



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

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

337

4 went home in January



Check out Capstone on Facebook.



You can donate a portion of your premium for a policy from Thrivent Insurance. Learn more about steps you need to take to ensure you can take full advantage of this program and continue your support of Capstone Ministries through this program. Step by step procedure given on p. 4

The Art of Helping

"How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"
"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil."
Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few"

Knowing how to help people in need is easy and simple if you only care about your good feeling in helping. If you are only concerned about the needs of today for the individual, then just pull out your wallet and give. If you don't care about the importance of local community/family/church support for the needy, then just circumvent those avenues and give. If the needy person's faith and trust in God as the provider of all good things is down the list on your priorities, then jump in with both feet and do the needful. However, if you have long term outcome goals for those you want to help, you want to build up families and community to help each other and you believe that the spiritual dynamic of faith and trust in God is more important than today's full belly, then you have a complicated issue on your hands. Anyone who has tried to help the needy over a period of time in the same locale knows this all too well.

The widow of a prophet in II Kings 4 is in dire need. Her husband has died. She has mounting debts. The creditors are threatening to arrest her two sons. Plus she has "nothing" in her house. She brings her problem to the right place. To Elisha the prophet. But after she explains her drastic state, Elisha asks her two very important questions: 1. What do you want me to do? 2. What do you have in your house? These are spiritually significant questions from Elisha. As God's prophet, Elisha speaks for God himself. So when he asks how does she want him to help, he is really saying, "How do you want God to help you?" His second question is curious. He seems to be redirecting the women away from what has been taken from her to what she still has. In today's parlance of economic/spiritual development, we might say he is asking about her "locally available materials." For some reason, the widow skips over the first question and answers the second one. Perhaps as a prophet's wife, she knows that God already knows her needs. Her answer tells us something about the issues she is wrestling with. She is very discouraged by the events in her life. She is in mourning for her husband, a man of God. And now she discovers that he wasn't very good in planning for their future. Behind him he has left a debtors trail of bills. And now her sons are about to be arrested and thrown in debtors prison. And while we sympathize with her situation and certainly fund raisers have been organized for less severe situations today, we must admit that she is pre-occupied with what has been taken



Berline (right) consults with Brian Ngesa and his mother about the sponsorship for school.



Five of the boys who are headed to high school in a few short weeks share before the orientation meeting begins.

Photo of the Month

On our way back to Kenya in December, we stopped in Germany to look into our ancestral roots. This is the town that Dan's great grandfather called home before coming to the US to study to be a pastor. It is the town of Eschenau in the south-west part of Germany known for producing good grapes for wine. In fact the Albrecht family (Dan's mother's maiden name) owned a winery in this town for 400 years and recently sold it to a larger winery.



from her. She has little, if any, appreciation for what she has. That shift from faith to fear, from God's power and grace to her sorrow and measly resources is destroying her. This is why Elisha asks her about what she has. These are the tough questions that experienced and bold pastors ask. They ask because they really do care more about people than problems. Problems come and go. They are temporary. People are eternal.

Elisha sends the woman into her community to raise the necessary raw materials needed: empty jars. And he tells her not to stop at just a few. From the end of the story we learn why. It has nothing to do with the number of jars but rather her faith as she knocks on door after door and reminds herself: "God can do anything! I believe therefore I knock! Each neighbor she talks to lifts her spirit and her gaze from her own feet, her own problems, to her Lord!"

That's a good lesson for us don't you think? We too tend to allow ourselves to wallow in our own self-pity when challenges come. It is important to have someone in our life who is bold enough to tell us to get up and get out there! God has not left you! In fact he is about to do something amazing! Trust him!



**The six boys who passed their 8th grade exams and qualified for sponsorship for high school.
Back: Franklin, Brian, (Patty), Crispin.
Front row: Brian, Eddyson, Richard.**

At Capstone we apply these same principles of faith-walk to helping families living in circumstances not much different from this widow. We ask parents of boys who have finished 8th grade to raise the necessary money to support their boy's needs as they prepare to go to secondary boarding school. Their Capstone scholarship provides only school fees and a uniform. Many raise the necessary things required by asking for help from neighbors, family members and their church. In a way it is like Elisha saying, *"Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars!"* This helps to build community and church support for families. But more importantly it allows, involves, and restores faith and hope in the hearts of families in need.

Christmas Gifts for Needy Families

Every December Capstone staff sits and review all the families where we have reconciled a former street boy. Some of these families face financial struggles few of us can identify with. Many only take two meals a day and often breakfast is just tea.

