



Capstone Ministries

Child and Family Restoration Outreach

"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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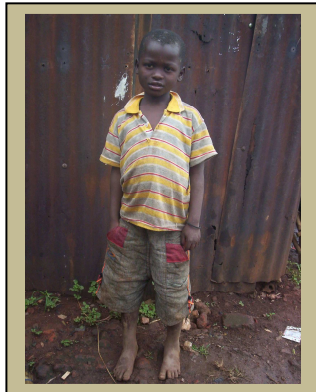
A Restored Stone; A Capstone!

"Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?...What are they building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones." Nehemiah 4:2,3

Every community has one! In every organization you will find one! Even in the church, they are there! Naysayers. Those who see the glass perpetually half empty, no matter how full it is. Those who say: *"It can't be done"*

As Ezra and Nehemiah rallied God's people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, there were those who shouted insults at their efforts. Two especially. Sanballat and Tobiah.

Steven while still on the streets of Luanda (November, 2009)



Steven at the CTC in a school uniform. (March, 2010)



They looked at the burned and cracked limestones, destroyed and apparently useless after the Babylonian destruction 150 years earlier. Worthless, weak! That was their conclusion. But 52 days later, by the power and grace of God, the entire wall was rebuilt with those seemingly worthless stones. Some of them had even been fashioned into capstones, crowning stones. Like the five sided stone on top of a pyramid. Who would have guessed it!!

Street kids look like those burned and crumbling stones around Jerusalem in 445 BC. Change? Restoration? Good kids going to school, obeying their parents and caring for their siblings? Some might and do say, *"Can't happen! Heaps of rubble! Worthless kids! They are just thieves! Chokora! Ninjas! Home??...NEVER!"* Those are some of the modern day Sanballat opinions we hear in Kisumu all the time.

But there is one who says, *"Come to me! Change your mind! Love your neighbor! You can do all things through Him who strengthens you! My arm is not too short to help!"*

And it has happened! Child after child has passed through Capstone Ministries' hand and become a Capstone himself. 81 times just in the last 15 months, a street child has changed, gone home, enrolled in school, reconnected with family!

Steven was a victim of shame and rejection. Born out of wedlock, Steven was rejected by his father and ended up on the streets of Luanda after his mother died. He became an accomplished thief, even stealing from policemen.

One of Capstone's staff, Newton leads an ongoing intervention outreach on the streets of Luanda every Wednesday morning. One Wednesday morning, Newton came across the burnt stone called Steven. It would have been easy to look at him and see no hope of change: dirty, manipulative, a thief. But God had other plans. After a few months of meeting Steven every week, Newton began to talk to Steven about home, staying with his step-mom and going to school.

Now 10 years old, Steven is staying at our Transition Center (CTC), enrolled in the local school, he has visited his step-mom twice already and soon this polite boy with the cute smile will be fitted into his family wall where he belongs. A burnt and crumbling life; now a stone in the hands of the Master Carpenter; soon...a Capstone!

Praises, Prayers and Recent News

1. Praise God! Pray for the 6 boys at the Transition Center: Steven, Jackton, Kevin, Dixon and Kennedy, Ivan.
2. Praise God for the long rains that have come to Kenya.
3. Attention! You can now make your donation via Paypal.
4. Pray for the team of four from California who arrive here on 9th April and will conduct a VBS at our CTC with our 6 boys and some of the neighborhood children.
6. Praise God for a donor who recently committed to supporting the entire cost of our Capstone Camp scheduled for August. Capstone Camp is a week of intensive spiritual lessons, games, scouting activities and home building exercises designed to strengthen 20 boys who have remained at home. Parents also participate for one day and receive encouragement, instruction and income generating ideas.
7. Pray for us as we make our plans for our fall trip to the states. Rough outline: Late August: S. Wisconsin, September in New England, October/Nov. in California. You are welcome to write to us and reserve a Sunday for your church or club. Several churches have already contacted us and reserved a weekend. Praise God.



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Patty's Post It

Capstone now has 127 children and their families in our files. We are growing by leaps and bounds and with a better than average success rate. Approximately 60% of our kids have remained at home and in school. About a month ago the District Children's Officer (DCO) was alarmed at an increasing petty crime rate and discovered street children were frequently involved. She decided to put together a plan and work on the problem. She called together many of the organizations working with street kids and asked us to participate. Children are being picked up by police. The officials don't use the term "arrested"; they prefer "rescued". The kids are taken to the juvenile remand center and held there. Our role is to visit and identify the children we know or are already working with. We attach ourselves to the name of the child and attend a court hearing with that child. The court then turns the child over to the children's organization or to the parents if they are present. If we have contact with the parent of the child we make sure the parent or guardian is also present.

On our first day in court we received a "surprise" by the name of Kennedy. We've known Kennedy for many years. He somehow migrated down from extreme northern Kenya and is from a tribe that we rarely see in this area. Kennedy is a Turkana boy with a huge personality. The court decided Capstone would take responsibility for Kennedy. We were shocked and concerned. We would have never asked to take on Kennedy. Although he's a very sweet boy and we all love him, he has always told us there is no way he will go home. But it was a court order; we had no choice in the matter. To our complete surprise Kennedy has adapted very well in our transition center. He is happy, polite, cooperative and a joy. He is also excited about going home to see the family he hasn't seen in 4 years.

By appearances the plan seems to be working with fewer children now visible in the streets of Kisumu. The Capstone staff know the "inside" story; many kids are still in the street but are now being more strategic about hiding out. Our hope is that this consistent program with the DCO, we will be able to send out a message that being in the street of Kisumu is no longer "fun", it's no longer "easy street" and maybe kids will decide to remain at home where they belong. It's still too early in the game to tell, but you can help us pray!

It certainly has reminded us again that this is not our work and Capstone is not our ministry. This is God's work. *"He determined the exact places where they should live."* Acts 17:26

Donations are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: **Key Ministries, Kenya Mission**

As our partners we encourage you to spread the word about this ministry. Feel free to share this newsletter or write to Dan and Patty to add a friend to this mailing.