

Communique

The Ministry of Christian Communications Commission



Ssali Jamir, sponsored Bill Wegener. Wegener met Jamir on a recent trip to New Eden orphanage and school with CCC founders Lovie and Syvelle Phillips.

Art Prints for CCC's Kids

Photographer and CCC child sponsor, Bill Wegener, is offering high-quality, hand-painted, digital prints of his photographs of CCC children. His images, like the one above, are printed on canvas rather than paper and are ready for a frame or to be hung without. Bill is offering the prints at \$200 over his cost. The \$200 goes to support CCC children in India and Africa. You can go to our website www.GodLovesKids.com to see the stunning images Bill has gathered over his years of traveling to CCC's schools and orphanages. Our thanks to Bill for using his artistic gifts to help us remember how beautiful our sponsored kids are.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

-- Matthew 9:35-37 NIV

I Think I Just got Sponsored!

By Bill Wegener

Many of us who have sponsored children have come to the realization that sponsorship is much more than simply doing what Webster's Dictionary describes as "a person who makes a pledge or promise on behalf of another." It is much more of a gift exchange: your gift to provide the needs of a child and their gift of love back to you. How much greater is a gift when the receiver has never even met the giver? What powerful message does that communicate to a child, especially an orphan?

Recently, I had the privilege of going to Uganda and Rwanda. If there is a common thread among the people that go on a missions trip with Lovie, it's this: your child sponsors you rather than you sponsoring him/her. Such is my testimony when "sponsoring" my last child. I was not even planning on stretching my dollar one more time as I already have a few children that I am sponsoring, but I was chosen. There always seems to be that one child that takes your hand, pulls on your shirt or gives you that special smile that says "I want you." What can you do? You have no choice. Yes, this child wants to sponsor me, how can I say no to sponsoring him? Am I not actually sponsoring Jesus when I sponsor a child?

continued on page 4



Rebecca Takes a Nap and Wins a Sponsor's Heart

by Lovie Phillips

I just returned from Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya. I had the privilege of visiting all five of our African orphanage/schools. What a joy to see the beautiful fruit from the seed you, the sponsors, have planted. It would take many hours to tell you about what I saw and experienced. The wonderful hugs and "Thank you mama for helping me become what I am today," were profuse. It made all of the hard work and long hours worth while.

In future letters, I will be sharing some of the highlights of the trip, but today I want to share the story of little Rebecca.

In 1993, I was on one of my many trips to Uganda Gospel Rehabilitation Center (UGRC), the first orphanage/school that CCC helped establish in Africa. Traveling with my husband and me were my son, Darin, his wife Laura, and our dear friends Mary and Don Kastner.

When we arrived, we were greeted wildly by many enthusiastic kids. After what seemed to be hundreds of hugs, we were escorted to a little thatched roof gazebo in the school/orphanage's courtyard. There, our Administrator served us a cool cup of water and some refreshing tea.

As we sat visiting with our Director, I saw two very small toddlers roaming around as though they were lost and looking for someone. I could not help noticing the forlorn look on their faces, so I inquired about them. Our

The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: "Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in." Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them.

Mark 10:13-16 The Message

director said "We just took them in a couple weeks ago. Their parents died of AIDS, and they were just dropped off here by someone."

Shortly afterwards, little Rebecca, who could not talk yet, toddled into the gazebo and over to our friend Mary. Mary picked her up onto her lap and cuddled her close in her arms. After a short time, I noticed Rebecca was sound asleep with a very contented look on her face. Then my eyes shifted up to Mary's face and I saw tears trickling down her cheeks. When Mary noticed me looking at her, she smiled and said, "I think Rebecca has found a sponsor." Yes, indeed she had. Mary and Don have sponsored little Rebecca ever since.

Fast forward to September 2006. I am sitting in a large room at our newly opened High School being entertained by the young people. A darling little teenager stood out as a leader. She sang the solo with the school choir, she was the lead dancer on the dance team, and she read the poem of welcome to all of us. Can you imagine my absolute delight when I discovered she was our little Rebecca! My joy was almost overwhelming when the Headmaster told me "She is very smart, studies hard, makes good grades, and loves God very much. She is a leader of the students at this school."

