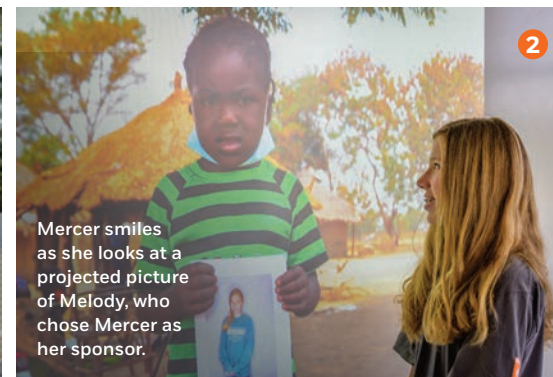
Kai holds a picture of Titus, a boy from Zambia who chose Kai to be his sponsor.



Sarah gets emotional watching a video of Faith choosing her as her sponsor.



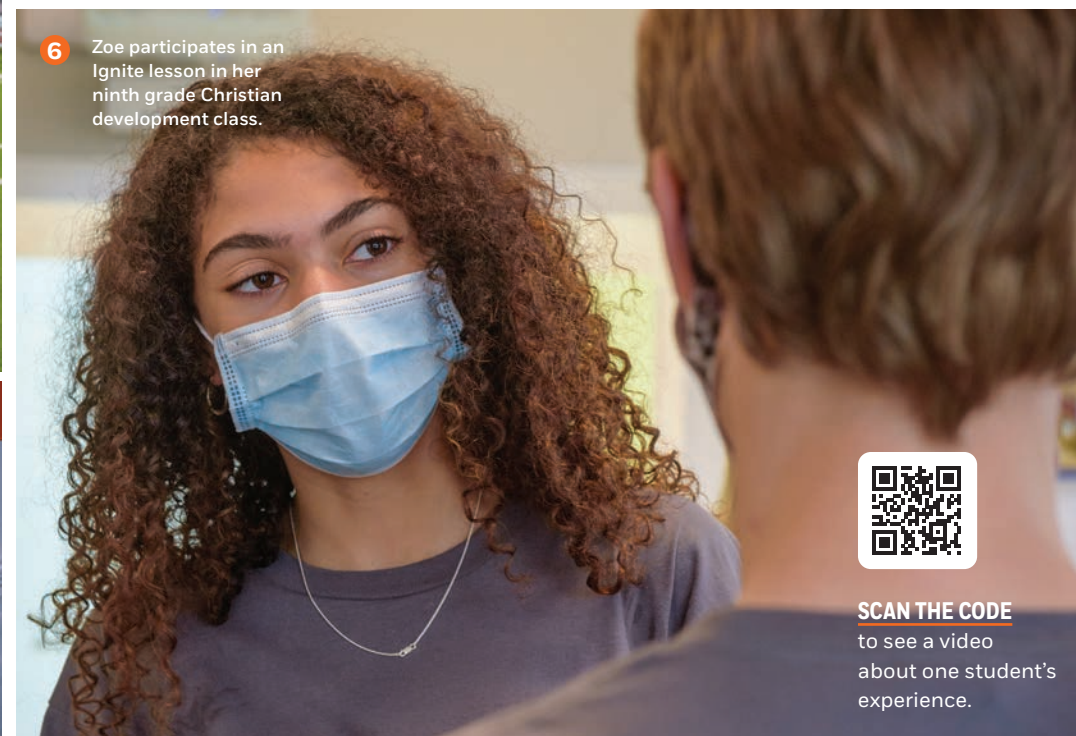
Whitney is all smiles as she opens the envelope to see Moses, who chose her as his sponsor.



Mercer smiles as she looks at a projected picture of Melody, who chose Mercer as her sponsor.



After the reveal event, Michael holds a picture of Danny, who chose Michael because of his smile.



Zoe participates in an Ignite lesson in her ninth grade Christian development class.



**SCAN THE CODE** to see a video about one student's experience.

## 1 Kai Parker

Titus chose Kai to be his sponsor. Kai expects that his relationship with Titus and learning from the Ignite curriculum will continue to change him. "I feel like it will make me notice the smaller things that I have, that [other] people may not have—just like the water, the clothes, ... the decisions I get to make each day that some people don't get to make," he says.

## 2 Mercer Ruffner

"This opportunity is going to change my life forever," Mercer says about the chance to connect with a child in Zambia and working through the Ignite curriculum. "I know that God has placed me in this specific spot, this specific time just to change their lives forever and to change mine," she says.

