

ISSUE 4 | 2024



CHILDIMPACT

INTERNATIONAL



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FROM DISCRIMINATION TO DISTINCTION - *Palawan's native students overcome challenges to excel*

By Jasper Iturriaga

Dirty. Smelly. Primitive. A few years ago, these were the labels given to the native children by lowlanders on the island of Palawan in the Philippines. The children had come from the highlands to attend the jungle schools supported by Child Impact and Philippine Adventist Medical Aviation Services (PAMAS). Some of the children no longer wanted to attend school because of the discrimination they faced for being native Palawan. This prejudice often discouraged them from pursuing their education.

Fast forward to 2024, and the change is mind-blowing. Children who were once discriminated against and in danger of dropping out of school are thriving and excelling academically! Some have even ranked in the top 10 of their classes, with one achieving the first place spot. Many are graduating from elementary grades at our jungle schools and continuing their education at the public high school in town.

When given equal opportunities, children from the jungle schools exhibit the same level of talent and potential. This success underscores the importance of bringing education closer to home. Child Impact is incredibly proud of these students who did not let circumstances and discrimination hinder them from pursuing their dreams.

Success stories like this don't happen by chance; they take a village to become a reality. The hope and future these children have has been made possible,



Jasper Iturriaga with Palawan students

not only by the dedicated teachers who pour their hearts into their work, but also the partnership between Child Impact and PAMAS in supporting the schools, ensuring that operations continue and that hunger never gets in the way of learning.

This is the power of sponsorship. Your small monthly commitment has the potential to change lives and unleash a ripple effect of positive impact that will shape generations to come. ■

2024 Operation Child Rescue Project: Palawan Child Safe House

Child Impact International and PAMAS formed a partnership two years ago to bring education to unreached indigenous tribes living in the mountains of Palawan. Child Impact currently supports 265 students studying in five jungle schools. Child Impact and PAMAS are joining forces to spearhead the construction of a haven dedicated to the safety and well-being of schoolgirls at risk for forced child marriage, one of the most prevalent forms of human trafficking in the world today. The envisioned Child Safe House Project aims to offer a protective and stable living environment for children in vulnerable circumstances and to provide them with a refuge where they can thrive without fear.



To learn more and to support the 2024 Operation Child Rescue Project, visit ChildImpact.org/SafeHouse.



\$75,000 Land purchase



\$200,000 Safe house



\$275,000 Total needed



TRANSFORMING FUTURES AND REVITALIZING EDUCATION

How sponsorship and donor support brought new life to schools in Tanzania

By Dr. Tom L. Evans

A heartbreaking decision was imminent. Pastor Musa had already spoken with the local government about closing the Twing Memorial Schools in Tanzania due to lack of funding. Since the 2013 passing of Ethel Twing, or “Mama Twing,” who had dedicated her life to mission work in the Kigoma region, funding had dwindled. Without outside funding, providing education in this impoverished area was not possible. Yet, there was so much potential. The hundreds of children enrolled in the Twing primary and secondary schools had hope for a brighter future. They longed for an opportunity to break free from generational poverty and pursue their dreams through education.

Growing up with Mama Twing visiting my home on furlough from Tanzania made an undeniable impression. I can still visualize my dad asking about the needs of the mission projects and then writing a check. When thinking of Africa, my immediate connection was with Tanzania and Mama Twing. After joining the Child Impact team, one of my first desires was to discover the status of the Twing Memorial Schools. Little did I know they were about to close.

After connecting with Pastor Musa in 2021, Child Impact has come alongside the

schools to provide support through sponsorship for almost three years. Currently, 228 students are sponsored, with 18 awaiting sponsorship. This support has had a stabilizing effect on the operations of both schools. They are no longer in danger of closing. However, the needs of the schools extended beyond monthly operations.

Due to years of inadequate funding, there were many infrastructure needs.

