



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:

376



Check out Capstone on Facebook.



“SHARES” CARD HOLDERS

For those in California who use the “Shares Card” with Savemart supermarket, the program has changed to an E-Scrip Program. Easy instructions on p. 3

“I am because we are”

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts. Teach them to your children” Deuteronomy 11:18,19

“I was feeling like....I mean, it is like my heart wanted something, then...I needed something and finally got it” These are the words of Maureen, a young orphan in Kenya and the subject of a video produced by Unicef and The Better Care Network.

At the death of her mother, Maureen was taken to live in a children’s home yet she often asked herself questions about why she was there. She reflects early in the video: *“I need personal time where I ask myself questions: Why I came here, why my mother had to die and why my father is mad and why do I live in a children’s home?”* The touching video is more than an anecdotal analysis of an individual child’s experience. It cites that there is a growing understanding that institutions are not the place for a child to grow up. Katherine Kimotho from Unicef states, *“As children grow up in institutions they do not develop personal attachment and they lack a sense of belonging.”*

Capstone has learned over the years that this belonging is not only true because God designed families this way but particularly in a culture that is clan oriented like Kenya, this belonging extends beyond the immediate family to the surrounding community as well. There is a strong supportive connection for children that is lacking in institutional care. In Kenya there is a saying that comes from an old Bantu expression: *“I am because we are!”* This saying expresses the strong bond of community and the interdependence that cares for all members of its society.

However, not all mission endeavors understand just how easily this interdependence—which is really an expression of the second table of God’s law: *“Love your neighbor as yourself”*—can be undermined by good intentions. Too often missiology does not prioritize the critical need for Kenyans themselves to help one another and trust in God instead of waiting for and depending on *“the white visitor.”*

“In the children’s home I really lacked that emotional bond where a mother or a father gives to their kids....that was something I really missed and I never knew how I would get it,” states Samora in the video. Samora grew up in a children’s home. Time and time again we have witnessed this critical developmental role of the family for reunited street boys and how devastating it is for those who don’t get it.

The goal of reconciliation is the restoration of this natural bond and the love that naturally flows from it. This is why Capstone staff visit homes frequently of reconciled boys: to encourage, correct and direct dysfunctional families. It is not our intention to provide financial assistance. Such hand-outs in a non-emergency situation do not allow

(cont. from p. 1) the head of the household to change irresponsible behavior and enjoy the satisfaction of providing for one's own family. One can easily and unknowingly replace the critical role of the father in a rural home just by handing out money or food stuffs.

In Ghana, there has been an awakening to the importance of family. A recently passed initiative called the Care Reform Initiative has been a step forward to reuniting children in orphanages with family members and at the date of the video, 1055 children have been reunited. *"We believe that every child must be given the opportunity to live and grow within the family setting"* states Iddris Abdullah, Unicef Ghana Child Protection Officer.

The video concludes with Maureen successfully reuniting with her grandparents. The scene of a grandmother smiling and singing as she sees her grandchildren come home is something Capstone staff has witnessed again and again. Of course not every reconciliation is as smooth as the one portrayed in this touching video. There are often behavioral issues that need counseling. But as our staff become close confidants of the family there is a growing willingness to listen and change. Sometimes it takes years. There is no timetable to the Spirit's work. God only asks that we be faithful. He is the real change agent at Capstone.

You can learn a lot about the dynamics of rural Kenyan life by listening to the elderly in the community. The wise old grandmother speaks volumes when she says, *"When they are with me, everyone in the community is here to help me raise them."* And Maureen says it all when she expresses her joy to be at home with her grandparents, *"At home I get love from my grandparents and I love them back!"*

*Please take a moment, listen and watch this video on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CNiekwAHy0>

Photos of the month:



Flame Tree outside our compound



Steve Biko with Patty. Steve is a former street boy now successful in producing and selling crafts in the Masai market.

Update on Dan's bout with infection

Nov. 21, Dan was admitted to Aga Khan Hospital and had surgery on his right arm the same day. Surgeon Okumu removed a cellulitis infection on his elbow and kept him for four days as the infection subsided slowly. Friday he returned home and is recovering. As of this writing I (Dan) am at about 90% again with just a general weakness remaining. Prayers are welcome and gratefully accepted.

Board Member Peter Kelm battling cancer

Please keep Pastor Peter, Angie and his family in your prayers. Peter serves at First Immanuel in Cedarburg, Wis and recently joined the Capstone Board. This is his second battle with cancer and the oncologists are trying to find the right cocktail of drugs to defeat the cancer. Below: Pastor Peter, Angie and family on a recent trip to Door County. Please keep them in your prayers!



Others for your prayers: Eunice, Chrysta, Josie, Jim, Rob, Dave, Dawn, Linda, Jenny,



Dan had a chance to visit a former student Blake Smith of Grace Lutheran School, Modesto, Ca. Blake now pitches for the Chicago White Sox. They met before a game in September at U.S. Cellular Field. Dan taught Blake in 5th grade

Do you use the “Shares” Savemart card when shopping?

Attention: Program Change

The Shares card is being changed to an e-scrip program. Savemart has made it easy for you to make this change from scanning your card. Here are the easy steps the next time you are shopping in Savemart in California or Nevada:

It’s as simple as providing your phone number at checkout:

1. Sign up for the NEW* Shares program by registering your phone number or Save Smart Rewards Card with eScrip.
2. *You will no longer use your S.H.A.R.E.S. card (effective April 1, 2016). Register your phone or your Save Smart Rewards card number (this will not be your S.H.A.R.E.S. card)
3. Shop at Save Mart Supermarkets and provide your registered phone number or card at checkout.

You can also go to the follow web address to make the switch:

<http://www.escrip.com/merchants/identity/savemart/index.jsp>

Donation: For Capstone and support for Dan & Patty

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Donation Amount _____

Designation? _____

New Phones for Capstone staff

Through a grant from Kansas LWML, we were able to purchase new iPhone 4s for the Capstone field workers. Having a reliable smart phone with a good camera has many practical advantages for our staff. They no longer have to carry a separate camera to take update pictures from the field. They can communicate with each other as they engage in field work through an “APP” called “WhatsApp” without incurring text charges. And often when copies of documents are needed for the office, they can take a picture of the document in the field and print it directly to the office wi-fi enabled printer. We thank Capstone Board member Ann Jedele for facilitating this grant with the Kansas LWML. This is the second grant from Kansas LWML.



Patty with Capstone field workers proudly displaying their new phones!

High School Sponsorship Opportunity

In the next few days we will have the results of the boys who took their final Grade 8 exams. We will then know how many qualified for the Capstone High School Sponsorship program. If you are interesting in sponsoring a High School student for his four years, please write to us immediately. The fees are \$650 per year for the four years. You will be notified as soon as we have the results of the tests. God bless you for your generosity in advance.

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 12 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!

You can assist a family for a gift of \$25. per family. We intend to distribute to approximately 25 families during the week before Christmas. What a nice way to show the love of Jesus and share from the bounty the Lord has provided! We encourage you to participate. On this page you will find pictures from the distribution last year. You can send your gift to the same address on p. 3 and you're your intention on the check. God bless you and Merry Christmas!

