When God gives you goats

Families embrace new dreams

1 SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS IN OUR READER SURVEY
11 AN UPDATE ON THE GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS
20 STORIES OF HOPE FROM UKRAINE
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 may vary and cannot be guaranteed by Christmas due to the many gifts given during the holiday season.

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“I knew immediately that living in poverty would become a thing of the past.”

—Vivienne, 44, Zambia

We asked children around the world to share their idea of joy. Artisan-made gifts... Girls in India experience joy.

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In a land of scarcity, amazing generosity

By Edgar Sandoval Sr.

WHEN OUR LAND CRUISER rolled to a stop in a village in Turkana, northern Kenya—a hotspot of the global hunger crisis—I braced myself to encounter desperation and heartbreak.

I didn’t expect to find extravagant generosity and faith.

On the journey to East Africa, my head was full of facts about this crisis. Alarming: 56 million people worldwide are facing starvation. Hunger was escalating even before the war in Ukraine due to extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, protracted conflict and violence, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, by limiting access to critical wheat exports from the region, the war inflated food costs even further—at a time when families were already suffering.

This was true in Turkana, where the worst drought in 40 years has dried up grazing land and caused widespread death of livestock. Families who didn’t have safety nets to begin with now lack milk or meat from their animals and face food prices beyond what they can pay.

As I arrived for a food distribution, I thanked God that I hadn’t expected to find extravagant generosity and faith.

I quickly learned that the Turkana people have a strong sense of community. Sharing with others is common, even in a time of dire need.

Imagine if we expanded our vision of community to encompass all God’s children around the globe. How beautiful it would be if we embraced the Turkana spirit of generosity—not just at Christmas but all year round?

I, like Ekidor, truly depend on God as my “daily bread.” And how much more can church play in Ekidor’s community.

Ekidor’s generosity was a beautiful display of God’s presence in the midst of suffering—beauty amid pain.

Ekidor later told me. “These are people with no place else to go.”

Ekidor collected her ration of vegetable oil, sorghum, and beans—only enough to last her family a few weeks—and I walked home with her. Waiting at her gate was a group of neighbors who were not eligible for the distribution—yet they were still hungry. Without hesitation, Ekidor took a cup and began scooping out portions of her food for them. Her generosity left me speechless.

“I’ve been taught this at church,” Ekidor later told me. “These are people with no place else to go.”

Ekidor later told me. “These are people with no place else to go.”

I was also struck by the vital role the church plays in Ekidor’s community.

“The church is like our second home,” she explained. “We get spiritual nourishment. Without it, life would be hard.”

This touched my heart even as it challenged me. Church can so easily become a weekly task rather than a weekly task rather than a second home. And how much more can I, like Ekidor, truly depend on God as my daily bread?”

In Kenya, I was troubled to see hungry children and parched animal carcasses. But I was also blessed to see vibrant faith and amazing generosity, unmistakable signs of God’s presence in the midst of suffering—beauty amid pain.
Juan Carlos, 40, helps his son, Carlos Joseph, 12, with his schoolwork when schools were closed by the pandemic and students were learning remotely. Carlos, a sponsored child, says his best subjects are math and science.

Their family participated in World Vision’s THRIVE (Transforming Household Resilience in Vulnerable Environments) program, which helps farmers increase their growing techniques and yields. Since the family went through the program, their monthly income has doubled to more than US$800 thanks to a sweet potato contract with Walmart alone.

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JON WARREN/WORLD VISION

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JON WARREN/WORLD VISION
In one of Kenya’s smallest communities, the safety of schoolchildren is being threatened by the rising waters of Lake Turkana—the world’s largest desert lake—due to climatic events like extreme rainfall and soil runoff from deforestation and agriculture. Once accessible by roads, the community is now cut off from the mainland, and children can only reach their school by boat. “There are many challenges that children in my community face,” says Sierya, a resident and the first in the community to graduate from college. “I am passionate about education because I would like many children to be empowered. Thankfully, World Vision has enhanced the safety of children in water through provision of life jackets.” Along with life jackets, World Vision has equipped kids with water safety training to help protect them as they get to school.
EXPLORE THE ISSUES FACING PEOPLE IN POVERTY

A GROWING CRISIS

See page 6 to learn how the ongoing war in Ukraine is worsening the global hunger crisis.

Discover

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

Kenya

In drought-stricken Turkana, a health worker measures the mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of 10-month-old Daniel. Red in the MUAC tape indicates extreme malnutrition. Daniel is one of 76 malnourished children being treated with ready-to-use therapeutic food at the World Vision-supported clinic in the community of Nakorio.

Guatemala

At 6 a.m. every Wednesday, Nicolasa and her daughters leave their home in the mountains of Los Cuchumatanes for the local market in La Capellanía. Their goal? To sell piglets. Nicolasa and her oldest daughter, 9-year-old Johana, proudly hold some of these piglets, which they raised as part of a World Vision food security project in their area. “We did not imagine that we would have so much support from World Vision,” says Nicolasa, “but thank God, as you can see, this is the product.” She now has 12 piglets for fattening and four for breeding, and the income has enabled her family to build a sturdy home and gain financial security. “Now when my daughters get sick, thank God, I have my savings to … take them to the doctor and buy the medicines they need,” she says. “Before I couldn’t.”

Looking for specific ways to pray for global challenges, but not sure where to start? Visit wvmag.org/prayer-guides to find different ways to pray for people in need this season.