Can you imagine what a thrill it would be to you to know you had a part in changing a child's life that much? I was

so excited that I could hardly wait to get to a phone that would let me call out of the country so I could share this with Don and Mary. Then I thought no, I want to really surprise them and bless you by sharing their story and let them read it here first. I just wish I could be there and see their faces when they realize the fruit from their long-term sponsorship of little Rebecca. I have a feeling I would see some more tears of joy and a smile as they repeat, "I think Rebecca has found a sponsor." In 13 years, they have never missed a month of support for her.

Rebecca will touch many lives with the testimony of her personal salvation and the faithfulness of the Father God to the fatherless. The seed Mary and Don planted will continue to multiply for years to come and probably for generations to come. Yes, she is still little Rebecca (she is a small teenager), but she is a tall powerhouse for God.

I request your prayers for Don and Mary. Don has Parkinson disease now. Pray for his healing and that he will someday be well enough to go see beautiful little Rebecca again. Whether that ever happens or not, Mary and Don have not quit planting seed. They just recently took more children to sponsor.

May God multiply and bless all of your seed, Mary and Don. We at CCC love you and pray for you and I believe many who are now reading this letter will add you to their prayer list as well. Rebecca is also praying for you. I shared your need for a healing touch with her that day as I put my arms around her and said, "This hug is from Mary and Don, whom I know would love to be here with you right now."

We here at CCC love you, and all of our faithful sponsors!



Former sponsored child, Kachura, and his wife, Allen, on their wedding day. More photos of the wedding at www.GodLovesKids.com

...Then Comes Marriage!

David Eastrely sent us an email this week that we just had to share with you. First some history: Kachura (who some may remember as Gacura. We have found that our African children often use alternate spellings and sometime change their names, a fact that makes record keeping a bit more of a challenge!) came to the Uganda Gospel Rehabilitation Center with legs that were deformed and under-developed. He had never been in school and his aunt could no longer care for him. He was almost a teenager, but had never been to school. He proudly started first grade with the six- year-olds.

When we first saw photos of him, he was looking very dignified, wearing rubber boots backwards over his legs and sitting in the dirt. We went to our sponsors with the idea of getting him a custom-made, off-road wheel chair that could handle the challenges we knew it would face in Africa. The money came in, we got Kachura's measurements and ordered him a sport model "Quickie" chair with a light weight purple frame. Then staff member, Kenny Phillips (no relation), told us proudly that he chose purple because "Gacura is a child of the King!" Kachura has been using that chair since the mid-1990s.

Now the email from David Eastrely: *We had a wonderful day yesterday with Kachura and Allen. Their wedding was wonderful. I am sending a couple of pictures of the wedding for you to see.*

