



Capstone Ministries

Child and Family Restoration Outreach

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone" Psalm 118:22

A prayer letter from Dan and Patty Schmelzer, Kisumu, Kenya

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Nature or Nurture?

"Train a child in the way he should go..."

Nature vs. Nurture! It is the age old debate in human psychological perspectives. The crux of the debate revolves around whether one's basic nature can be influenced by outside stimuli or is fixed genetically. The debate also has spiritual implications. If we do not change and grow spiritually then the objectives of missionaries are flawed at the core.

God expressly commands us within the basic societal structure called "family" to teach our children. Even before the Word of God was written for posterity, it was the role of the head of the clan to pass along the historical events that demonstrated the true God as merciful, gracious and powerful. Reconciliation meals were a practice long before Jesus sat with his disciples and , "This is my body.....this is my blood."



Seven boys at the Transition Center!

At Capstone, we firmly believe in nurturing the emerging faith of boys who once called the streets their home. It is, in fact, the power that heals. We have recently upgraded our teaching materials complements of the mission team from Connecticut. Sent through a donation from Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis, MO, the curriculum designed for

Sunday School classes takes children through lessons in the Old and New Testaments and reveals Jesus as a Savior who knows them and loves them. In a recent lesson on Jesus healing of the lame man, Javan noted that even after he was healed, people around the man helped him to his feet. With some personal insight he commented, *"You see how even when God works miracles in us, we still need people to help us take the first step!"* What remarkable insight from a 12 year old former street boy. Learned theologians could not have said it better! We need each other to move forward.



Newton, David and Edwin show two of the SS. Lessons for Lent

As we reconnect former street boys with their families, the great challenge has more to do with what you don't see than what you do see. It is the heart and spirit of parents and guardians that need encouragement and strengthening. Poverty is much more debilitating in the mind than in the stomach. So not only do we minister to the heart and soul of the children while they stay at the Transition Center, we frequently encourage the family with visits that focus on instilling hope. When a family knows God's love as real, they see their future as promising. Time and time again we have seen poor families look poverty in the face, express unshakable faith and welcome their child back home again. That is why we believe in nurturing with spiritual truths of love and hope. We have seen the power of nurture!

Praises, Prayers and Recent News

1. **Pray** for the boys currently at the CTC: Eugene, Javan, Brian, Peter, Thomas, Kevin, James, Joseph, Frederick, Wilson.
2. **Pray** for Norman as he prepares to go home and enroll in school at the beginning of May. He has been stabilizing in our compound and getting some private tutoring to help him catch up to his grade level. One of the obstacles he faces is that he is larger in size than the other boys in his lower primary class. Pray also for his father Alex to develop his small scale business and farm. This provides food security. Often it is not the poverty itself that destroys families but rather how they handle the poverty. 90% of rural families live at or below the poverty line but not all suffer from a poverty of the heart and spirit. Dependency on outside assistance only fosters and exacerbates spirit poverty that allows hopelessness to replace drive and initiative.
3. Praise God for the productive trip of a mission team that visited from the New England District of LCMS. Led by Pastors Coffee and Yeadon, the team did SS Teachers seminars in two areas. Capstone welfare officers also attended and adapted the teaching techniques and materials thanks to a gift through Concordia Pub. House.
4. **Pray** for Dan as he returns to the US to attend the wedding of his son Christian Carl on April 25.
5. **Praise** God for our interim manager, Paul Gimode from Mbale. Paul agreed to take the post to help us organize ourselves better and make us more effective particularly at the CTC. Paul continues to work in this position and will also be traveling to Maryland in mid-April for a family wedding.
6. **Pray** for our donors who have seen beyond the poverty mentality that can become all too real when mortgages are overdue and housing values drop by 50%. To continue to give to God's work and consider the circumstances of those less fortunate is truly the work of the Spirit in God's people.

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Patty's Post It

This month Dan wrote about children and nature and nurture. What a wonderful sound I noticed today as I sat at our dining table working on some bookkeeping. I smiled at the sound of children playing outside...but wait, there is only one child at our house, Norman. Norman can make enough noise, sorry-sounds for three children. We call him whistler's brother, he recently learned to whistle and does so almost constantly and usually without a specific tune. He also loves to ride the bicycle. He races around our house and at every corner one can hear the "tires" squealing and then the "engine" accelerating. If Norman is not doing school work, or riding the bicycle then he is bouncing a basketball or sometimes dribbling it with his feet as if it's a soccer ball, he is really enjoying his newfound energy and seems to making up for lost time! He is very active! My favorite sound is the sound of his laughter. Norman will be leaving us soon to get back in school and stay with his dad. We'll really miss the sounds of a content, happy and healthy child outside in our yard.

Another sound I truly love is the sound of the birds.

There is a grove of bamboo in the neighbor's yard and is a nesting haven for the bright yellow weaver birds. In order to encourage the birds to come into our yard we made a feeder tray on a tall post. We have about six varieties of birds that come to feast on the seeds. Often when we look out we're disappointed that the feeder is void of bird activity. This is because our very adorable kitty, Kiboko (hippo in Kiswahili) has decided to take a nap under the feeder. One morning I looked out to find Kiboko sitting in the middle of the feeder tray patiently waiting for the birds to come. I have no idea how she got up there! We thought we would outsmart Kiboko by putting a second feeder at the other side of the yard. Now Kiboko spends the morning going back and forth between the two feeders watching, stalking and disturbing the birds.

As I sit and type this message I can hear the wonderful sound of rain falling outside. Thank God!! We have been praying for rain for more than a month. People living in the rural areas rely completely on the rain to grow their crops. If there is no rain then the seeds can't germinate and the food source is simply not there. The rains usually come around the first of March signaling the start of the growing season. As the time to plant approaches people can be seen working the soil in the small plots alongside their houses. Women, men and children can be seen digging and hoeing by hand. Most often women are working alone. Life is difficult for the common people in a third world country but the past year in Kenya has been exceptionally difficult. We realize the economic struggles our fellow Americans are facing in the states. It's difficult times when people are losing their homes, jobs are lost, once secure and thriving stores are closing; yet you, our faithful supporters continue to stand with us. We are so grateful to our Capstone supporters who continue to sacrifice for the street children in Kenya. God bless you and thank you!

Donations are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Key Ministries, Kenya Mission

As our partners we encourage you to spread the word about this ministry. Feel free to share this newsletter or write to Dan and Patty to add a friend to this mailing.