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Global displacement hits record high

Today, more people than ever before—over 100 million—have been forcibly displaced from their homes. That figure includes 26 million who have fled their countries because of conflict, hunger, persecution, or human rights violations and 53 million who are displaced in their own countries by conflict, including the war in Ukraine. In responding to refugees and displacement crises around the world, World Vision provides basic survival supplies such as food, clean water, shelter materials, blankets, and household goods. We set up and run Child-Friendly Spaces where children can play, learn, and enjoy normal childhood interactions. Our Infant and Young Child Feeding Centers give displaced moms a private place where they can breastfeed their babies and have them screened and treated for malnutrition. Healthcare, livelihoods training, cash-for-work opportunities, and educational programs are other ways in which we provide support for uprooted families.

World Vision coordinates humanitarian activities with national governments and partner organizations to achieve the best outcomes for people affected by crises. With our presence in nearly 100 countries, we are well-positioned to help meet the needs of displaced people, whatever their situation.

After conflict, Iraq’s next phase

As Iraq works toward post-conflict recovery, progress has been slow and construction projects remain incomplete, hampering many displaced Iraqis’ ability to return home. At the start of 2022, at least 2.5 million people—including 11 million children—needed humanitarian aid. Since World Vision began working in Iraq in the 1990s, we’ve provided short-term emergency relief in addition to medium- and long-term recovery assistance to help alleviate suffering and empower families to rebuild their lives. From October 2020 to September 2021, our staff focused efforts on food security, water and sanitation systems, health, child protection, education, and livelihoods, reaching over half a million people with life-changing resources. Throughout the year we partnered with Procter & Gamble to distribute more than 4 million water purification packets to over 51,000 people in Baidoa, Somalia.

World Vision empowers children to work toward their own well-being. And we work with their parents and communities to help ensure that kids are protected and that their futures are not stolen by exploitative labor.

#1

World Vision is the World Food Programme’s largest distribution partner worldwide.

We’re responding in

25
countries where hunger is at its worst.

We’re aiming to reach

22M
people with life-saving aid.

#1

World Vision provides more than

1,000
life-saving meals every 60 seconds for people affected by disaster and conflict.

Over the last 10 years

89%
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Visit wvmag.org/child-labor to read more about how World Vision is working to end child labor.

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A GOOD LIFE WITH GOATS

In 2021, 4.5 million people participated in World Vision livelihood programs like animal management.
Discover

Vivienne smiles as she prepares dinner for her family in a small grass-thatched-roof kitchen while watching over her youngest daughter, Chileleko, 8, who is playing a ball game with her friends. The 44-year-old mother of seven wasn’t always able to smile, because scenes like these used to be a rarity. Her family’s life was so much more difficult just six years ago. Vivienne and her husband, Martin, 47, couldn’t provide basic necessities for their kids, generally earning less than US$2 every two weeks clearing other people’s fields and doing household chores like laundry for them.

“There were days when my husband and I would sacrifice our little food for our children,” Vivienne recalls. “We couldn’t afford to eat more than one meal a day because the daily income we earned from odd jobs was insufficient to provide us with a decent meal.”

She says having an adequate meal, with at least eggs, typically happened only once a year—usually at Christmas.

“Some days, we only relied on wild fruits and unfamiliar green-leaved plants that we would try to eat so that we could call it a day,” she says. “Even though we were scared that the plants could be poisonous, we placed our hope and faith [in] God to see us through.”

The poverty Vivienne’s family experienced impacted their lives in other ways: Her children were expelled from school because their fees had not been paid.

“It used to break my heart to see the children coming back from school in less than an hour after they reported,” she says. “I’ll never forget the day they were sent home from school and went [lay] down under a tree and took a nap—hoping to wake up later … to find food, given that they hadn’t had a meal the night before.”

Putting poverty in the past

In 2018, Vivienne was selected by World Vision to participate in a goat-rearing program. Along with the training, she would receive five goats of her own.

“They are easy to rear, they multiply fast, and they are very easy to sell.”

Vivienne and Martin’s family used to struggle with hunger and lack of income. In 2018, World Vision provided them with training and five goats. The family is now thriving and has grown their livestock herds to include 70 goats, 63 chickens, and 15 cows.

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she had a herd of eight. She says, “The goats have made our lives easier because we have continued to benefit in different ways. They are easy to rear, they multiply fast, and they are very easy to sell.”

The training Vivienne received transformed her mind, inspiring her to dream of the possibilities for her family’s future. “I did not want to get used to the life of always begging for food or picking wild fruits for a meal,” she says. “Receiving goats was a life-changing experience for me. I knew immediately that living in poverty would become a thing of the past for my family.”

**Expanding opportunities**

In 2019, after just a year in the program, Vivienne was ready to expand into new ventures. She and Martin decided to sell some goats to purchase farming equipment and begin to grow crops. They started a small garden within their homestead where they grow vegetables such as cabbages, leafy greens, tomatoes, and onions. The goats even helped improve their garden!

“The goodness with goats is that one can also use the manure to enhance the quality of the soil,” says Vivienne. “I tried it in my garden, and the results were good.”

By 2020, after receiving training from World Vision in conservation farming, Vivienne’s family was growing so much that they were able to sell their surplus for income. They have also been able to grow maize and groundnuts (similar to peanuts), which they sell to Zambia’s Food Reserve Agency. They typically harvest about 40 50-kilogram bags of maize, which they sell for US$11 a bag, and 10 50-kilogram bags of groundnuts, which they sell for US$27 a bag. The family that once didn’t have enough food and was often near starvation now has an abundance.

