



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

September, 2011 Volume 6 Issue 10

“Whose is the Street Child?”

“Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home.” Proverbs 27:8

When I was about 12 I remember feeling a desire for independence from family for the first time. Sometimes this longing expressed itself in a good way and sometimes it was selfish, ungrateful and even arrogant. Despite my wanderings, my parents never gave up on me. They knew I was still a child in many ways and maintained an atmosphere of unconditional love grounded in Christian faith.

Children have the same basic needs no matter where they come from. They need love, direction, and security. The list of needs is a long one but those are the basics. These concepts are met within a framework we call “family.” God established this framework when he blessed Adam and Eve with children. (Genesis 4:1) It is not until the construction of the Tabernacle in Exodus 26 that we see God establishing another spiritual framework outside of family. Until then the “priest” of the family—if you will—was in the home. To this day, even in the New Testament church the primary responsibility for spiritual development of children is given to parents. (Eph. 6:4) This is critical to remember when we talk about ministry to children and families. As the Church, as pastors we are to be supplementary to parental spiritual authority not replacements to the same.

Too often, however, solutions to the needs of children are sought outside of the family structure. Sometimes this is well intentioned and motivated by Christian love; other times it is nothing more than social engineering. A recent article in a national Kenyan newspaper made allegations that often the motivation is even greed and malice. The article alleges that many orphanages in Kenya are nothing more than money pits for someone’s personal bank account, some even engaging in child trafficking.

Capstone Ministries was founded on the Biblical principles of family. We believe that family—immediate and extended—is the best place for a child to grow and develop. We also believe that our missionary role in

Kenya is to strengthen the existing structures so that families and church can continue independently. We believe this is not only good missiology but also honors the dignity, self determination and faith of the individual. Long gone are the ideals of the 19th Century where a white missionary decides for the local people what their needs are and then proceeds to give it to them whether they want it or not.

The title of this piece is “Whose is the street child?” not “Who is the street child?” It is framed that way intentionally. It is important to acknowledge that a child belongs somewhere and to someone. Often the assumption is drawn that a street child has no one. A recent local website stated that the vast majority of street children are orphans. The statement is made to encourage donors to give money to build an orphanage. But the statement is misleading. In the African context, no child is an orphan. In fact, if you ask rural people they will tell you that from the village perspective a child belongs to a community or clan even if his immediate family has died. In other words, there are no “real” orphans. They all belong somewhere. In addition, in a recent survey of the 200 children Capstone has reconciled with family we discovered some interesting facts. Only 16% had no living parent, 38% had one living parent and 56% had both surviving parents.

To be sure, in all our cases, there are problems in those homes. That is why the child is on the street. The fact there are problems in a family does not justify replacing the family. Rather, it should motivate Christian ministry to that family. That is what Capstone does. Every week, the families of restored children are ministered to. Bible studies with groups of parents are organized. To date Capstone has established 4 group bible studies and is working on a 5th group. Few things are more powerful than watching parents repent of their mistakes with their children and vowing to change.

The proverb above is especially powerful when it is remembered that Solomon was the product of a father who strayed from the nest. Solomon’s mother was Bathsheba. The work of Capstone Ministries is nest reconstruction.

Praises, Prayers and Recent News

1. Pray for the 7 boys at the Transition Center: Dennis, Titus, Moses, Daniel, Kevin, Sylvester and Ronnie. They visited family during the August school break and return to the CTC for their last quarter before final reconciliation in December.
2. Dan will be traveling in September. He will visit supporting churches in CT and Mass. But the primary reason for his visit to the states is to see his mother in Wisconsin. Pray for safe travels.
3. Lee Kucker, the US Board Chair of Capstone will be visiting Kenya in early Sept. In fact, as I write this he is on a plane somewhere over the Atlantic. He will be with us for a week and will return on 9/11
4. We have recently added another group to those who are growing moringa for us. We provide them with seeds and training. They earn an income for providing us with the leaves. We now have 25 farmers actively growing moringa. Most—90%-- are women.
5. Thanks to Bethany Lutheran of West Hartford, CT. We are now realizing a profit of about \$100/monthly from our chicken layers project.
6. Pray for good health and safety for Dan and Patty.



Check out the Capstone Page on Facebook.

Pictures, News and more....

Just search for Capstone Ministries.

Become a fan!



Capstone participates in Savemart/Lucky Supermarket's SHARES program in N. California. You only scan your card before purchasing your groceries and SaveMart donates 3% of your purchase. To date Savemart has given Capstone \$1,310,762...because of your shopping!! Ask for your card.

More Information!

Signup for Capstone Ministries' monthly e-newsletter:

Newsletter-Subscribe@CapstoneMinistries.org

Web site address: www.CapstoneMinistries.org

Email: Capstoneministries@gmail.com

Contact Information and to donate:

Capstone Ministries

650 West Las Palmas Avenue

Patterson, CA 95363

E-mail: Capstoneministries@gmail.com

Dan and Patty Schmelzer

P.O. Box 3962

Kisumu, Kenya 40100

Patty's Post – It

“Reach Within to Embrace Humanity.” If you are a member of a Rotary Club, as many of our friends are, you will recognize this as the motto for the 2011/2012 Rotary year. This year I'm privileged and honored to be the club president of the Rotary Club of Vihiga. Yesterday was the annual “official” visit of the Rotary District Governor. This is a special event in the calendar of a Rotary Club. As the club president one needs to be prepared and “on toes” for the visit. I was feeling a little nervous and anxious about this official visit.

Adding to the expected and normal anxiety is the fact that our Rotary District Governor is also a long time and very close family friend, Mr. Eric Kimani from Nairobi. Dan and I have known Eric and his lovely wife Margaret since 2003. We have stayed in their home on countless occasions. Eric and Margaret have also come to visit us in Kisumu. I wanted to be a very diligent president and present our club well to the prestigious District Governor. Eric is a motivational speaker among many other activities and vocations in his life. He is eloquent and has always has a warm presence about him. The official visit went well. As the District Governor Eric challenged us in various areas of club administration and as a friend, he encouraged me in the ideals of Rotary to “Reach Within to Embrace Humanity!”

As I type we Dan and I are blessed to have our Capstone Board Chairman, Lee Kucker, visiting us for a week. So far Lee has visited the Capstone Transition Center, worshiped with us at the ELCK Cathedral, visited the local “Impala Park” (There he even had the chance to pet a cheetah). Yesterday (Monday) he also visited the outreach program to the boys on the street called Capstone Youth Center. There he saw street kids with all their characters and challenges. It is always a shock for people to witness what a street boy goes through on a daily basis. The boys shared in detail the experiences they go through. I'd like to share more about Lee's visit but with limited space we'll reserve that for next month so stay tuned!

Donations are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Capstone Ministries

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.