## 3 Michael McKenney

Junior high can often feel very much like a popularity contest. But Michael doesn't seek that. Instead he focuses on integrity, honesty, and other biblical principles. He wants to spread joy in the world, and one of the ways he does that is through his smile. That smile led Danny to choose Michael as his sponsor. "When I know my purpose is to help other people, it really helps to know that God is with me," says Michael.

## 4 Sarah Chappelle

Sarah's hand flies to her mouth as she watches a video of 12-year-old Faith in Zambia choosing Sarah as her sponsor. "That was incredible," Sarah says. "I'm speechless right now. I didn't expect to be so emotional ... getting to see who chose me." It touched her to realize that, in her words, a child "chose you out of the rest of the people. She wanted to have a relationship with you. She was led to have a relationship with you. She wants to know you."

## 5 Whitney Tucker

An Ignite lesson that made a special impact on Whitney included a video about a community in Africa getting clean water. The community's exuberance impressed Whitney with "just the joy of them having something that we take for granted every single day." Whitney's ready to serve in a way that fulfills God's plan for the world. She says, "I do hope He uses me for something big."

## 6 Zoe Calimani

Zoe participated in the Ignite lesson on justice. She considers it "another topic that is actually really important and needs to be discussed more." She says, "It's a common misconception that people my age just want to sit down [and] watch television all day. But I think a lot of us actually have some really good ideas, but we just need guidance and ... the chance to make a difference."





Stories by Sevil Omer

## Hope blooms

### WHEN 10-YEAR-OLD

Blakeleigh Snell of Easton, California, strolls through her family’s sprawling San Joaquin Valley orchard, she steps into a dreamy scene of fluttering petals, an abundance of pink and white star-shaped blossoms bursting with possibility.

“Peach, pomegranate, and apple trees,” says Blakeleigh. “The trees bloom at different times of the year, and the fruits I handpick and make into jam and sauce.”

Blakeleigh’s homemade goodies are far from your average jam. The home-schooled fifth-grader sells her stock of jellies and preserves under her label, Tree of Life. “Because they’re all fruits from trees, and they’re God’s trees, and fruits give life,” she says. “I want my gifts and money I earn from selling jam to help children to have a better life.”

Blakeleigh’s gifts given through the World Vision Gift Catalog help empower children and families to lift themselves out of poverty. “It feels really good to know that I’m helping someone else,” she says.

A \$100 gift on Blakeleigh’s fifth birthday set her on the path to giving. “She read the Gift Catalog from cover to cover and wanted to pick something that was special and meaningful from her,” says her mother, Candace.

That first year, Blakeleigh picked

chickens. “I love my own chicken and going out and collecting eggs. I also send Bibles. I believe that helps in another way in their lives. Now, I wanted to do more,” she says.

Both her mother and her father, Andrew, encourage Blakeleigh and their 12-year-old son, Gatlin, to live out their Christian values and be generous in giving while becoming good stewards of their resources. Gatlin supports his younger sister by



PHOTO COURTESY OF CANDACE SNELL

Ten-year-old Blakeleigh Snell loves animals, especially her chickens. The girl from Easton, California, has gifted chickens, a package of 28 farm animals, and more through the World Vision Gift Catalog to equip children and families to change their own lives.

donating his money and time to help her in her mission to help others.

“The Bible speaks of the fruit of the Spirit, and I wanted to plant in my children those fruits. That’s love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control,” says Candace. “There is no long-term value in money as it’s only valued on earth—not in heaven. If we can provide love and relief to someone who needs it on earth, then it is ours to give.”

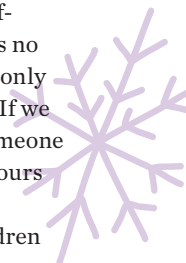
The family sponsors two children through World Vision. Blakeleigh and Gatlin share birthdays with them. Through letters and gifts, the family celebrates milestones, school advancements, and birthdays. “We pray for them daily,” says Blakeleigh.

In 2020, Blakeleigh raised \$2,620 dollars to donate the Gift Catalog gift of 28 farm animals: two cows, two sheep, two pigs, two goats, and 20 chickens. She also raised \$1,700 for clean water through World Vision’s Global 6K for Water in 2020.

This year, she’s dedicated to raising more funds, and is choosing between gifting an Animal of the Month package or a trio of dairy animals.