“Unlike in the past when we would go to the bush to look for food, nowadays I just walk to my garden to pick any vegetables I want, and my family will not have to go to bed on empty stomachs because through the goats God has provided,” Vivienne says.

In 2019, Vivienne was invited to participate in World Vision’s Biblical Empowered Worldview program to learn more about financial literacy and continue to build her identity, hope, and vision for the future. With others in her community, she joined a savings group, one of nearly 80,000 supported by World Vision worldwide. These groups are designed to equip and empower people who lack access to traditional banking services with ways to save money and access small loans to help them rise out of poverty. Members each contribute a set amount on a regular basis agreed upon by the group. As needs or opportunities arise, members can request a loan, which they pay back with interest. At the end of a set period
of time, the money—with the interest that’s been paid—is shared out among the group members, proportionate to how much each has contributed. Vivienne started saving with just US$5 a month. As time went on, she took out loans of increasing value through the group and was eventually able to purchase a piece of land. She continued saving, with an even more ambitious endeavor in mind.

“I built a five-roomed house, which I put on rent, and when the tenants pay their rentals, I use the money to pay back my loan,” she says. “And now, through the same house, my husband and I agreed to buy a cow, and today, we have 15 cows.”

In addition to their cows, today Vivienne and Martin own an astounding 70 goats and 43 chickens. “The goats have not only been a source of income to us, but they have also brought us joy and removed poverty from our lives,” Vivienne says.

**A flock of blessings**

As the goats have continued to multiply, Vivienne and Martin have diversified into many other activities to increase their household income, such as making bricks to sell and renting out their cattle and ploughs to other community members. The US$60 to $90 a month they now earn has opened the door to other new dreams. While their first three children missed out on an education, it’s not too late for the younger four. Vivienne is grateful she can pay their educational fees now.

“In the past, [I] had no means to support my first [three] children with education. Today, whenever any of the school-going children requests for any school materials, I quickly go to the goat’s pen, pick one goat, and sell it. Then I pay for what has been requested,” she says. She has hopes for Gloria, 18, Miyanda, 14, Gift, 11, and Chileleko to receive the best education and have bright futures.

Chileleko wants to be a teacher when she grows up, but for now, she enjoys caring for the goats. Her favorite goat is named Kasalala, which means “clean” in Tonga, the local language.

“I like to feed and play with my goat, and I pretend to cook nice things for it and feed it,” she says. When she is not at school, she helps her mother water the vegetables in the garden. When she’s not helping with chores, she enjoys playing ball games with her friends. In the evenings, after playtime, Chileleko and her siblings sit around the fire while their mother prepares dinner. They sing merrily as they wait, confident that meals are now consistent.

“Our lives have changed,” Martin says. “We are here now because of World Vision and the goats we received. My children are in school, we have enough food, and we now have livestock that [have] continued to generate income for us.”

As part of the animal distribution program, once their goats reproduce, families are encouraged to bless others in their community by gifting goats. Vivienne’s goat flock had grown to 23 by the time it was her turn to bless another family in 2019.

**An answer to prayers**

In 2019, Loveness and her children were busy rebuilding their lives about 5 kilometers from Vivienne’s household. Loveness’s husband had died the year before, and his family had grabbed all the property the couple had acquired, leaving her with nothing. Life became very hard for her as she had to take care of her six children single-handedly.

With no shelter to live in, Loveness and her children had relocated to a small piece of land that was allocated to her by the village leader.

“We started life from scratch,” she says. “The community helped me to build a small shelter that we used as a kitchen and a bedroom. I used to cry and pray every night, asking God to come through for me and change my life. But little did I know that God was preparing something for me, and that was a blessing of goats that changed my life.”

That year, Loveness joined a community savings group that had been formed and trained by Vivienne. She was able to save with the group from the little income she earned doing odd jobs. A few months later, Loveness’s family was selected to receive five goats from Vivienne and her family.

“I meant God answers prayers,” Loveness says. “After receiving the goats, I knelt and praised my God.” And multiply they did. Loveness has already been able to sell goats from her growing herd, using the proceeds to build a better house and enroll her younger children—Venus, 11, Nector, 8, and Kinet, 5—in school.

All she wants is for her children to have a better future, and the goats will help ensure that happens.

“Why is my wish to educate my children so that they can [live] a comfortable life and not have to go through what I went through,” she says. “If not for the goats, I can’t imagine what my life and family would look like today.”

**Give today!**

Empower families like Vivienne’s and Loveness’s to leave poverty in the past through your gift of a goat. See the insert between pages 18 and 19, call 1.888.852.4453, or visit wvrmag.org/givegoats.

Chileleko, center, is now able to attend school consistently and hopes to become a teacher when she grows up. Before her family received goats, she was often dismissed from class for failing to pay the required school fees.

When Loveness’s husband died, she was left with no resources to provide for her children. In 2019, she received goats from Vivienne’s family, and the gift has given her a fresh start. Today, her children all attend school and the family lives in a newly built house.

Chileleko got to choose her sponsor at a Chosen® event in September. Scan the code to watch her experience!
SEVEN MONTHS PREGNANT, ANA STRUGGLED with the idea of leaving her home in Ukraine until finally, she felt she had no choice. As she was out walking with her husband, Oleg, two rockets exploded in the sky over the city center of Mykolaiv where they lived. They knew the time had come for Ana and their 18-month-old son, Leonid, to seek safety. They fled to Moldova as Oleg stayed behind to defend Ukraine, along with most men ages 18 to 60.