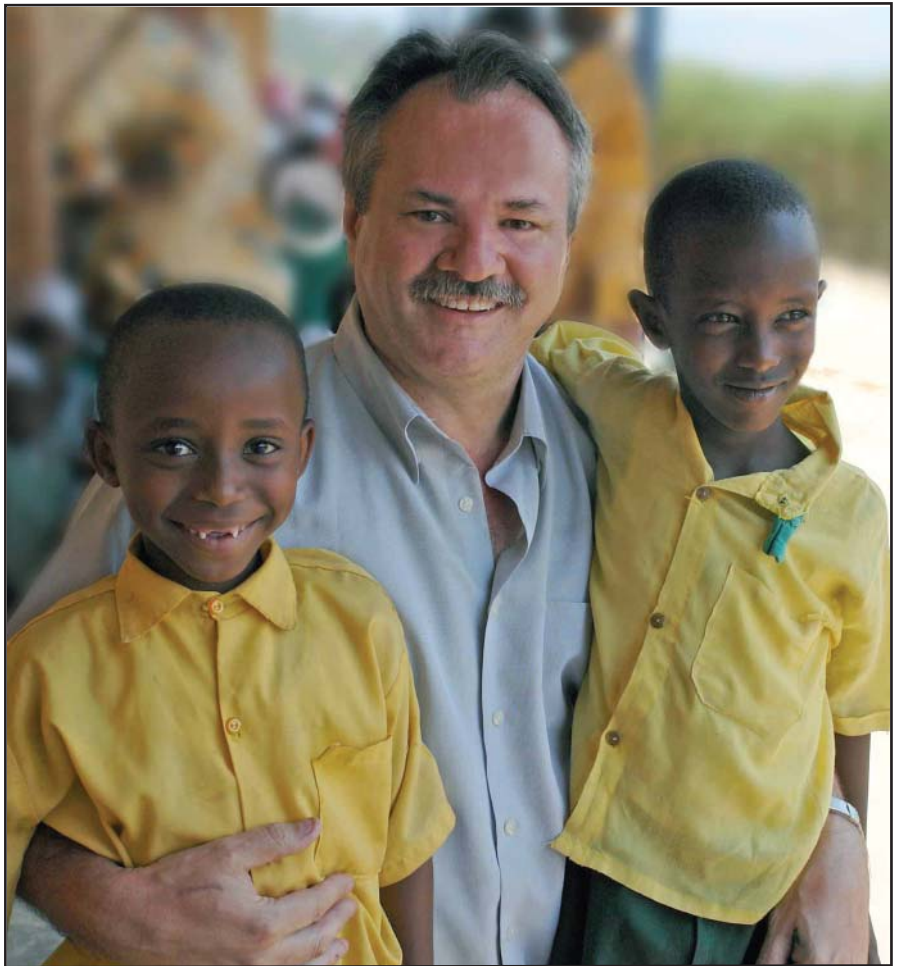
It is amazing how respected he is. When he graduated from Bible College last year, they had a party for him out at UGRC and so many of his former friends from the orphanage came. They had over 400 people come to see him and congratulate him. The pastor of the church where he attended while in Bible college said he was one of the strongest leaders he has ever met. Here again is a great example of why it is necessary and the best if we can continue to sponsor them through higher education. He has a good start on building a strong congregation. I truly believe he is going to be used of God to touch thousands of lives.

“Whatsoever you do unto the least of these...” Can I say no to Jesus? Of course not.

Once you decide to sponsor one of God’s precious little ones, you must ask yourself, “Why me, God?” What have I ever done to deserve an honor so great that you would trust me with this life changing task? The answer is quite simple: because you are willing to say “Why not me Lord, why not me?” God is not looking for the perfect person, just someone that will say “why not me?”

I may have an advantage, as I too was taken away from my parents and put in a foster home. I understand the feeling of loneliness and the pain of having no one who really loves you. But, I too have a sponsor; His name is Jesus Christ. One day, Jesus came to me and said “I want this boy right here.” That very day my name was written in His book, and He has never dropped or found reason to let me go. Are we not a reflection of Jesus? Aren’t we indeed our brother’s keeper? The answer, of course, is yes, I am my brother’s keeper. Truly, I have learned over the years that sponsorship is not just a gift given but much more; it is a gift received. Each one of these little ones is a special gift to love, and even though we must love them from afar, our sponsorship enables others to love them directly on our behalf. I don’t want to ever look my sponsor Jesus in the face and say, “I would have sponsored a child, but I was too busy or never gave it much thought.” Not a single one of my children picked the perfect sponsor, but they did pick a determined one. I am determined to love them from afar and realize that these children have had enough disappointment in their young lives, they don’t need a sponsor that will drop them. By the grace of God, I will stay the course.

On this last trip to Uganda, we went to one of the orphanages where I sponsor a child by the name of Shyaka, and yes, this little guy was one of those children that chose me. He was only two when I met him on my first trip to Uganda, and he is about four or five now. I didn’t expect him to remember me and in the crowd of several hundred children, I had a hard time finding him. Finally, my eyes met his and at the



Bill Wegener and two of his 14 sponsored children, Prince and Shyaka at Harvest Children’s Home in Rwanda.

same time smiles came over both of our faces. I remembered him and he remembered me. It was as though I was seeing my own child after two years. What a remarkably blessed day that was. Let me encourage you, future sponsor, don’t underestimate the impact your sponsorship is to these little orphans. Your gift given is truly a gift received.

While in Uganda at New Eden, a little boy (see page one photo) chose to sponsor me, and I am grateful to God for the privilege to sponsor him.