During Child Impact’s annual dinner in November 2023, funds were raised to build commercial kitchens on both campuses. Then the following month, I traveled with a donor to visit the Twing campuses. She committed the resources to build a new girl’s dormitory, but she soon had another vision as well. The donor desired to see an atmosphere in the classrooms and on campus that inspired students in their learning. This included fresh paint inside and out, as well as educational artwork. We are excited to see the transformation take place.

Thank you to those who are sponsoring these precious children at Twing Memorial Schools. Your generosity has enabled these schools to remain open. As a result, lives are being changed for eternity! ■

“One of my first desires was to discover the status of the Twing Memorial Schools. Little did I know they were about to close.”



If you would like to sponsor one of the waiting 18 students at Twing Memorial Schools, visit ChildImpact.org/Sponsorship.



Top: Primary students enjoy their revitalized classroom; above: updates to the campus include inspiring artwork on the exterior and interior of buildings

BEACONS OF LIGHT

Students from Adventist school in Brazil begin to shine in a community without hope

By Nicole Bertelli

Winter break is over in Brazil, and as most children are returning to a school routine they have been in since the beginning of the year, for two children, that won't be the case. Isabel and Bruno won't return to a public school where classmates are still illiterate in middle school, teachers are underpaid and unmotivated, and the policy is to pass students along regardless of academic progress so that the school doesn't lose funding. Instead, these two children will start the new semester enrolled at an Adventist school where they will receive the needed resources to thrive academically, emotionally, and spiritually.

"All of the local children stopped their lunch to see them off, excited and curious about the new experience their friends were to have."

Bruno is a sweet and kind 10-year-old. His parents moved to Brazil from Bolivia 12 years ago because his father is an alcoholic, and his mother thought a new country would break the habit. Unfortunately, he still drinks away his paychecks, making the family of five unable to afford decent housing and thus forcing them to live in a crime-run community without basic sanitation.

Isabel is a bright and spunky 11-year-old whose mom, Patricia, is also an alcoholic, as well as illiterate. As a single mom, Patricia survives off begging and minimum government assistance. Isabel herself can often be found begging on the streets, too.

Sadly, Bruno and Isabel's stories aren't exceptions but rather the rule in their community. What is exceptional, however, is that through sponsorships, Bruno and Isabel now have the opportunity to become beacons of light.

On their first day leaving Child Impact Brazil's center to go to their new school, all of the local children stopped their lunch to see them off, excited and curious about the new experience their friends were to have. Every day, Bruno and Isabel return with reports of what the new school is like, showing their friends a better reality that they can also partake in. This will inspire many kids to study harder and stay out of trouble so that they may qualify for a scholarship. We believe that through this, their lives and families will start to be transformed.

Choose to be a part of this transformation of children and their families living in the favelas of Brazil. Choose to sponsor a child. ■



Clockwise from top: Isabel with her mother, Patricia; Bruno at his new school; Bruno and Isabel ready for the first day of school

FROM NEGLECTED TO LOVED

Orphan transforms into witness for family and village

By Lesieli Savelio

Growing up, Sheela lived with her family in a hill tribe in India. Living with a hill tribe is very different from what most are used to in the United States. They have no electricity, roads, or safe drinking water.

Sheela lived this way until tragedy struck at just five years old when her mother passed away. Even though her father was alive, she basically became an orphan; her father was an alcoholic and neglected her. Raj Varma, Child Impact's field partner who manages the Sunrise Children's Home in Bobbili, was working on a safe drinking water community development project among the hill tribes when he met Sheela. At seven years old, she was malnourished, carrying scars and wounds all over her body.



L-R: Sheela at her wedding to Rajesh (center) with Raj and Lelitha Varma of Sunrise Children's Home; portrait of Sheela

Raj brought Sheela to Sunrise where she was cared for, receiving nourishing food, new clothes and shoes, and support from caring adults. Soon after, Sheela was paired with sponsors through Child Impact—Pastor Shawn and Jean Boonstra—enabling her to begin school.