Ana saw the explosions’ toll on little Leonid: “For a day and a half, he didn’t get any sleep. The moment he would fall asleep, he would wake up shaking. It was not a place for me to stay, especially [being] pregnant.” Moldovan doctors felt that Ana could deliver before full term, so she began frantically filling out paperwork so that Oleg would be allowed to leave Ukraine and be with her for their baby’s birth.

Ana and Leonid found shelter at Centrul Crestin Sfanta Treime (Holy Trinity Christian Center) in the city of Chișinău. The church had opened its doors to help refugee families by offering beds, home-cooked meals, and hygiene supplies.

Pastor Alexandru Malancea doesn’t call them refugees, but rather guests. He tells his staff, “I don’t see a person running away from the war. I see Jesus.” Ana sees that sentiment lived out.

“I feel like I’m home, that I belong here,” says Ana. “We all have one God and we’re here on earth to be able to support each other and to be there for each other.” Through tears she says she’s grateful that, even though separated, her family members are still alive—that, and thinking about welcoming her soon-to-arrive child keeps her moving forward in this troubled time.

The right place

Television host and Presbyterian minister Mister Rogers famously reminded people to “look for the helpers” in times of trouble. Around the world, many helpers have stepped up to support people fleeing the war in Ukraine. The support comes in ways as varied as the people offering it.

At the church where Ana found shelter, 21-year-old Alina greets arriving refugees with care, kindness, and a shy smile that blesses those receiving it.
In Moldova, the World Food Programme (WFP) has partnered with World Vision to provide a special cash grant to families hosting at least one Ukrainian refugee. The program began in February 2022.

In late February, Angelica began offering shelter to as many as 14 people in her three-bedroom apartment, where she lives with her 19-year-old daughter, 30-year-old son, and 18-month-old son in the second child, Ana holds her 1-year-old son in the church in Chișinău. Angelica and Elisabeth babysit the younger girls while their mom works. Elisabeth’s face lights up as she explains how the girls have also made a dream come true for her. “They helped me to feel like I’m a big sister,” she says. They take this role seriously by walking to local parks and helping with the girls’ homework.

Alina says she’s guided by Galatians 6:2, which reads, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (ESV). On staff at the church, she normally works in the library. Now she’s dedicated to helping refugees from Ukraine to feel at home and welcomed.

“I feel a great dose of joy that I can do this,” Alina says. “I think that all this is what God wants me to do, and I feel fulfilled as I never felt before.” – Alina

Supporting the helpers

Angela Tanasi also finds herself in the right place at the right time. “I think I’m a person who always helps someone who needs it,” she says.

In late February, Angelica began offering shelter to as many as 14 people in her three-bedroom apartment, where she lives with her 19-year-old daughter and 30-year-old son.

In Moldova, the World Food Programme (WFP) has partnered with World Vision to provide a special cash grant to families hosting at least two Ukrainian refugees for more than one week. The program began in March 2022, with each host family receiving 3,500 Moldovan lei (US$190) to help cover expenses.

Angelica learned about the program through the people she was hosting. She was grateful for the assistance because her expenses had risen, especially for electricity and water. The cash can be used on anything the family deems necessary to help in their support of refugees.

“World Vision has been working with Romexpo to provide basic food materials, things like rice and pasta and oil... along with hygiene items, as well as paying utility bills and other invoices.”

Building an extended family

By April 2022, one family remained in Angelica’s home—a mother and her three daughters. Angelica and her children embraced them. She says, “We do everything together. We cook, clean, go for a walk.” Angelica’s family even included them in their Easter celebration.

Living with Angelica and her kids has offered an extended family to Ukrainian sisters Eugenia, Ana, and Arianna.

“When we were leaving, everything was usually like they show the war [on TV], shooting, bombing,” says 14-year-old Eugenia. “I was very scared. I didn’t know how I would be received.”

In Angelica’s 19-year-old daughter, Elisabeth, Eugenia and Ana found an older sister—someone who helps them navigate the unfamiliar environment of Chișinău. Angelica and Elisabeth babysit the younger girls while their mom works.

“I feel a great dose of joy that I can do this,” Alina says. “I think that all this is what God wants me to do, and I feel fulfilled as I never felt before.” – Alina

Elisabeth doesn’t see her family’s generosity as anything extraordinary. “It’s important to help because we are people, and we don’t know what it will be tomorrow,” she says. “Today, I help. Tomorrow, you help.”

Even though Ana and Eugenia miss the family and friends they left behind in Ukraine, they didn’t feel safe once the war began. “I couldn’t sleep well there,” says Eugenia. “I couldn’t go out for a walk, but I can do all these [things] here. I’m happy here.”

Youssel thanks all the Moldovan host families, and stresses the need for continued global support: “We as World Vision appreciate what you are doing. And we will pray for you, and we will try to help you to continue supporting the Ukrainian refugees.”

City center community

As the war began, World Vision’s 32 years of experience in Romania offered a solid foundation to partner with the government and local organizations in quickly setting up places for refugees to find help.

One such place was Romexpo—Bucharest’s largest, 2,000-person overflow shelter, but normally an exhibition center and indoor arena.

In April, an average of 900 people were visiting the location each day. World Vision’s emergency logistics director Mark Mitchell explained, “World Vision has been working with Romexpo to provide basic food materials, things like rice and pasta and oil... along with hygiene items, as well as paying utility bills and other invoices.”