The long term solutions cannot be attained with short term fixes like hand-outs. Frequently the circumstance is complicated by poor farming, lack of industriousness, laziness, moral compromise and family dysfunction. To simply give money to families in such circumstances not only is short sighted but creates dependency and encourages the bad activities one is trying to work to remove. Experience has taught us that building self-reliance, parental responsibility and spiritual development takes time, patience and persistence. Capstone staff regularly make follow up visits on all boys who are reconciled with family. This is the very intent of those visits and consultations. Families are also encouraged to attend one of the 13 Bible study groups organized by Pastors Isaiah and Zadok in the areas within and outside of Kisumu. Progress has been made, people are growing and the fruits of faith are ripening.

Once a year, we decide to give a one-time gift of simple foods and supplies for the poorest of the poor families we work with. It is an expression of the love of God in sending Jesus Christ. We go to great lengths to remind families who receive these gifts that we still want them to be responsible for the regular upkeep of their families. However, in the spirit of Christmas, we want them to have a special meal as they remember the birth of Jesus.



Listening to the feedback from the recipients through our staff is deeply moving. Frequently our staff reports that families are moved to tears by this gesture. Our staff is thanked profusely by this generous gift and many tell them they have been praying that God would provide a Christmas meal for them. Imagine then how the family feels when a Capstone staff shows up at their door with a bag full of food stuffs for Christmas. That is Christmas joy!

Some thankful families



ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS?

If so, it is easy to designate your Thrivent Choice dollars for the work of the Capstone Ministries!

Online:

Step 1 – Visit **Thrivent.com/thriventchoice**.

Step 2 – Click on **“log in”** at the top right of your screen & enter your MyThrivent user ID & password.

(If you haven't registered on Thrivent.com, click on **“register now”** to register for full access.)

Step 3 – Look for your designated Choice Dollars on the right side of the screen.

Step 4 – Click on **“Direct Choice Dollars”** on the Thrivent Choice box on your MyThrivent page.

Step 5 – Search the catalog of organizations to find and select the “Capstone Ministries”

Step 6 – Click on **“Direct Choice Dollars Now”** to direct your designated Choice Dollars to benefit the reconciliation of street children with God and family!

By phone:

Step 1 – Call **1-800-847-4836** and when prompted, say, **“Thrivent Choice.”**

Step 2 – When prompted, say, **“Choice Dollars.”**

Step 3 – Say or enter your Social Security number.

Step 4 – **Press 1** to direct Choice Dollars or **press 2** to hear the Thrivent Choice program terms and conditions.

Step 5 – A representative will then work with you to direct Choice Dollars for Capstone Ministries.

Prayers, Praise and News

1. Praise for the safe return of Dan and Patty to Kisumu. They had been traveling and fund raising in New England, Virginia, South Carolina and California from Oct.- Dec. with a brief vacation in Germany before returning to Kenya on Christmas Eve.

2. Thanksgiving for Derek and Penny Oliver who filled in while Dan and Patty were traveling.

3. Below are the of visits Dan and Patty made Sept-Dec this year

Sept. 6 – Christ Lutheran, Scituate, MA

Sept. 13 –Redeemer Lutheran, Gorham, ME

Sept. 15 –Falmouth Rotary Club, Falmouth, MA

Sept. 16 –Scituate Rotary Club, Scituate, MA

Sept. 20 –Lutheran Church of the Savior, Bedford, MA

Sept. 25-27 –Immanuel Lutheran, Danbury, CT

Oct. 3 Shepherd of the Hills, Morris, CT

Oct. 4 –St. Paul's Lutheran, New Hartford, CT

Oct. 11 –Fairfax Community Church, Fairfax, VI

Oct. 18 –Island Lutheran, Hilton Head Island, SC

Oct. 25 –Our Savior Lutheran, S. Windsor, CT

Oct. 25-27 NED Pastor/Teacher Conf, Enfield, CT

Nov. 1 –Peace Lutheran, Fresno, CA

Nov. 8 –St. Peter's Lutheran, Elk Grove, CA

Nov. 15 –St. Peter's Lutheran, Lodi, CA

Nov. 22 –Grace Lutheran, Modesto, CA

Nov. 25 – United Lutheran, Manteca, CA

Nov. 29 –Our Saviour's Lutheran, Patterson, CA

Dec. 6 –St. Andrew's Lutheran, Stockton, CA

Donation: For Capstone & Dan and Patty Support

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Address _____ City _____

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Donation Amount: _____

Specific Designation? _____

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