



Capstone Ministries



Restoring Children! Strengthening Families!

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

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

April, 2012 Volume 7 Issue 4

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The number of street boys reconciled with family by Capstone Ministries to date:

215



Check out Capstone on Facebook.



Capstone participates in Savemart/Lucky Supermarket's SHARES program in N. California. You only scan your card before purchasing your groceries and SaveMart donates 3% of your purchase. To date Savemart has given Capstone **\$2,741.72**...because of you.

"Breaking through..."

"I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have forgotten your commands" Psalm 119:176

How well do you receive correction for a mistake you have made? Not easy to have our black spots brought out into the light of day, is it? We rationalize, argue, defend and engage in counter attacks. If you are like me, there is a public and immediate response and then, after awhile... a private and reflective response to correction.

Love makes a difference. If I am shown love and respect, then it makes it easier to respond positively.

Looking through the iron bars of the Children's Remand Center in Kisumu



Psalm 119 is the longest of the Psalms. Reading it is humbling. It is written by a man who knew the errant ways of his heart, knew the pain and fruit of corrective discipline and knew the pain of slander and ridicule at the hands of the arrogant and self-righteous.

Trust makes a difference. If I know that you really care and will not be talking to my friends about my mistakes, I will feel less threatened, more secure and willing to open up, confess and share my flaws and mistakes.

Looking inside our heart is a very difficult exercise. Few do it honestly. Fewer do it willingly.



In verse 176, the author says, ***"I have strayed like a lost sheep."*** It is the very last verse in the psalm. We can really learn a lot about ourselves by the position of this verse. Even the most honest and humble of men, took 175 verses before he finally opened up and said, "It was me. I made the mistake. I strayed. I sinned." Gone is the obfuscation, defensive maneuvers, rationalization, blame shifting and denials. Lord, give us the strength to kneel by our beds and before your altar and confess honestly and openly. Give us loving and trusted friends who help us to kneel and confess.

cont. p.2

Patty's Post-It

If you're a recent visitor to Facebook, you have heard about the campaign called "Koni 2012" It details the actions of a man named Joseph Koni from Uganda who is the ring leader for the LRA, Lords Resistance Army. This group is reported to have abducted children and used them as child soldiers. If you watch CNN you've seen the commercials and maybe even the news documentaries about modern day slavery. These are disturbing and "hot" topics today.

In Kenya we are facing the same challenges; even in our work at Capstone we occasionally hear of such atrocities. Last year one of the children we have worked with ran back to the street. When that happens we look for the child and make attempts to talk and counsel the child. At the very least we monitor his whereabouts. It's usually pretty easy to find a child and know what's happening on the street. The kids on the street are open and share without reserve. Billy (not his real name) was back on the street. That was confirmed by our many informants but we had not been able to meet and counsel with him yet. Within a short time we received word that a man talked to Billy and convinced him to go with him to Nairobi. This alarmed us and his parents. We had no way to track this boy, all we could do was wait. Billy finally showed up at the Children's Remand Center and told his story. He indeed was picked up by an unknown man who took him to his home and used him as a house servant. As far as we could tell Billy was not sexually abused but that could have been next on the agenda of the abductor. Thankfully, Billy escaped. He was picked up by the police and taken to the Remand center in Nairobi, later he was transferred back to Kisumu. We praise God he was not abused beyond his captivity.

Another case recently involved a small boy who Capstone had returned to his home. He suddenly disappeared. We soon discovered he was "taken in" by a man who claimed to be his guardian. The Children's Department shared that this man was suspected of trafficking children. The boy is now back in the protective custody of the Children's Department. It is shocking to realize this happened in a rural village.

As I mentioned earlier the boys on the street are usually pretty open and free to share about their lives. Recently several of the boys shared that there were a couple of "white men" who used older street boys to "recruit" younger boys for sexual favors. We are aware this happens in the street among the boys, but it's more alarming to hear that it's being done as an organized crime. We take comfort in the knowledge that *"Where sin increased, grace increased all the more."* Romans 5:20

(cont. from p.1)

Breaking through the barriers to the human heart with a message of hope and forgiveness, reconciliation and forgiveness is the meaning of "ministry." It is the most important aspect of our work with street children. It is the key to a child's decision to go home; it provides the bridge to a restored family; it is the wind in the sails of the human heart.