3,500 Moldovan lei (US$190) to help cover expenses. April, with each host family receiving 3,500 Moldovan lei (US$190) to help cover expenses. Alina registers refugees from Ukraine at her church in Chișinău, Moldova. Elisabeth, a Moldovan 19-year-old (left), ensures that Ukrainian sisters Eugenia (center) and Ana (right) feel welcome in her home. They spend time together drawing, playing, and going on walks.
feminine hygiene products, diapers for children, etc.”

Families were able to come every 10 days to pick up more supplies.

A place to connect and find normalcy
Understanding the need for connectivity in times of crisis, World Vision worked with a coalition of partners through the Geeks Without Frontiers–led N50 Project to set up the first of 10 Portable Connectivity Centers just outside of the original Romexpo location.

The easily transportable centers, like internet cafés, can charge multiple devices at a time, provide a powerful hotspot, and include laptops, tablets, and smartphones that kids can use to continue their education. Parents can also access vital information on the go.

Tatiana, 36, brought her three sons to the location to pick up food supplies. Her son Ivan had a birthday the next day, and would be turning 13 in a country not his own. But the family received food vouchers, and they hoped to get some sushi (Ivan’s wish), then take a walk in a city center park.

“We want to say thank you to everyone who is helping,” said Tatiana. “Thanks for the peace that we find here.”

A place to play and catch a breath
World Vision offers a peaceful place through its child-safe play area at Romexpo.

Mark explains that as a child-focused organization, World Vision puts service to kids at the forefront. “Thinking in terms of Romexpo,” he says, “it was important to have a [supervised] space where children can be children and they can play.”

Diana, age 31, came to Romexpo with her 5-year-old daughter, Yeva, and 2-year-old son, Artiom. While she picked up much-needed food supplies, Yeva and Artiom colored and played with toys.

Diana said, “It’s great to have this place here especially because where we live, we don’t have space for kids.”

She added, “We can leave our kids here and walk … without worrying what the kids will do.”

Peace of mind
As more refugees entered Romania from Ukraine, children’s entertainer Cristian Russ began delighting kids at Romexpo once a week, with his show becoming a high point for families.

Cristian regularly performs at birthday parties, so this was a completely new experience for him. “Here the people don’t expect to have fun. They come here for getting help…” he says. “Maybe this is the better way to make a surprise and give some joy to the people.”

Though he’s unable to speak Ukrainian, he notes that “fun has no language.” To get around the communication barrier, he pours his energy into big gestures.

He says, “When things are really tough, laughter can be a good route through. For children, and for everyone, it helps us to forget our struggles, even if it is for an hour, or even just 10 minutes.”

An island of safety
As a child, Natalia dreamed of being a teacher, but she ended up becoming an auditor instead. Six months before the war, she says, “I just decided that dreams from childhood should be true.”

At the age of 41, she made a 180-degree life change. She went back to school and, in October 2021, she started teaching math to fifth through seventh graders.

Little did she know that her life was about to change drastically once again as the war began in Ukraine.

She and her 15-year-old daughter, Kristina, fled Odesa the Thursday before Orthodox Easter. Bombs fell close to home two days after they left.

They found respite at a shelter in Iasi, Romania—a city bordering Moldova—that houses up to 450 people. World Vision pays for utilities such as electricity, gas, and laundry services, as well as all volunteer-related expenses. World Vision staff also offer anti-trafficking seminars, a critical resource for displaced women and children.

Natalia and Kristina left behind relatives, friends, and Natalia’s students. Despite circumstances, Natalia hasn’t given up on her dream. Now she shares her love and lessons virtually with students from the shelter’s cafeteria.

Kristina also continues her studies as she’s able. But it’s difficult because she’s struggling with the trauma of having to flee her home. She finds comfort in painting and knitting.

“WHEN THINGS ARE REALLY TOUGH, LAUGHTER CAN BE A GOOD ROUTE THROUGH.”
—CRISTIAN

Ukrainian mother Tatiana visits Romexpo in Bucharest, Romania, with her sons to pick up food and hygiene items for her family.

Cristian’s dry ice show fascinates 2-year-old Alisa.
Discover

Natalia expresses gratitude for the shelter, which provides a roof over their heads and the food they need. She says, “It is an island of safety and the place of hope and calm.”

Changing needs and response

With the generous help of supporters around the globe, World Vision reached more than 116,000 people in need in the first 100 days of the war in Ukraine (see sidebar for more details).

The war’s ever-changing landscape means World Vision’s work adapts to meet refugees’ evolving needs. But ultimately the hope remains for the return of peace. “In New Zealand we have this phrase, tūrangawaewae,” says Mark Mitchell, whose regular role is with World Vision’s New Zealand office, as head of fragile contexts. “It means [in the Maori language] ‘a place to stand.’ And for all of us, we have a place where our heart belongs.” For Ukrainian families, the support they’ve found outside their war-torn country gives them strength until they can go back to where their hearts belong.

You can be a helper too!

Donate to receive the crossbody purse shown in the insert between pages 18 and 19, and your gift will benefit those impacted by the war in Ukraine. Or use the insert between pages 8 and 9, call 1.888.852.4453, or visit wvmag.org/help-Ukraine to donate.

IN THE KITCHEN:

Githeri
By Laura Reinhardt

Githeri—a traditional one-pot dish that originated with Kenya’s Kikuyu tribe—is now enjoyed by people across Kenya. This simple but flavorful combination of beans, corn, onions, and tomatoes makes a colorful and nutritious meal.