Her inventory keeps expanding too. In addition to jams, Blakeleigh now makes her own version of hot chocolate bombs (see facing page).

This year, Blakeleigh’s giving will continue to be as bountiful as the blossoms of spring. 



### HOW TO MAKE

## Blakeleigh’s hot chocolate bombs

Servings: About 12

### SUPPLIES

- 1 mini muffin tin
- 1 bag of chocolate chips
- Assorted toppings (Be creative! Try crushed candy canes, crushed Andes mints, marshmallows, or white chocolate chips.)
- 12 craft sticks (or tongue depressors or ice cream sticks)
- 12 cellophane treat bags

### DIRECTIONS

1. Melt chocolate chips in the microwave or using a double boiler.
2. Fill each mini muffin cup with melted chocolate, just to the top. Be careful not to overfill or they will be difficult to pop out.
3. Add toppings of your choice.
4. Wait 3 to 5 minutes for the chocolate to firm up slightly, then insert the craft stick. Place the tin in the fridge to harden the chocolate.
5. Once completely hardened, pop each hot chocolate bomb out and individually wrap in treat bags.
6. When you’re ready to enjoy your hot chocolate bomb, stir it into 6 to 8 ounces of steaming hot milk (dairy or non-dairy) until it’s completely dissolved.

## Rooney’s snow globe

### SUPPLIES

- Mason jar with lid
- Superglue
- Miniature figurine(s)
- Cold water
- Glitter
- Glycerin

### DIRECTIONS

1. Glue the figurine(s) to the inside of the jar’s lid. Set aside and let dry.
2. Fill the jar with cold water, leaving some room at the top.
3. Add about 2 teaspoons of glitter to the water and stir.
4. Add a few drops of glycerin.
5. Once the glue on the lid is dry, screw the lid onto the jar. If there’s a big air bubble, carefully remove the lid and add a bit more water. You can also glue the lid closed if you’re concerned about anyone opening it.
6. Shake and enjoy!

## Delivering hope

 **ALL THAT GLITTERS** is good for 7-year-old Rooney Weidemann.

“Glitter makes everything better,” the second-grader says.

Rooney’s voice is measured with compassion as she recounts a particular day last winter when her mother, Erin, was exhausted by caring for Rooney’s newborn sister, Roxanne.

“She was stressed,” says Rooney, seated next to Erin in their Montana home. With a gentle smile she continues, “I wanted to do something for my mom, something to help calm her. So, I got glitter [and] a Mason jar and filled it with water and put in some colorful beads. I took it over to my mom and I asked her to shake it. It calmed her down right away.”

From there, Rooney determined she needed to do the same thing for others. Her sparkly snow globes were born, jump-starting an entrepreneurial journey of generosity. An initial \$57.12 investment from her grandfather ballooned into a \$183 profit. She sells her treasures for \$10 during family gatherings and community fundraisers around the holidays.

“While I was making the snow globes, I felt really good,” says Rooney. “Then I started to sell them. Now that made me really happy.”

She used the money to gift goats and sheep through the World Vision Gift Catalog. She’s dedicated to sending hope to families in need.

“Being generous and kind and living your life by taking care of the needs of others is important,” says Rooney. “It’s healing to help someone in need. I am really happy when someone I know is really happy.”

Rooney says kids aren’t too young to create change and be an inspiration to their family, community, and beyond.

She’s learning from her parents.

Erin and her husband, Brent, stress

the importance of modeling Christ-like behavior, teaching and training Rooney to live well and give generously. The family also sponsors Andrea in Honduras through World Vision. Through child sponsorship, Erin says, they’re able to live out their values and empower Rooney to care for and love other children around the world.

“It starts with us,” says Erin. “Our home should reflect what we value—kindness, peace, and generosity. And does our home reflect love?” The author of 12 books, including the best-selling Bible Belles series, “The Adventures of Rooney Cruz,” Erin is also a guest speaker for World Vision.

“God has added so much blessing and favor to our family,” she says. “Now, at home, can I help my child have a mindset that is open to generosity, kindness, love, and sharing? The answer is yes, and that’s the gospel. That is our constant conversation in our home—keeping the gospel at the forefront.”

With that, Rooney affirms: “Amen!” 



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRENT WEIDEMANN

Seven-year-old Rooney Weidemann of Montana holds one of her snow globes as she snuggles next to her mother, Erin. Rooney is selling her handmade treasures to raise money for gifts through the World Vision Gift Catalog.