Relationship building, therefore, is key to the work we do with children and families. Only a trusted friend gets close enough to effect change. That is why our staff meet with the boys on the street regularly.

Trust only comes where there is consistent love and attention. That is why our staff visit the Children's Remand Center every Monday to meet the children who have been taken there by the court, the police or city council guards.

Trust is built at the point of need. Effective ministry understands this. If you want to help someone, you have to begin from where they are, not where you want them to be. You encourage, love, listen, sympathize and take time. Then, after you have earned the right to be heard, you bring a message of forgiveness and hope that comes through repentance and reconciliation.

It has been seven years since we founded Capstone Ministries. It was built on the rocklike principle of family restoration. Early on we coined the 4 R's of this work: **Rescue, Redeem, Reconcile and Restore.** Building relationships with those who have strayed, wandered, or rebelled is the first step. And in each step, God leads with his grace and mercy.

Ambassador Program

We are introducing an Ambassador Program at Capstone Ministries. Ambassadors are selected to promote Capstone in their church and community in order to heighten awareness of the reconciliation work of Capstone Ministries. We are privileged to have a number of people around the country who have shared this ministry with others and we want to recognize, commend and encourage that faithfulness.

Each Ambassador will receive a lapel pin with the Capstone logo. It is pictured below. If you would like more information on becoming an Ambassador to your circle of friends, fellow club members, study group or church, just write to Dan and Patty.

CapstoneMinistries@gmail.com. To date we have eleven who have expressed an interest in serving as an ambassador in their congregation. Glory to God!



Luffa (Loofa, Lufah) Soap Project

One of the groups that grows moringa trees for Capstone also has a large group of disabled (physical and developmental) people as part of the group. We would like to help them become self-sustaining. Making soap is one avenue of income generating. The wife of one staff member (Benedict) already makes soap and is willing to train the group. The group also would grow and dry the luffa plant and add them to the soap. Watch for updates in the May newsletter. Feel free to write to us if you are interesting in supporting this empowerment.



Foot Pump Project

Capstone works with three women's groups to grow moringa trees. They benefit with a regular income from the leaves and Capstone benefits as we market moringa to the community. One of the obstacles to expanding this program is the dry season. Many in the Kajulu group are near a river however. We have discussed with them the idea of a water foot pump which will enable them to irrigate their crops and moringa trees regularly. I agreed to find a donor to assist them if they raised 50% of the cost. This is the type of development we love to get behind. We are still looking for a sponsor interested in this project. If you are interested, the partner cost would be only \$125. Just indicate this on the attached slip. Four pumps are needed but we will begin with one to establish a pattern of faithfulness. Write to us at CapstoneMinistries@gmail.com if are interested in sponsoring one or more foot pumps.



Supporting Capstone

You too can be an ongoing supporter of Capstone Ministries and bring real and lasting change to the street boys of Western Kenya.

Capstone Ministries is a proven effective program supported by churches, individuals and Rotary clubs in the US and Canada. Fill in the form on the last page of this newsletter and send your donation today.

Be a spokesperson for Capstone in your church, Bible study or club. Make copies of this newsletter and share them with your friends.

Every year we have specific ways you can target your donation. In the past year opportunities were available to support many projects. Currently we are promoting three ways you can help specifically: The Water Foot Pump Project, The Fund Raiser for a new pick up, and The Loofa Soap Project. We also encourage you to consider being a monthly donor to our ongoing work.

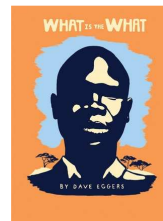
Feature: Moses Okoth

Moses was rescued from the streets of Kisumu on January 5, 2011. He spent the year at the Capstone Transition Center and was reconciled with his family in December of 2011 after the Capstone Camp. He consistently placed #1 or #2 in his 6th grade class at Vumale Primary while at the CTC. He is from Kajulu West in Kisumu. His father is a security guard at a hospital there. His mother runs a micro business. He is pictured below receiving an award as the best academic performer at the Camp and at his baptism on Friday at the Camp. Moses loves Math and football and wants to be a teacher.