At Sunrise, Sheela learned many Bible stories and verses. She was not only taught but shown through example what it truly means to be a Christian. Seeing firsthand how alcohol could destroy people's lives and families, Sheela became passionate about temperance and participated in several rallies. She even gave her family and community members Bible studies. Through her witness and influence, her father gave up drinking and is now involved in ministry!

When Sheela was 17, she fell very sick and spent two weeks in the hospital. Doctors diagnosed her with brain malaria and typhoid fever. The nurses and medical staff worked day and night to save her life. After recovering, her experience with such dedicated nurses in the hospital inspired her to study nursing to help others the way she had been helped.

Today, Sheela works as a Community Health Officer. She provides medical services to four villages, serving around 3,000 people. She even works in her home village sometimes, too. This has been an exciting year for Sheela as she recently got married! Child Impact is blessed to see how God has led in her life. Sheela's story is an inspiring example of how God uses sponsorship to impact lives for eternity. ■



Sponsor Perspective: Jean Boonstra

I can't recall where I first saw the ad inviting me to sponsor a child. I was a 19-year-old university student in Canada, and with a few extra pennies of my own each week, I decided to sponsor a child. In the busy years of ministry life and raising a family that followed, I forgot about my early sponsorship experience until my husband and I heard about Child Impact.

Our daughters were on the precipice of their teenage years. We wanted to encourage in them a sense of generosity and the assurance that their faith community is global. As a family we chose to sponsor a girl in India. We soon received a photo and description of Sheela along with her story.

We each chose a photo and wrote Sheela a letter introducing ourselves. Not long afterwards we heard back! Sheela wrote about the school subjects she enjoyed (and those she didn't enjoy), and we stayed in touch regularly.

Eleven years ago, my daughters and I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to India to meet Sheela and see Sunrise Children's Home. We were so excited, and our first meeting was full of awkward smiles, stilted conversation, and general shyness from each of us. Later that same day, we bumped into Sheela and her school friends at the little market near where we were staying. The giggles came freely, and we all talked easily. Spending time with Sheela at Sunrise, we got to know her home and feel her heart. What we saw was a family—the Sunrise leaders love each of the children.

As our daughters grew up, graduated from high school, and pursued higher education, so did Sheela. She followed her dream of attending nursing school, and we were delighted to support her in pursuing her calling. Recently we praised God for another milestone—Sheela was married in the small church where we had worshipped with her a decade ago.

With Sheela in our lives, we are reminded that God's plan and blessing isn't restricted by geography—His family of faith is truly global. Our lives are so much better because of it. Sponsor a child—your life will be better because of it, too.



Top: Shawn and Jean Boonstra; above: Jean and her daughters meet Sheela in 2013

LETTERS OF HOPE

Children connect with sponsors through written words and handmade art

By Shana Fairchild

Letter writing may be a largely forgotten form of communication, but for Child Impact children and their sponsors, this old medium brings two very different worlds, separated by distance, cultures, and sometimes languages, together in a special way. Through words and pictures, children give their sponsors a glimpse into their lives and hearts, and their sponsors reciprocate in turn, forming a connection that will last into eternity. Take a look at these examples.



