



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:

460

9 went home May
 (See page 3 photos)



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.

"Reconciling Girls"

"He took her by the hand and said to her 'Talitha Koum!' (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!") Mark 5:41

What about the girls? This is usually the first question we receive when we speak of the work of Capstone Ministries in a new church. The main focus of Capstone Ministries is on the reconciliation of young boys on the streets of Kisumu, Kenya.

During the first few days of May, the staff of Capstone reconciled two young girls on the street: Sandra and Jennifer.



Sandra Auma



Jennifer Akinyi

It is rare for a young girl to be found on the street. I would estimate that somewhere around 98% of children on the street are young boys. There are a number of reasons for this. Some of these reasons are cultural and others have to do with the difference between boys and girls.

First, Kenyans see girls as much more vulnerable and subject to abuse than boys. It is common for ordinary good Samaritans to ask a girl who seems to be lost, how she came to be in that situation. Many will take steps of intervention personally to make sure a girl does not remain in that on the street. As a result, our staff, who are on the street every day will seldom come across a vulnerable girl. So it was very unique for them to find two girls on the same day. Their circumstances are personal and not something I wish to share here but suffice it to say that circumstances at home created the challenges that lead them to run away. After counseling with the families and the girls, both are now home and in school.

There are also a number of cultural reasons why a girl will not be found on the street. Many young poor girls in rural areas will be employed as house help in her home area, especially if she does not

TIK – This is Kenya

This is a new column and I hope you enjoy it. It will focus on our unique experiences in Kenya that just become part of living here.

Security

It is quite common in a third world country for security to be a big concern. Due to the level of poverty and the perception that *wazungu* (white people) have money, petty crime, pick pocketing and robbery can be common. We take extra precautions that might seem unusual to someone from the US but for us it is just part of the routine and living environment.

Security is 90% perception in my opinion. We take visible steps to enhance the real and perceived signs of security. At our home for example, we live in a compound surrounded by 10' cement walls. On top of those walls we have what we call "poor man's razor wire." Broken glass has been cemented onto the top of the wall. Inside the compound we have security lights that surround our house and a night guard who patrols throughout the night. We also have two dogs, a German Shepherd and a Rottweiler, who add an extra measure of protection. Additionally we have engaged a security company who has supplied us with portable panic buttons that will signal a patrol car that will arrive within moments to investigate the cause of the alarm.

Communication

Most Kenyans speak at least three languages: English, Kiswahili and their tribal mother tongue. Patty and do speak a little bit of Swahili but our Luo is limited to words of greeting.

However communication is not just about language; it is even more so about being understood. Americans who are not exposed to foreign accents have difficulty understanding Kenyan English. Believe me, Kenyans have the same issues with fast talking Americans who use slang and often abbreviate their words. Being patient and making every effort to adjust one's speaking patterns is critical to communication. This is why I try to mimic Kenyan speech patterns in every day conversation and especially in preaching.

It is important to avoid slang and illustrative American expressions that are not common to Kenyan life. This can often take years to develop as second nature.

qualify for secondary school. Girls also will marry younger than young men and, unfortunately, in a country where polygamy is still common especially in rural areas, young girls will often be taken as a second or third wife. As a result they will not be found in the street. Girls also bring a family a dowry from the husband and as such there is actually a monetary incentive for families to make sure their girls stay at home.

Rural girls also tend to be more submissive in Kenya as well and boys more rebellious, independent and adventurous. This general personality and cultural trait creates an atmosphere where peer pressure among boys can lead to choices that lead them away from their family.

The circumstances that are evident when a girl runs away tend to be much more serious and often involve the vulnerability of her gender. This makes reconciliation issues much more unique and severe. Our staff is not as experienced in these areas and usually if we find a girl in such a situation, our staff will contact another organization that specializes in these specific areas. However in the cases of Sandra and Jennifer, the situation was not so serious, in fact the issues had more to do with the parents involved than the girls. As a result our staff felt they could handle the families' dysfunction in the same way as they would approach them if it was their son who ran away.

I chose the Scripture from Mark's Gospel because of the Aramaic word that Jesus uses in resurrecting the young girl. In Aramaic, the language Jesus and the disciples would have spoken in their everyday lives, the word "talitha" is the feminine form of "tela." This Aramaic word not only refers to a young girl or boy, its roots refer to a young lamb that has been injured. The vulnerable state of the animal, hurting and in need of special treatment, care and protection seems to be the point of comparison that led to a young child being referred to with this Aramaic word. Jesus, recognizing this young girl needed special care and protection, speaks a word and brings about the "healing" she needed. To Jesus, death is nothing more than an injury and by his word, he brings the restoration of life.

As a footnote, in another instance, Jesus placed a child (we are not told whether it was a boy or girl) in the midst of the disciples and told them they need to change and become like little children. We usually assume Jesus was talking about the innocence and trusting nature of a child but if Jesus used the word "tela", in referring to the child, he may also have been stressing that disciples of Jesus need to recognize their own wounded condition who need to seek Jesus for healing.

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 following 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 Rescues

Capstone has rescued and reconciled at home nine boys and girls in May 2018. They are pictured below. L-R beginning at the top:



Sandra Auma #452



Jennifer Akinyi #453



Kevin Musinga #454



Peter Orieno #455



Jerod Obonyo #456



Clinton Otieno #457



Kevin Ochieng #458



Godwin Odhiambo #459



Lickens Oluoch #460

The Face of Reconciliation

Reconciliation between us and God is an event. It took place once and for all time on Calvary. However reconciliation between people is a process and takes patience, persistence and faith.

I am sure if you have listened to us present Capstone at your church or function, you have heard us say those three sentences. The lead article dealt with the complicated nature of reconciliation and its spiritual components. Reconciliation also has what one might call sociological components.

Capstone is involved in enhancing stability for boys reconciled with their families with specific projects. In this article I wanted to highlight some of those supplementary projects.

High Flyer Project

A child who is in school is automatically removed from temptations that can lure him into the street. Succeeding in school enhances self-esteem and brings hope for a brighter future. Once a child reaches Grade 7, Capstone provides a study aid called a “High Flyer.” It is a book that gives overview lessons on the subjects tested in school. Preparation for the KCPE exam in 8th grade is a long process and already in 7th grade, serious pupils are preparing for this 3 day exam. The High Flyer prepares pupils for this exam. Currently Capstone provides the “High Flyer” for eight 7th grade pupils and ten 8th grade pupils. We have seen a significant improvement in exam results since we have started this project.

Raston Okungu with his High Flyer he will use to prepare for his Primary School exams!



Lunch Project

Food insecurity can be a push factor for some boys who come from poor rural homes. Tales of white people handing out food in Kisumu can fill a child’s mind with all sorts of ideas when his stomach is empty. It is a reality that in some rural families, daily bread is not always automatic. For this reason Capstone does assist in exceptional situations where self-reliance may take time to develop. Currently 10 families are helped by this project. Food is always given in kind directly to the school to remove any temptation by the family to spend the cash on something else. The idea is: if a child knows he will get food every day in school, he will be less tempted to run away from home for lack of food. Currently we are helping 4 boys with lunch.

School Uniform Project

The sooner a child can be enrolled in school, the more stable he will be at home. The phrase: “*Idle hands are the devil’s workshop,*” is really true when it comes to a child in a rural home, especially when there are tempting distractions. Normally we encourage parents to provide a school uniform for their child in order to enroll him in school. In some circumstances where financial issue will delay a child’s enrollment, Capstone will provide the basic uniform and ask the parents to buy the extras like a “sport kit” as they are able. Currently 23 children have received a uniform this year.

John Onyango in his new school uniform

