



# 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 since  
2005

# 551

***59 went home in  
2019***



Check out Capstone  
on Facebook.



Capstone Ministries is an RSO of the LC-  
MS (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)

## "2019 In Review"

***"Remember Him, before the silver cord is severed, or the gold bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring or the wheel broken at the well and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." Ecclesiastes 12:6***

Wise words from Solomon. Sharp metaphors concerning the process of aging and passing the milestones along the way. It is January 1, 2020. A new year, a new decade is upon us. It is good to remember what we are: spirit and dust. By remembering our Creator and what he has accomplished through us, our hearts are filled with humility and thanksgiving. That is the purpose of "remembering." And so we look back at 2019 and remember what the Lord has called us to in Capstone Ministries and give thanks.

At the heart of Capstone Ministries is the rescue and reconciliation of street children in Kisumu. In 2019, 59 children were rescued from the streets of Kisumu. The ones from August and September are pictured at the end of this newsletter.

### RETREAT

Each March we take our staff on retreat. It is a time of rest, refreshment and team building. This year we went to the Diguna Retreat Center in the Nandi Hills outside Kisumu. It is run by a German couple and there is plenty of open space for thinking, praying and reflecting. The team went on hikes in the rocky hills surrounding the center. Here they are mugging for the camera.



## MENTORING

In April, the secondary school sponsored boys attend a two day mentoring seminar put on by Capstone staff. We ask “old boys” who have graduated to come and give their testimonies and act as mentors to the H.S. boys. This year Stephen and Maxwell came and gave excellent talks to the group. Steve is in University and Maxwell has become quite an artist, illustrated two books for me. Here is Steve giving a one on one talk with Brian Poi.



The graduates act as big brothers to their younger counterparts, often touch on very practical issues like peer pressure and study habits.

The Capstone staff also gives group counseling as well as does an intensive review of each student’s progress.

## GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Every two years the small group Bible studies gather together for a joint meeting. It is a time of fellowship, testimonies, fellowship and food (which we call “swallowship”. This year there were some very moving and touching testimonies as parents willingly shared their sorrows and joys together, under the banner and freedom of the Word.

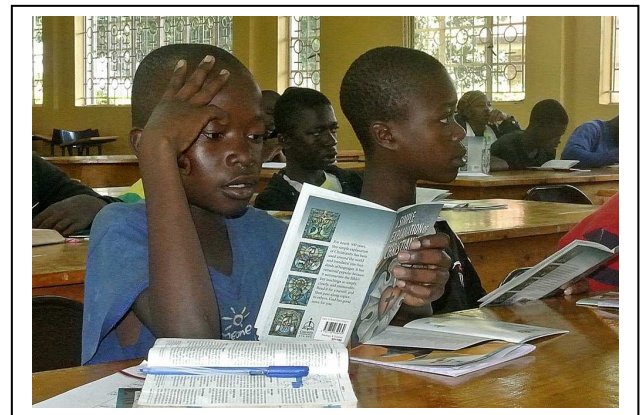


I am happy to report that since the joint group meeting; we have added another 3 small groups and now have 14.

## CAPSTONE CAMP

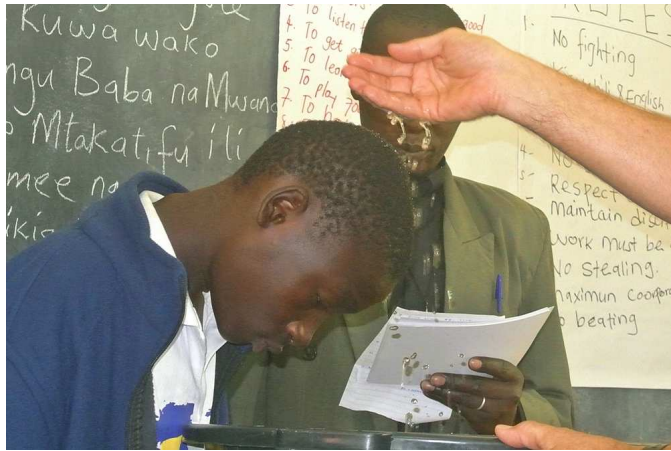
Capstone Camp is one of the highlights of the year. It is an opportunity for the staff to interact intensively with 20 primary school boys who have been rescued in the last year. In addition we also invited 10 secondary school boys to attend and act as mentors for the primary age boys. We ended up with 28 in attendance at the facility we have used for the last five years: KIST (Kima International School of Theology) This institution, run by the Church of God in Kenya, has allowed us to use the dorms, dining hall, missionary house, playing grounds and classrooms for Capstone Camp.