Samraj Mandal, India

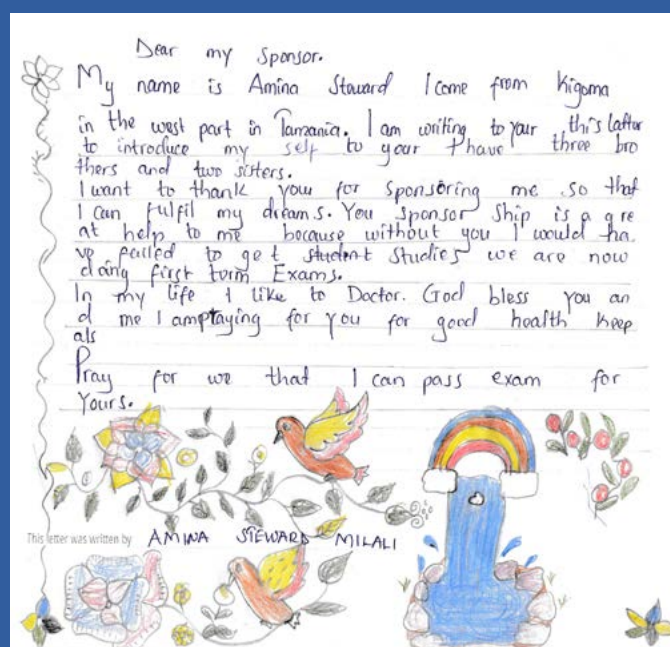
My Dear sponsor,
I am so excited to write to you. I am doing fine. I am always praying for you. I enjoyed summer vacation with my friends. I helped my father and mother by obeying them whatever they assigned me. I did it happily. I had a very good time with my family members and friends. I helped them in our kitchen garden. It was wonderful experience to learn cultivation now. I am back to my beautiful campus. I am so happy to see my teachers and friends after a month and a half. It's my happiness to sit in 3rd grade. I feel comfortable with my teachers and friends in this school. Thank you for supporting me for my education. With this small letter I stop my pen here with lots of love.

This letter was written by Omresh Dalpadi

Omresh Dalpadi, India



Santosh Padal, India



Amina Milali, Tanzania



Lili Santa, India

*"I am so excited to write to you ...
I am always praying for you."*

JOURNEY OF FAITH

Thai refugee school places trust in God and begins new academic year despite overwhelming numbers

By Anna Adams



In 2010, a small mission school called Sunshine Orchard Learning Center was founded in Thailand near the Myanmar border to be a beacon of hope and education for refugee and migrant children. The story of this mission school traces back to 2008, when the Adams family embarked on what was intended to be a short-term mission trip. Unexpectedly, their visit turned into a lifelong commitment to serve the Karen people—a large and dispersed ethnic group of Southeast Asia and Myanmar (Burma). The Karen people have endured a civil war, along with ongoing unrest and conflict, for nearly 80 years. In many ways, Myanmar is a place where World War II never truly ended.

Soon after the school's founding, it was devastated by a sudden attack that burned down the school buildings and forced students and teachers to flee. The Adams family welcomed over 100 students into their home in Thailand, ensuring their safety. Despite this setback, God's provision helped the school to grow, overcoming significant challenges such as funding issues, government opposition, and demands for the children to either enter refugee camps or return to Myanmar.

Today, Sunshine Orchard Learning Center has grown significantly, including the expansion of two satellite schools in rural Myanmar. Combined, the three schools serve over 1,000 students, with more than 800 enrolled at the main campus in Thailand. In 2024 alone,

Sunshine Orchard welcomed more than 200 new students, reflecting both the growing demand for education and the vital impact of this ministry.

During the summer of 2024, preparations began at Sunshine Orchard for the upcoming year's registration, and the staff anticipated another year of growth and blessings. However, what awaited them on registration day exceeded their expectations. By 7:00 a.m., hundreds of

people had already gathered outside the registration area, hoping to secure a spot for themselves or their children. The staff quickly realized their preparations were vastly insufficient. As the day unfolded, it became clear this year would be unlike any other.

As the registration process began, the school started with a simple devotion and prayer, followed by a presentation of the school's goals and mission. The hall was filled to capacity, with many people peeking in through every available window. As the orientation continued and the proposed student enrollment numbers were announced for each grade, gasps could be heard throughout the crowd as they realized something extraordinary would need to happen for many of them to secure a spot for the upcoming year.

Throughout the day, many families and individual students shared their stories and heartbreaking experiences with staff. One particular group from a village in Myanmar had traveled a great distance to reach Sunshine

"The staff quickly realized their preparations were vastly insufficient. As the day unfolded, it became clear this year would be unlike any other."