How are you raising money for World Vision Gift Catalog items or to provide a Special Gift for your sponsored child this season? Email [editor@worldvision.org](mailto:editor@worldvision.org) to share your story with us!



# Savor and sing

By Elisabeth Rickard

In a Christmas season when we may be experiencing stress, difficult days, or loss, what does it look like to choose joy? During Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, use these meditations to reflect on different facets of biblical joy through Scripture passages and familiar Christmas carols.

## WEEK 1

### HOPE IN JESUS’ VICTORY

READ

*Habakkuk 3:17–19* “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

LISTEN

#### Reflect

These verses that close out the prophet Habakkuk’s writings can be some of the most challenging in the whole Bible. We’re tempted to ask, “Really, God? Even if there’s nothing in my bank account and my loved ones are sick or dying? ‘Rejoice’ then?” The Bible’s answer is yes. And the bracing lines of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” tell us the same thing: Amid “the gloomy clouds of night” and “death’s dark shadows,” God’s people are called to “rejoice!”

Why? Because Emmanuel—God with us—is on His way here. This hymn is an embodied ache of living in our fallen world. And we’ve felt those pains even more acutely than usual the last couple years, haven’t we? Yet we sing this somber hymn alongside upbeat carols like “Go Tell It on the Mountain” at Christmas to remind ourselves that Jesus was born to deal with a very specific problem: death’s erosive power over our lives and world.

Biblical joy, in the words of Habakkuk and “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” is rooted in the hope of the incarnated Jesus’ certain victory over the hold death currently has on all we love. With His coming, Jesus disperses the clouds and “put[s] to flight” the shadows. Habakkuk can declare, “I will be joyful in God my Savior” (v. 18) because of the hope that the Savior will put death itself to death—by His own birth, death, and resurrection.



This Christmas drawing, called “Angel in Winter,” was made by a Romanian child who participated in World Vision’s Friends of Colors painting club.

## WEEK 2

### DELIGHT IN GOD’S GOODNESS

READ

*Psalms 98* “Joy to the World”

LISTEN

#### Reflect

This hymn’s title says it all! When we sing, “While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains/ Repeat the sounding joy,” we’re proclaiming a truth straight from Psalm 98: The entire creation, from a speck of seaweed to the grandest mountain, calls us to revere our glorious God—and joins us in praising Him. Both Psalm 98 and “Joy to the World” tell of jubilant, irrepressible praise to the creativity and power of the Creator. It’s wildly worshipful.

When was the last time you “shout[ed] for joy to the Lord” because of His glory? This repeated shouting in the psalm and the “sounding joy” of the hymn aren’t some forced admission of God’s provision. Rather, they’re the overflow of a heart that delights in God because His goodness is abundantly evident everywhere we look in the world. And God’s character—His holiness, salvation, righteousness, love, and faithfulness—is a legitimate cause for joy, too.

The Bible portrays this kind of joy as a transformative force that has its source in God’s pure goodness. God “has done marvelous things”—thus “all the earth” is exhorted to “shout for joy before the Lord, the King” (vv. 1, 4, 6). Simply because “the Savior reigns,” humans and nature are called to sing, to use their whole selves in exuberant, imaginative worship of God. And that worship will show the world the “wonders of His love.”

## WEEK 3

### RECEIVE THE SON’S RECONCILIATION

READ

*Colossians 1:15–20* “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

LISTEN

#### Reflect

“Peace on earth and mercy mild/ God and sinners reconciled.” These gloriously simple words from “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” sum up the joy of the incarnation and the foundation of our Christmas celebrations. In some of its earliest known uses, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “reconcile” was used reflexively, “to restore oneself to friendly relations with another.” Yet it’s the central truth

of our faith that we can’t achieve the reconciliation we need most: between ourselves and God. And that’s why Paul’s praise song to Jesus in Colossians 1 culminates in the glorious proclamation that “God was pleased ... through [Jesus] to reconcile to himself all things” (vv. 19–20). Restored relationship with our Creator doesn’t depend on our efforts—praise God!

When we consider the depths that separated us from God in our sinful nature, we sing “Glory to the newborn King!” at Jesus’ birth. This gift of reconciliation prompts the response of joy in us—joy that’s based on a right understanding of our fundamental need for restoration with the One who is “the firstborn over all creation” (v. 15). If God required us to raise ourselves up from our sin, we’d be doomed. But from first to last—from birth to death to victorious resurrection—it’s Jesus’ work that gifts us our “friendly relations,” our rightness, with God. So we celebrate with the angels that “Christ is born in Bethlehem” and find joy in our reconciling Son of Righteousness.