During camp, which runs from Sunday to Sat in early August, the boys receive catechetical instruction in the chief parts of Luther’s Small Catechism. This includes the 10 Commandments, Lord’s Prayer, Baptism and Confession.



This activity takes place early each morning. In the late morning there are group discussions regarding issues that plague many rural Kenyan families ranging from health and hygiene, alcoholism, peer pressure, and cheating in school. The format the staff follows is called CHE (Community Health & Evangelism) Each discussion is introduced with a “starter” or a small drama put on impromptu by the boys. It is a time of good humor followed by serious discussions.





The week concludes with Baptismal ceremony for the boys who have been instructed and counseling on Baptism. This year 11 boys were baptized. It is the one function in which I (Dan) participate. The Baptismal ceremony is introduced with a telling of the Parable of the Prodigal set in the context of rural Kenya. The boys play the parts of the father, the two sons, the fair-weather friends of the Prodigal and the pigs.

### **ORIENTATION**

In early December, Capstone staff met with those boys and a girl, along with their parents for orientation into the scholarship program of Capstone. Of the 12 boys who sat for their exams, 11 of them qualified for the scholarship. Before they can receive the scholarship, they must agree to the stipulations and requirements. Parents must make the first step and provide all the needed requirements for boarding school. All 11 students along with the parents attended and agreed. This is a huge step forward for Capstone. It is also testimony to the effectiveness of the lunch and High Flyer projects of Capstone which provide school lunch for needy families and a test prep book for all 7 & 8 grade pupils.



### **CHRISTMAS GIFT**

Capstone staff works hard each week, doing follow-up visits on the families of a reconciled boy (or girl). The intention of these follow-up visits is to counsel the family concerning parenting, spiritual welfare and education. Parental neglect is a real problem in Kenya. Often well intentioned programs from abroad have allowed parents to lean on hand-outs instead of taking responsibility and working hard to support their families. In this context, Capstone takes great care to guard against encouraging dependency or enabling the bad habits of parents. It is at Christmas that begging often increases. A missionary who has spent any amount of time in East Africa has heard the line, from a beggar "Where's my Christmas?"

For this reason, the staff meets and chooses 30 of the neediest families they work with for the purpose of giving them a "Christmas package." The package is very practical and includes food items, soap and sweets for the kids.

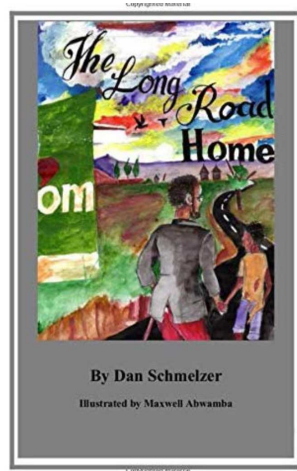




## THE LONG ROAD HOME

I wrote and published a new book on life in rural Kenya this year. It is a story set in Katito, a small village southwest of Kisumu on the Kanu Plain. It is a story of challenges, failures and reconciliation. If you are a supporter of Capstone Ministries, this is a must read.

The book is illustrated by a former street boy, Maxwell Abwamba, pictured below. It is available on Amazon.



## BOARD RETREAT

This year the board of Capstone met in Tennessee at a house on the Cumberland Plateau east of Nashville for two days of fellowship and discussion about Capstone.

It was a wonderful opportunity for the board to get to know one another and talk about the serious matters of mission.



## THANKSGIVING

We are most grateful for your support of Capstone Ministries during 2019. May God richly bless you in 2020.

## Rescues August-September, 2019

They are, in order: Diana, Matthews, Bob, Livingston, Charles, Shadrack, Calvin, Fidel, Crispin, Junior, Margarete, Edwin, Newton, Tony, David, Nicholas, Moses, Josiah. Oct., Nov., Dec. coming next month.