Clockwise from top left: Prayer time in the boys dorm; families enroll their children on a previous registration day; 2024 orientation held in the packed hall; girls peer out of their dorm window

Orchard Learning Center. The family explained how military drafting in their village had begun to target boys as young as 10 years old. With tears in their eyes, the parents pleaded for a spot in the school for their young sons.

Around midday, a group of young girls arrived with their aunt, begging the staff to allow them to take the entrance exams and complete the registration forms despite their late arrival. They explained how they had spent the entire morning traveling to get there. The girls, covered in dust from the bumpy mountain roads, waited patiently as new forms were printed and a place was made for them in the registration process.

An esteemed monk also brought one of his nieces, asking that the school accept her. Surprisingly, he voluntarily shared that he thought it would be a wonderful place for her to study and that he had no issue with her learning about the Bible and Jesus.

Many very young children were brought by relatives or accompanied by older siblings, all sharing the same story: their parents wanted them to come to the school, believing it to be a safer place. Even late into the afternoon, many were still waiting in hopes of securing a spot.

Despite the overwhelming numbers, the team, guided by God's grace, managed to complete the registration process. By the end of the day, over 380 high school students had taken entrance exams and completed questionnaires, around 60 primary students were enrolled, and over 100 more were placed on the waiting list, which continued to grow in the days following registration. After many prayerful meetings and careful consideration, a hard decision was made in response to the unprecedented demand: an additional class per grade would be added for the primary level and around half of the high school applicants would be accepted.

Plans were swiftly put in place to construct a temporary building to accommodate the new students, and thanks to the incredible support from the community and God's provision, the structure was completed just a week before the school year was set to begin. Devastatingly, however, just two days before the opening ceremony, a violent storm struck, collapsing the newly built classrooms. Though this disaster raised many questions, the staff remained steadfast in their faith, trusting that God's plan was greater than their own.

Despite the setback, the school year commenced, with classrooms spread across vocational training spaces and staff living quarters. While the vocational program has been temporarily halted due to the shortage of space, students continue to learn and thrive, undeterred by these challenging circumstances.

Sunshine Orchard Learning Center remains committed to its mission of providing a faith-based education in a safe environment for children displaced by conflict and instability. As staff look ahead, they trust that God will continue to guide and provide for the ministry. Support from sponsorships helps give stability to the school, allowing them to meet the ever-increasing needs of more and more children. Thank you for contributing to lives being changed! ■



To support a refugee student attending Sunshine Orchard Learning Center, visit ChildImpact.org/Sponsorship



BEYOND THE DARKNESS

Inside Child Impact's fight against child trafficking in Bangladesh

By Shohag Baidya

The Transitional Safe and Care Home project run by Bangladesh Children's Sponsorship Services (BCSS) is making significant strides in transforming the lives of destitute children from the world's largest brothel in Daulatdia, Bangladesh, with support from Child Impact International. Through targeted interventions that include safe shelter, nutritional food, education opportunities, a violence-free environment, and holistic Christian care, the project is fostering hope, resilience, and brighter futures among the most vulnerable members of the community.

A Destitute Existence

The city of Daulatdia, located in central Bangladesh and situated beside the Padma River, is the world's largest brothel town. This industry of prostitution that Daulatdia is known for grew from the presence of high amounts of traffic crossing the Padma River. Historically, ferries would routinely carry trucks, buses, and people traveling to and from the capital city of Dhaka, lying across the river further west. Those waiting in the long lines to board the ferries have been the targeted clientele of the brothels. This industry, however, has recently been disrupted due to the construction of a new bridge allowing vehicles to cross the river and has directed most traffic away from the ferries. As a result, clients are decreasing daily, meaning less income and increasing financial hardships for the women in the brothels.

There are roughly 1,200-1,300 women who work as prostitutes in the city while approximately 600-800 children live inside the brothels in small huts. Many of the women and girls have been trafficked from remote parts of Bangladesh and are slaves to the brothel owners who buy them. Others have come into servitude at the brothels due to poverty, abuse and neglect, or falling into a trap of false promises.