Book Review: "What is the What"

By Dave Eggers



In a heartrending and astonishing novel, Eggers illuminates the history of the civil war in Sudan through the eyes of Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee now living in the United States. We follow his life as he's driven from his home as a boy and walks, with thousands of orphans, to Ethiopia, where he finds safety — for a time. Valentino's travels, truly Biblical in scope, bring him in contact with government soldiers, janjaweed-like militias, liberation rebels, hyenas and lions, disease and starvation — and a string of unexpected romances. Ultimately, Valentino finds safety in Kenya and, just after the millennium, is finally resettled in the United States, from where this novel is narrated. In this book, written with expansive humanity and surprising humor, we come to understand the nature of the conflicts in Sudan, the refugee experience in America, the dreams of the Dinka people, and the challenge one indomitable man faces in a world collapsing around him.

Puppet Training for Counseling

Ongoing "capacity building" is critical for staff development. With this in mind we are planning on a training day in July to give our staff another tool in counseling with our boys. A program called "PIP" trains those who work with vulnerable children using the familiar Lego "people of the world" to allow children to identify conflicts and trauma in their life. Dr. Charlotte Koff from the USA does the training.



Prayers, Praises

1. Pray for two very special people diagnosed with cancer: Steve Nolan and Kathy Loschke. Steve will have surgery to remove a small cancerous spot on his forehead. Kathy has been battling cancer for some time. Her husband Pat was a team member who visited Capstone a few years ago. Pray for God's grace and healing touch for both Kathy and Steve.

2. Capstone will hold a mentoring day for our four high school boys on April 16. Pray for safe travel. Staff and Kenyan board members will encourage the boys and give them practical advice on success in high school and in life.

3. Pray for all the Ambassadors of Capstone who spread the word in their churches.

4. Praise for Capstone's application as a 501c3 with the IRS has been approved. Capstone is now an independent non-profit organization.

5. Thanksgiving that welfare officer Benedict was not injured when he was involved in an accident in a matatu (public transport).

6. In April-May Patty will be visiting family in California.

7. Praise that we have the opportunity to share the vision of Capstone with Evergreen Lutheran, Evergreen, CO; Bethlehem Lutheran, Lakewood, CO; and Trinity Lutheran, Toledo, Ohio. Pray for new opportunities to present Capstone to new congregations during the fall of 2012. Dan and Patty are planning their time in the states for Sept-November. If your church would like to hear more about Capstone from Dan and Patty you are welcome to write and invite them to visit your church. CapstoneMinistries@gmail.com

8. One of the items to be considered in long term planning is having an experienced missionary couple to fill in for Dan and Patty so that they both can visit the states together for fund raising. Pray that this process is clear and certain.

9. Praise that our application for a grant through LWML Kansas District was approved. Much thanks to Ann Jedele who championed this application. Ann and Chuck visited Capstone two years ago. The grant will provide office equipment.

Visiting the USA

We are planning a visit to the US this fall from Sept-November. We will be in the Midwest from mid-Sept to mid Oct and will be introducing new churches to Capstone. From mid-Oct. to the end of November we will be in churches in New England.

If you are interested in having us visit your area, just send us an email.

Fund Raiser for a new pickup

For some time, our current truck which we use to move around Kisumu has begun to show its age. We received this truck through a grant from Evergreen Rotary Club back in 2006 so it has served us well these six years.

Recently a supporter of Capstone made a challenge to our donor base: Raise the funds to upgrade the truck and I'll match all gifts up to \$10,000. The deadline for this matching challenge is the end of June. If you would like to consider contributing to this non-budget item, indicate so on the donor slip on p. 4. You may also write our Capstone Board Chairman in the US for more information on this fund raiser. He is Lee Kucker and his email is kucker43@gmail.com

Photo of the Month



Appropriately named "Flame Tree"

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____ (Include if you are not currently receiving the newsletter via email)

Donation Amount: _____

Designation if other than operational budget: _____

Make checks payable to Capstone Ministries. All donations are tax deductible.

CapstoneMinistries@gmail.com

Send to: **Capstone Ministries, P.O. Box 2080, Oakdale, CA 95361**

(Please cut and include with your donation)