## THOUGHTS ON JOY:

“With Jesus, even in our darkest moments the best remains and the very best is yet to be.”

—CORRIE TEN BOOM

“The fullness of joy is to behold God in everything.”

—JULIAN OF NORWICH

“Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God’s love for us. ... Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.”

—HENRI NOUWEN

“Desire to see God ... and find joy in everything that can lead to Him.”

—TERESA OF AVILA

## WEEK 4

### ADORE THE CHRIST’S BIRTH

READ

*John 1:14* “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

LISTEN

#### Reflect

A distinction is commonly made between a Christian’s joy and happiness—that joy isn’t based on circumstances but on God (see the first week’s reflection), whereas happiness shifts with each small life change. But it’s not an entirely accurate delineation, because there is one crucial moment in history on which every Christian’s joy depends: Jesus’ life, from His birth to His death and

resurrection. As The Message translation puts John 1:14, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” God inhabiting our world is an event that transforms all our grounds for joy. That’s why the lines of “O Come, All Ye Faithful” call God’s people “joyful and triumphant” as we behold Him.

The kind of adoration that this hymn and this verse calls us to isn’t passive, much like joy isn’t just positive feelings. The admiration in mind is active—“Come and behold Him”—and hospitable in the fullest sense. We make room for the miraculous in our lives as we realize the wonder of “the King of angels” coming to us as a child. Contemplating God’s glory revealed in the birth of Jesus, we are moved to choose the joy this beautiful Savior offers. We’re basing our joy not on an earth-bound circumstance, but on the fact that the Creator of the universe willingly bound Himself to earth as a helpless infant—to restore all of creation to Himself. 🕯️



# Sending joy

By Kristy J. O'Hara-Glaspie

📧 Among the joys of the holiday season are finding the perfect gifts for loved ones and having your mailbox filled with Christmas cards, letters, and photos as friends and family reconnect during this special time of year. As Christmas approaches, don't forget to also connect with your sponsored child, blessing them with the knowledge that you're thinking about them. Here's how! ➡



ROBERT CORONADO/WORLD VISION

When Janvie, 27, was a sponsored child in the Philippines, letters from his sponsor meant so much. He says, "[Up to] last year, I was still reading that letter. I can still remember the first line she wrote: 'I am sorry that it took me a while to send you a letter, but please keep in mind that you are in my heart.'" She also promised she was praying for him. "If not for her praying for me and supporting me through the sponsorship program, I couldn't imagine the kind of life I'd have right now," Janvie says. He now works as a consultant for the World Economic Forum and credits World Vision child sponsorship for where he is today—and he sponsors a child himself now too! Read his full story at [wvmag.org/janvie](http://wvmag.org/janvie).



RENA TANJUNG/WORLD VISION

Rahmawati, 10, in Indonesia is excited to get a letter from her sponsor.

## Email a letter.

The simplest way to write your sponsored child is by emailing them a letter through My World Vision. We've made it even easier for you to connect with our new My World Vision app, which you can use anywhere you go. Write your sponsored child a letter right in the app, and for the first time ever, track your message to see where it's at in the process of being delivered. You'll also get more frequent updates about the different trainings and programs your sponsored child's family participates in, making this a great way to stay connected year-round!

Sponsored child Odness, pictured here at age 9, opens a package with small gifts from her sponsor that World Vision staff member Princess Moyo has delivered. Odness regularly prays for her sponsor and says, "I would tell him that I'm very grateful for the support you have given me, even the love that you have for me."

## Mail a package.

If you want to go a step further, create a Christmas package for your sponsored child. Gifts must fit in a small envelope, no larger than 9 by 12 inches, so some great options to include are stickers, balloons, coloring books, colored pencils, postcards of your home region, and photos of you or your family. You can get the mailing address in your My World Vision account. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, be sure to check with the post office about any mail restrictions to your child's country. If there are restrictions, remember that you can still send an email!



JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

Rome and his mother, Hellen, stand outside the new house they were able to build thanks to a Special Gift they received from Rome's sponsor. Rome's family struggled to keep up with repairs on their old house, which constantly leaked when it rained and lacked a toilet, forcing them to use the bushes behind their house. The Special Gift allowed them to build a sturdier house as well as install a toilet. Hellen says, "When I got the news, I danced ... and sang. I hugged my son so tight. ... The money reached us at our critical time. We thanked God so much and prayed for Rome's sponsor for blessing." Read the family's full story at [wvmag.org/rome](http://wvmag.org/rome).