For the children who are born and raised in the brothels, their lives are full of darkness. Babies born into these sad circumstances pass their existences in dirty, dark rooms. There are stories of alcohol poured into children's mouths instead of milk. At an age when children might sit on their mother's lap and fall asleep listening to lullabies, many mothers here must hand off their young children to others to watch so that they are able to take care of clients. If a mother's financial situation is decent, she may be able to pay for her children to be kept in a house or shelter outside of the brothel. Little girls living inside the brothel are often forced into prostitution at a very young age where they are abused and sold for pleasure to countless men for just a little money. In addition, a lot of the children become addicted to horrible drugs. Because of these dark conditions, many women and children develop severe mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, resulting in self-harm. Amid their struggle to exist, parents don't have time to see for themselves how cruel life is there for them.

Living in a world where sexual abuse, drugs, alcohol, torture, and violence are the norm, these women and children are marginalized in society and find it difficult to integrate with others and into schools. There is no one to care for them in the case of serious illness or even in the event of death. For the children, the stigma associated with being the child of a sex worker results in difficulty accessing many kinds of services. Since many in the community view the prostitutes as sinful, cursed, addicted, and criminals, they believe the prostitutes have no right to mingle with normal society. They don't even believe prostitutes have the same rights as others. Even parents and relatives are scared to mingle with or take care of the women and children from the brothel. The community also doesn't want brothel children to attend school with their own. They believe the brothel children to be bad influences and that their own children co-mingling would ruin their futures.

A New Hope

Founded in 2024, the Transitional Safe and Care Home project was set up to transform the lives of girls who come from these destitute situations. The team from BCSS works to remove young girls before they are pulled into a life of prostitution and place them in a safe house right outside of the city. So far, the project has impacted 20 children through holistic care, ensuring their protection and wellbeing. However, the project has not only improved the lives of these direct beneficiaries, but it has also positively influenced the wider community, including the girls' mothers. Awareness is spreading about the importance of child safety, continuing education, and holistic development, leading to a gradual transformation in attitudes and opportunities.

Located a couple hours from Daulatdia is a Seventh-day Adventist boarding school. BCSS and Child Impact are working to renovate a dormitory that will be used to house the rescued girls attending the school after their transition period at the safe house in Daulatdia. This dormitory is desperately needed so that the girls might continue their education at the Seventh-day Adventist boarding school and eventually go on to attend the Bangladesh Adventist Nursing College, ensuring a bright future free from prostitution. As the girls start attending school with the other boarding students, friendships will slowly develop, helping to overcome discrimination and showing a promising future for the girls. Right now, up to 20 girls will be able to live at the dorm, giving them educational opportunities where they can discover a positive outlook for life.

Through the Transitional Safe and Care Home project, rescued girls can experience Christian love, parental care, mental support, safety, nutritious food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and harmonious development in a violence-free environment. They are given the opportunity to feel the love of Jesus and receive support from dedicated staff members who understand their complex situations and needs. Becoming empowered through education, holistic development, and a Christian environment, the girls can look forward to a brighter future with normal lives and the ability to take care of older mothers or parents. Child Impact is working with BCSS to make strides and impact the destitute of Daulatdia, but generous support is needed. Please consider partnering with Child Impact in order to grow this project and rescue more girls from the brothels of Daulatdia! ■