A meal consisting of these basic, accessible ingredients takes on increased importance in light of compounding crises that have left many struggling to feed their families—crises like the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, worsening drought conditions, rising costs, and ongoing conflict. One of those conflicts—the war in Ukraine—has exacerbated an already difficult situation. Grain from the Ukraine–Russia region is used to feed millions of refugees and vulnerable people in Africa and the Middle East, but the war has complicated access to that grain supply.

Through World Vision’s child sponsorship programs, families receive training in improved agriculture methods along with seeds that can weather drought conditions. Farmers also learn techniques that restore nutrients and stability to the soil. This empowers them to grow healthy and diverse crops that provide nutritious food for their families.

The ingredients needed for githeri can be grown in families’ gardens. Having a recipe that calls for homegrown ingredients can be especially reassuring in times of food shortages.

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We invite you to try making githeri in your own kitchen. It’s a simple way to support families in Ukraine and across the world who are struggling to feed their families.

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Experiencing the HOPE- FILLED Joy Jesus brings

By Elisabeth Rickard

During the Christmas season, joy fills our songs and our celebrations. For God’s people around the world, the source of this joy is our Savior’s incarnation—His love-filled entrance into the middle of the human story that so deeply needed a new vision of life. We can say with Nehemiah that “the joy of the Lord is [our] strength” (8:10), and this season of incarnation is a chance for God’s people to display the depth of our joy to the broken world. But the joy that Jesus’ birth heralded doesn’t end with individual or personal happiness—after all, His first recorded quotation of Scripture, in Luke 4:17–19, is about all, His first recorded quotation of Scripture, in Luke 4:17–19, is about

exalting the humble

The goodness of God’s kingdom is especially for people who are most oppressed, whose lives seem furthest from anything resembling joy. In World Vision’s work, we get to witness the new life that God’s Spirit brings into spiritual poverty—and the joy when physical poverty is overcome. We see restoration of broken relationships with God and others—and progress from despair to hope as a family takes hold of their future. We witness a deepened trust in God’s truth—and people’s new understanding of their capacity to tackle poverty as image-bearers of God.

Remember who God exalts in the words of Mary’s famous song? “He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty” (Luke 1:52–53). The people culture marginalizes and see as most forgettable are the ones God came for in Jesus. This season, reflect on these stories that show the joy of vulnerable people living into their God-given potential. We pray that they also bring you joy as you celebrate what God is doing around the world.

Strong families display God’s goodness

The close relationship that Meshack has with his wife, Abigail, and son, Rashford, is rare in most rural communities in Kenya, where culture dissuades men from expressing emotions. Though men are expected to provide physically for their families, they’re not typically responsible for raising children or cultivating a loving relationship with their wives. But World Vision’s Men Care training, a global fatherhood campaign, seeks to enhance men’s involvement in their families as equitable, responsive, and nonviolent fathers and spouses who promote gender equality and seek to improve all children’s well-being. Abigail persuaded Meshack to join a local Men Care group, where he met with others to discuss and learn about childcare, maternal and reproductive health matters, good parenting skills, and the significance of strong marriages for the well-being of children and families. Meshack has learned how “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him” (Psalm 127:3). Now, Meshack and Abigail pray together about challenging situations or decisions that affect their family, and their joy-filled unity points their community to God’s transformative power.

A generous heart molded by service

In the rural Honduran community where Eber lives, thousands of families used to have no access to clean water. But Eber had abundant clean water on his property in the hills. When he witnessed firsthand the muddy pools that children were collecting water from, his compassion prompted him to undertake a seemingly impossible project. Twelve years spent caring for a severely disabled daughter—whom he saw as a gift from God—had softened his heart toward children in need. He was determined to make sure families in the valley below had clean water.

Eber and the community dug trenches, laid pipes, advocated with the government for funding, and prayed for over a year until they finally saw the clean water flowing down from Eber’s land into homes. “God has been with us at all times, in every step we have taken,” affirms one community member who helped with the project, which has blessed thousands with clean water. Eber trusted God with his resources, believing that “You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Corinthians 9:11).

Education opens new doors of hope

In India, the name of the informal settlement Anand Parbat means “joyous mountain,” but it’s an ironic name for a place of deep struggle and poverty. When their impoverished neighborhood was demolished as part of a government promise to build better housing, thousands of families were forced into worse temporary conditions, with no end in sight.

Opportunities for earning incomes where are limited to begging and sorting garbage on the streets. But because donors and partners support World Vision educational centers, three teenage girls have become the first ever from this struggling community to take India’s national class 10 exam and pursue higher education. As Proverbs 24:14 explains, education and knowledge are ways God’s goodness reaches many people—“Know also that wisdom is like honey for you. If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.” For Poonam, Tulsi, and Pooja, their difficult background didn’t define their dreams, and their achievement has become an example to other girls from their community who faced a future of extreme poverty—but who now see the possibility of a future hope.

Our call this Christmas

May the joy of the Lord be your strength this Christmas as you consider the incomparably good news of Jesus’ arrival into our stories and the stories of people around the world. Let’s celebrate our Savior’s birth as “good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10)—including the most vulnerable.

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Inspire

World Vision

Winter 2022

Inspire
FOR MANY YOUNG PEOPLE in the U.S., the Ukraine war is the first they’ve witnessed in real time. Their hearts have been broken by footage of children clinging to their mothers, clutching backpacks containing all their earthly possessions.

“I feel bad for the Ukrainian kids because I feel they should be able to live a normal life,” says Taury, a student at Park Street School in Boston. For young people like Taury, it can be overwhelming to see their peers suffering.