FRED OUMA/WORLD VISION

## Send a Special Gift.

Want to make a big impact? Your Special Gift (minimum \$100) will help your sponsored child and their family how they need it most, with a portion of the gift supporting projects for their whole community. When you give your gift, you won't know what the family will receive, but you can pray and know that God is working through our staff to identify what will make the biggest impact (maybe a bicycle to get to school, or supplies to repair their roof). And after the gift is purchased, you'll get a letter and photo showing how your Special Gift was used. You can even send a Special Gift using the new My World Vision app! Learn more about Special Gifts at [wvmag.org/special-gifts](http://wvmag.org/special-gifts).



In the new My World Vision app, you can email your sponsored child, track the journey your letter travels to be delivered, and get notified when your child writes back—all at your fingertips, wherever you are. To download the new My World Vision app, scan the code at left. For more information about how to write to or send a package to your sponsored child, visit [wvmag.org/letters](http://wvmag.org/letters).

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: ANNICE WHATLEY, GEORGIA

By Sevil Omer



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADAM CAMP

When 82-year-old Annice Whatley was a teenager volunteering with her church youth group in Georgia, she met children living in extreme poverty on the outskirts of town who had been abandoned and abused.

"I can still see their faces," says Annice, a retired teacher from Rosemont, Georgia.

"They broke my heart, and they have been on my mind for all these years."

In the early 1960s, encounters with World Vision founder Bob Pierce would change her life. In 1960, during a church service in LaGrange, Georgia, she heard the American Baptist minister and relief worker speak about the Korean Children's Choir—composed of musically gifted children sponsored through World Vision. The choir toured the world to sing for broad audiences.

A few years later, she met Bob at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where she was attending seminary for a brief time. She learned how his deep burden for others had led him to follow Jesus into the world's suffering. "This time I learned about child sponsorship, and I signed up that day," she says.

Ever since then, Annice has worked to make the world a more just place for children, in her home state as well as around the world. She has sponsored more than a dozen children in countries including Bangladesh, El Salvador, Honduras, Lesotho, Myanmar, and Thailand. She believes World Vision provides lifelines that empower children living in poverty to reach their full potential.

"Our Lord is incredible, and it is to His glory that I have been able to help children who desperately need it," she says.

Locally, Annice's career as a life-changing educator spanned 39 years, mostly in Georgia middle and high schools. Annice attends Rosemont Baptist Church in LaGrange, where Pastor Adam Camp has seen her tenacity to help others. "She's one of the greatest servants of the Lord," he says.

Annice also loves animals. She puts that into action by running an animal rescue shelter.

"The Lord has saved me and surrounded me with all His guardian angels," she says. "The least I can do is my part to help care for God's creation."

As life grows and flourishes in Rosemont, so does Annice's heart for all of God's creation—especially children. ➡

**Share your sponsorship story! Email [editor@worldvision.org](mailto:editor@worldvision.org) and tell us why you sponsor and how child sponsorship has impacted you and your family.**



Actress Meagan Good has partnered with World Vision this Christmas by designing a bracelet for the World Vision Gift Catalog.

# Q&A: Actress Meagan Good

By Nicole Harris

**† ACTRESS MEAGAN GOOD HAD ALREADY BUILT** an impressive resume with more than 40 movies, but she wanted to play a superhero to show how women can be simultaneously strong and vulnerable. So when she got the chance in *Shazam!*, it was an answered prayer. “I really wanted to be in a superhero space because I wanted little brown girls to see themselves in that space,” she says. Meagan, 40, is passionate about inspiring others and giving back. She and her sister started a nonprofit called For the Greater Good to benefit young women and partnered with the Compton School District. Meagan also sponsors a child through World Vision, and this year, she helped design a bracelet for the handcrafted gifts section of the World Vision Gift Catalog. We spoke with Meagan about her bracelet, her partnership with World Vision, and what she’s looking forward to this Christmas.

### What do you love most about the Christmas season?

It really brings families together. Families don’t always get to spend time together and I love that the Christmas season makes us conscious and intentional about that. This holiday season, especially because of the pandemic, I am looking forward to getting together with my family. I miss them.