Top: Entrance to the safe house; above: girls living at the safe house



Borsha's Story

Borsha grew up living with her parents in the brothels of Daulatdia. Both her grandmother and mother worked as prostitutes due to their dire financial situations. Tragically, her father died seven years ago, followed by her mother the following year. Borsha went to live with her grandparents who resided beside the brothel community. However, her grandparents also faced tough financial circumstances. They are very old, and her grandfather drives a rickshaw. With their limited income, it was difficult for them to take care of Borsha. When her grandparents heard about the Transitional Safe and Care Home project, they requested many times for Borsha to be accepted in order for her to have a safe residence and be able to continue her education. Happily, she is now staying at the Transitional Safe Home in Daulatdia and is admitted to the Seventh-day Adventist boarding school where she will soon be able to continue her high school education, avoiding the snares of the brothels in Daulatdia. She is very happy to now have safe shelter and the chance to continue her education. "I thought my studies might not happen," Borsha said. "But I am so lucky to get this opportunity, which will fulfill my studies and my dreams." Borsha and her grandparents are so thankful to BCSS and those who have given to make this project a reality.

There is still so much work to do. **Will you partner with BCSS and Child Impact in rescuing more vulnerable girls from the streets of Daulatdia?**



ChildImpact.org/OCR

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR ONE AMONG MILLIONS

Sponsor Spotlight: Greg and Jill Morikone

By Shana Fairchild

Many may recognize Greg and Jill Morikone if they have ever spent time watching Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN). With Greg serving as President and Jill as Vice President/COO, the couple often appear on the network and work as the face of 3ABN. What may be less known about the Morikones, however, is that they are proud sponsors through Child Impact International (CII) to two children from Ethiopia: a boy, age 6, and a girl, age 7.

What motivated you to sponsor children through Child Impact?

Greg: As a couple, we feel drawn to help children. It is important to help the one among the millions and make a difference for them. It is a responsibility to use the ability we have been given to help others.

Jill: As a couple, we love children but have not been able to have children of our own. When we learned about the work with Child Impact, we were excited to be parents in a way, halfway across the world. God could somehow use the resources that we give through the ministry of Child Impact to touch little kids, where they can be safe, learn the gospel, go to school, and be happy. Even if we have not had kids in our own home, we can still make an impact in a child's life.

How has being a sponsor impacted your life personally?

Greg: You get the pictures and see their smiling faces. It is rewarding to know that we are helping to improve their lives and provide opportunities that they wouldn't otherwise have.

What do you think are the most significant benefits of sponsorship for both the child and the sponsor?

Greg: Safety is the most important aspect of sponsorship. Children are vulnerable and need someone to provide a safe place for them and protect them. Plus, the child has a better life and greater opportunities.

Jill: It is a picture of heaven where we spend an eternity with our brothers and sisters. They are halfway around the world and we have never met them, but we are connected as children of God ... through the ministry of Child Impact, we are connected. Child Impact serves as that link between us and them. It is incredible to make a difference for eternity. It is Biblical to help those who are less fortunate. This is the work that Jesus did and asks us to do. When you give, there is a blessing that follows.

The most important thing for me is for a child to be safe and loved and then to connect with Jesus. When you have that, you have everything—for these children to know that they have value inside and that Jesus gives them this value.

“They are halfway around the world and we have never met them, but we are connected as children of God ... through the ministry of Child Impact, we are connected.”

What would you say to others considering sponsorship?

Greg: Get involved today; don't wait for tomorrow. You will never regret it!

Jill: Greg and I believe in the ministry of Child Impact. We believe God is using this ministry in incredible ways to reach those who are most vulnerable. When you sponsor a child through Child Impact, you can do so with assurance that your money is going for the children. There is good leadership with each of the projects and schools. You can make an eternal difference in someone's life.

For me, sponsoring the kids helps in a little way to heal a hole in my heart. We are at peace about not having kids. God has called us to ministry, and this is fulfilling, but there is still that hole of missing what could have been. Through sponsorship, there has been a bit of healing of that hole. Even if I can't be a mom, I can have a part in helping in a child's life. That is really precious to me. ■



Greg and Jill Morikone show pictures of their sponsored children

BEACON ACADEMY SHINES AS BEACON OF HOPE

School sponsors children in honor of student who passed away

By Lesieli Savelio

In 2021, Tom Evans, CEO of Child Impact, and his family finalized the adoption of their sons Daniel and Andris from Latvia. The brothers grew up in an orphanage and had always looked out for each other. When they were ages seven and five, the Evans family came into their lives. The boys would travel to the United States to spend Christmases and summers with the family, and in turn, the Evanses visited them in Latvia as well. After developing a strong bond, the Evans family decided to adopt the boys.