“When you have so much of this information, you can easily be paralyzed by it and lose hope,” says Dr. Katie Wiens, executive director of the Council on Educational Standards and Accountability (CESA). According to Wiens, it’s critical for children of all ages to respond with faith. “If you’re in a safe place, support them, but also remember that God is love, and that He is in control.”

“If we know that God is truly a God of justice and compassion, then we know He is all-powerful and we can respond with wisdom, with purpose, and without being weighed down to a degree that’s not helpful,” she says. “Our hearts should break for this, but we can’t stay there.”

As an experienced Christian educator, Wiens wanted to help young people find a way to process their feelings about the war by creating an opportunity for them to help. Her thoughts turned to World Vision Ignite—a partnership with Christian schools that challenges young people to be a part of making a difference.

Wiens wanted to help young people find a way to process their feelings about the war by creating an opportunity for them to help. Her thoughts turned to World Vision Ignite—a partnership with Christian schools that challenges young people to engage with the world and live out their faith. She drafted a letter to CESA schools, encouraging them to support families displaced by the conflict through Ignite.

Drew by one, CESA schools began to respond as students, families, and staff came forward to help. Other schools were stirred by the need as well. In all, students at Christian schools around the U.S. have raised more than $80,000 through World Vision to benefit children and families impacted by the war.

The funds raised by these schools are already being put to good use. World Vision’s emergency response programs meet physical needs by providing access to essentials like food and temporary shelter. And World Vision’s Child-Friendly Spaces help meet the emotional needs of children impacted by traumatic experiences. In these safe spaces, kids can play, engage in informal learning, and express their worries and fears to trained, caring staff.

At Park Street School, Taury and other students felt compelled to help ensure that kids from Ukraine were protected and cared for. They approached staff members, asking if they could help as a school.

One Park Street student, Eleanor, was stirred to action by seeing displaced children in the news. “I wanted to help because I was watching TV one night and I saw a lot of kids who had no place to go,” she says. “Kids who don’t have the privileges we do. Kids who have been separated from their families and have no safe places to go. It made me sad.”

“It would be hard to grow up in the middle of a war that you have to face,” says another student, Draper. “[I thought], we should raise money so they can have a safe way out of the country.”

So together, students and staff at Park Street created the “Children Helping Children” Ukraine Fund to support kids impacted by the war through World Vision. They held a walkathon that netted more than $6,000—far more than they anticipated.

“Students have not only met their goal, but have surpassed it six times over,” says Tracy Bradley, head of school for Park Street. “We are so proud of them, and so grateful for their hearts that are growing in empathy and compassion for others. We are excited to see the real-life leadership skills they are developing, and for the hope they’ve expressed in wanting to be a part of making a difference.”

“I see concerns for the future written across the wrinkled brows of men standing along dusty roads. I don’t know their unique situation but I carry my own. Grief binds us to each other, and my heart compels me to act. I’ve received comfort. Through giving, I can extend it as well. Sorrow does not leave us defenseless. In God’s goodness, He has wired us for resilience and offers us His gift of resurrection. Even in the face of unlikely odds, real change is possible. I enthusiastically support World Vision with my ‘widow’s offering’ (Mark 12:41-44) because I believe good things can grow even in the midst of suffering.”

“I don’t have the kind of budget I did before my husband’s death. I’ve had to tighten the purse strings in many areas of my life. But loss has taught me that generosity is the fruit of love, and I want love to always win. Through partnership with World Vision, I’ve seen God work in seemingly forgotten places, transforming them through global generosity into flourishing communities. World Vision’s work has allowed me to channel my pain into something beautiful, connect with the comfort I’ve received, and help affect real change in the face of uncontrollable tragedy.

I am convinced that little becomes much in the Master’s hands. Our small gifts given with great love multiply into work that heals and transforms those around us. My husband’s death broke my heart, but even in the midst of grief, I’m grateful that it broke my heart for the things of God.”

Clarissa Moll is an award-winning writer, podcaster, and author of “Beyond the Darkness: A Gentle Guide for Living After Grief and Thriving After Loss.” Connect with her at instagram.com/ clarissamoll.
When Champa recovered, she found a starting-level position with a fair-trade group. Her passion and diligence helped her advance, and six years later she is thriving as a skilled artisan. The fair-trade group has helped provide educational support for her children, while her consistent wages have helped her family rise out of debt.

Today, Champa is delighted to produce bags like the “All Things Possible” crossbody purse featured in our Gift Catalog by TV host and multimedia personality Tayshia Adams (below)—yours with a donation of $120 to the World Vision Fund. “I am inspired by the artists behind my crossbody purse, Champa, a mom of three, wife, and full-time fair-trade worker created the ‘All Things Possible’ crossbody tote. She has provided her family with a more financially stable life through determination, grit, and trust in God’s timing. Thank you for supporting World Vision and all the artists within the Gift Catalog this holiday season.”

When Samaira, 36, and her husband, Intizar, 44, (both above) began working in a fair-trade artisan group in India, it was the first step on their path out of poverty. Samaira had only been educated to eighth grade, and the family struggled after Intizar lost his wages to an unscrupulous business partner. Fortunately, Samaira had discovered a talent for basket-weaving. The two now work together, along with Intizar’s brothers and other family members, to create fair-trade sari bowls—earning wages that allow them to provide healthcare and education for their children.

Intizar builds a wire frame for the bowls while Samaira and other women in the family weave cloth strips from recycled saris around the wire. Samaira, a gifted seamstress, hopes to also create clothing someday. Through their reliable income, Samaira and Intizar have gradually grown their incomes while also supporting their extended family. They’ve even built a house and a workshop in their village.