### What’s your favorite family holiday tradition?

We do a family talent show and sing Christmas carols ... people really get into it. My aunts range from their early 60s all the way up to 93, and everybody gets in on the entire talent show. My Aunt Donna, who is in her 70s, does Tina Turner and it’s really amazing.

### How do you stay grounded during the holiday season with all its busyness?

My faith definitely influences how I approach the Christmas season. For one, it represents Jesus’ birthday. Two, it puts things in perspective. It’s always about something that’s bigger than us.

Three, of course, it’s about family; and four, there is something about giving, and it doesn’t always have to be a tangible thing. There’s so many ways to give, and sometimes it’s just support, love, listening, or going out of your way to do something for someone.

### How do you choose joy this Christmas season after the last couple years?

For me, it’s been a huge time of reflection and perspective and time with God: If God has allowed this season, what are we supposed to be getting out of it? How are we supposed to be learning and growing? What are we supposed to be taking into the next season, and what are we supposed to be leaving behind? When you’re pursuing joy—and it’s not always easy—when you catch hold of it, it’s the most incredible thing in the world.

### What do you like about partnering with World Vision?

To be able to sponsor a child and to hear from them and to see their little face and to know that you just get to help out—it’s a privilege. It’s a gift, not just for the child, it’s a gift that you “get” to do this for them.

I hope to encourage people to bless others. I hope that people think to themselves, “If I donate something from the World Vision Gift Catalog,



DEWAYNE ROGERS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WORLD VISION

this is going to bless not just the person I give in honor of, but someone else, and maybe many others.” I hope it becomes a movement.

### Why did you decide to help design a bracelet, specifically, for the Gift Catalog?

I like vintage-y stuff. It was the perfect opportunity to help design something that looked the way that I would want it to look—that I would wear. Older and younger generations both really love vintage, so I hoped that it would be a gift that would transcend quite a few generations to be a bracelet that’s not just stylish for all ages but, most of all, meaningful.

### How will your handcrafted gift help people choose joy?

It’s directly connected to prayerfully giving someone else joy—the person who is the recipient of the bracelet, but also the person who gets blessed because you donated to impact their life. I have little tattoos on my arms, reminders of things that are important to me, that remind me of who I am, how much God loves me, what I’m worthy of. I hope that when people wear this bracelet, that they get that type of reminder: that they are trying to ... make someone’s life better, that the person that gave it to them loves them. I hope that when they’re wearing it, they know that it’s much bigger than just fashion—that it’s also about something that’s bigger than them. †

*This interview has been edited and condensed for length.*



Give Meagan’s wrap bracelet to someone in your life this Christmas! See the insert between pages 18 and 19 for more information.



# Beyond presents

**I WAS LOOKING THROUGH PHOTOS** from a trip to Mwala, Kenya, a rural community about two hours east of Nairobi, and this picture of Sofia and her grandson, Collins, gave me pause.

Collins is a busy boy—always on the go. But when Sofia’s well-worn Bible comes out, everything stops. Only the white curtains flutter in the breeze. Collins sits, listening with his whole being. Sofia reads, her face beaming.

The scene tugs at my memory. It feels familiar, and yet how?

Then it strikes me.

Every year during Advent, my parents would read to my brother and me. It was always the story of Mary and Joseph, their long journey

from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and their baby whose first bed was a manger.

I think my mom and dad—like so many parents—wanted to remind us of the season’s deeper meaning. Beyond presents, pretty lights, and Christmas trees. That story captivated us.

Looking back, this time also represented a moment when my whole family put aside life’s busyness and stress. My brother and I stopped playing, fidgeting, and fighting.

When the Bible appeared, peace prevailed.

Now, decades later, I witness that same peace in this Kenyan home. I feel the connection between Collins and Sofia.

And I give thanks to God for using this photo to transport me back to those long-ago Christmases and to feel the connection that binds us.

This Christmas, may the same peace be with you. †

Written and photographed by Laura Reinhardt

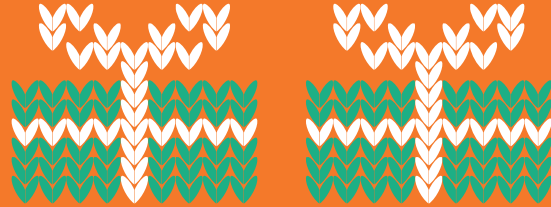
Nikon D750

24-70mm lens, 1/160 at f/6.3, ISO 1600



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