Choose joy with your gift giving

Together, we can make lasting change possible. With your donation through the World Vision Fund, you’ll help to meet critical needs both today and tomorrow—equipping kids, families, and communities in need to build futures once thought unimaginable. You’ll be helping them tackle the big issues that keep them in poverty, equipping them to thrive with reliable access to basics like clean water, nutrition, healthcare, education, and more. And that’s a great way to share joy.

Give joy with these gifts! See the insert between pages 18 and 19 for more information.

Fair-trade handicrafts help women in India move out of poverty

Weaving sari bowls leads to sustainable income for husband-and-wife team

FOR 700 YEARS, THE PEOPLE of Le’s village have been known for their craft in sericulture—the rearing of silkworms. For centuries her village created silk clothing for the imperial Vietnamese court. But in recent years, people began to flock to cities in search of better income. Large silk manufacturers created competition that made sales more difficult. Le, now 60, learned the art of silk-making from her parents and grandparents when she was 10, and was among the last remaining artisans in her village. Though she thought about giving up the trade as well, she instead decided to differentiate her craft.

Through passion, talent, and creativity, Le improved the quality and smoothness of the silk she produced. She also found that creating scarves with different colors set her products apart, increasing their popularity throughout Viet Nam and improving sales significantly.

Le’s traditional village craft has been restored, and more and more families have returned to make silk scarves as the market has grown. Today Le continues to pass the skills she’s learned to others so they too can support their families.

For a $100 gift to the World Vision Fund you can add the “Wrapped in Peace” traditional silk scarf featured in our Gift Catalog by actor-director, and producer Melissa Joan Hart (above) to your wardrobe or that of someone you care about. “Give this gift, and your donation will help empower kids and families around the world out of poverty and into a better future,” says Melissa. “This is a little thing we can do this Christmas to make a big difference and spread joy.”
THE BIBLE IS FULL OF REFERENCES TO JOY.

In Luke chapter 2, Jesus’ birth was proclaimed as good news of great joy.

Before that, the prophets spoke of joy. My favorite is Isaiah 55:12—“You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.”

Mother Teresa said, “A joyful heart is the normal result of a heart burning with love.”

Joyful children have hearts that burn with love. Their pure pleasure in the smallest of things, that sudden burst of happiness, fills us with delight, too.

We asked children all over the world, “What is joy to you?” Here is what they said.  

—Jon Warren

Haiti

For 9-year-old Louise, 13-year-old Sophie, and 11-year-old Jilienne, joy is being back at school. “We are so happy to see our school rebuilt,” one girl shares. On August 14, 2021, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in Haiti caused widespread destruction affecting 800,000 people. World Vision responded immediately with life-saving food, clean water, and shelter, and helped support families through health, education, and child protection. Communities were equipped to repair infrastructure like the girls’ school.

Uganda

“My joy is playing soccer with my friends … It’s my best part of the day,” shares 10-year-old Timothy. He and his friends are elated after Timothy scores a penalty kick during a lunchtime soccer match.

El Salvador

“Joy is playing with the ball,” says Wilbur, who uses a wheelchair. He rolls the ball again and again, knocking down colorful pins while his mother observes in the background. On this day, Wilbur scores double—happily hitting plastic pins one by one and getting ready to go into the white tents where he’ll pick his World Vision sponsor through World Vision’s Chosen® program.

SCAN THE CODE to see more photos of joy.
Myanmar

For this family, joy is the animals that have transformed their lives. Ngwar Tar, 62, and his grandchildren, Ngwar Lay, 5, and Ngwar Sar, 3, enjoy laughing and caring for the goats they received from World Vision. “Every day, we wait for our grandfather to go to the goat farm, and then we accompany him,” says Ngwar Lay. “When we arrive, we cuddle and feed the goats. We really like playing with them. They are not afraid of us, and they also love us.”

Ghana

“Joy is bonke after COVID. No more staying at home,” says Kofi. His mother, a local farmer, has also felt a lift—out of poverty, that is! She’s been empowered through VisionFund, the microfinance subsidiary of World Vision, which empowers rural entrepreneurs with small loans that unlock the growth potential of their small businesses.

India is known for its diverse culture. For celebrations, women and girls dress up in colorful traditional attire, which is the most interesting element in all Indian events. I went to the community of Dhar and was lucky to meet 10-year-old sponsored child Varsha (left), and her friends Shivkanya, 11 (center), and Gareema, 11 (right), as they were practicing a cultural dance in their traditional costumes for a village function. I sat down to watch. Their smiles enhanced the beauty of their outfits, and their laughter highlighted their confidence. Their innocent giggles showed how happy children are when they have their freedom. These girls attend school together, but Dhar is a community where many girls drop out of school to be married. The community did not realize the serious harm that child marriage does until World Vision started working here. In partnership with the government, World Vision is working hard through various community activities to help parents and leaders prevent child marriage and keep their girls and boys in school.

How great it will be when every child around the world wears this same smile and shares this same laughter. That reminded me of my responsibility in supporting this as a program manager. My contribution might be the size of a drop in the ocean, but every drop matters.

Honduras

“Joy is learning how to write the number eight while singing songs to God,” says Dulce María, a 6-year-old sponsored child.
Donate at worldvision.org

Thanks to a generous donation from celebrity ambassadors Patricia Heaton and David Hunt, any gift given to the World Vision Fund on Giving Tuesday, November 29, will be MATCHED—empowering even more kids and families to create change that lasts.