Sadly, Andris was diagnosed with leukemia and lost his battle with the disease in the spring of 2023. He was just 14 years old. He always said that he wanted to adopt when he grew up, and he wanted to be an advocate for children.

For 15 days, Andris had attended a Christian school in Ooltewah, Tennessee, called Beacon Academy. Though he was there only for a short time, the students at Beacon remember him fondly. The principal, Bridgett Pangkey, said the kids remember playing soccer with Andris and that his kind spirit left a lasting impression, not just on the students.

Soon after Andris' passing, Bridgett and Tiffany Britt, treasurer, felt God calling them to sponsor students in honor of Andris. They decided to sponsor five children through Child Impact, choosing older kids to give the opportunity to continue their education, an opportunity that Andris didn't get. The ripple effect of support continued as some of the students at Beacon, including senior Kiarra Crane, were moved by the stories that they heard from Child Impact, felt impressed to help, and decided to use their own money to sponsor children.

"We believe that God put us here to be the hands and feet of Jesus," Bridgett said. "We believe that there is a need to care for those who are less fortunate than us." ■



L-R: Principal Bridgett Pangkey, Beacon student Kiarra Crane, and Treasurer Tiffany Britt

A TRIP TO REMEMBER

Transformation begins when father and son visit Zambia

By Shana Fairchild

Are you my sponsor?" Jose Cortes Jr., chair of Child Impact's board, was greeted with this question from students repeatedly as he and his son, Joel, arrived at Riverside Farm Institute in Zambia on a trip for Child Impact International during the summer of 2024.

Upon arriving at the campus, Jose immediately noticed the need around him and the great desire

many of the students had to meet the person who was blessing them through sponsorship. Although he and his family were planning to soon sponsor a student, as he saw this all around him, his desire to become a sponsor greatly increased. The realization hit him of just how important sponsorship was for each student.

As the trip continued, Jose and Joel saw the amazing work being done at the school and the better quality of life the students were able to have living in the dormitory. They later visited the homes of some of the parents. Many lived in small huts that leaked when it rained. At one home they visited, in the midst of deep poverty, the mother of a sponsored girl began dancing for joy and thanksgiving for what Child Impact had been doing for her daughter.

Later, Jose asked to meet some of the students who weren't sponsored yet. It was then that he and Joel were introduced to their soon-to-be-sponsored student, Naomi. She was very nice and pleasant but also incredibly shy. When Jose told her that they were going to sponsor her, he inadvertently expected to see the same kind of joy that the other students had who'd initially greeted him. She kindly said, "Thank you" but seemed to show no enthusiasm. Upon

mentioning the reaction to Tom Evans, CEO of Child Impact, Tom shared that this was a typical reaction for students in the beginning because of the trauma they've experienced. But, he said, you'll see over the coming years that because of your sponsorship, her whole outlook will be transformed.

Jose and Joel later met Naomi's mother and siblings and saw the family home where they all had shared a single, small room. "Now thanks to sponsorship," Jose said, "Naomi gets to go to a beautiful school, live in a dorm with an actual mattress and pillow, and have peace knowing she won't be sold or won't have to offer herself to pay for family debts. Knowing this has made [Joel] and me very, very happy."

Now back in the U.S., Jose and his family are preparing letters and pictures to send to Naomi, letting her know that they are thinking of her, praying for her, and loving her, even from a distance. "If you are considering sponsorship," Jose said, "in the name of Jesus, go ahead and just do it." Sponsorship changes the life of a child, who will go from having no future at all to having great possibilities. "Do it as if lives depend on it. Because they do." ■



Jose (left) and Joel (right) meet Naomi and her mother (center)

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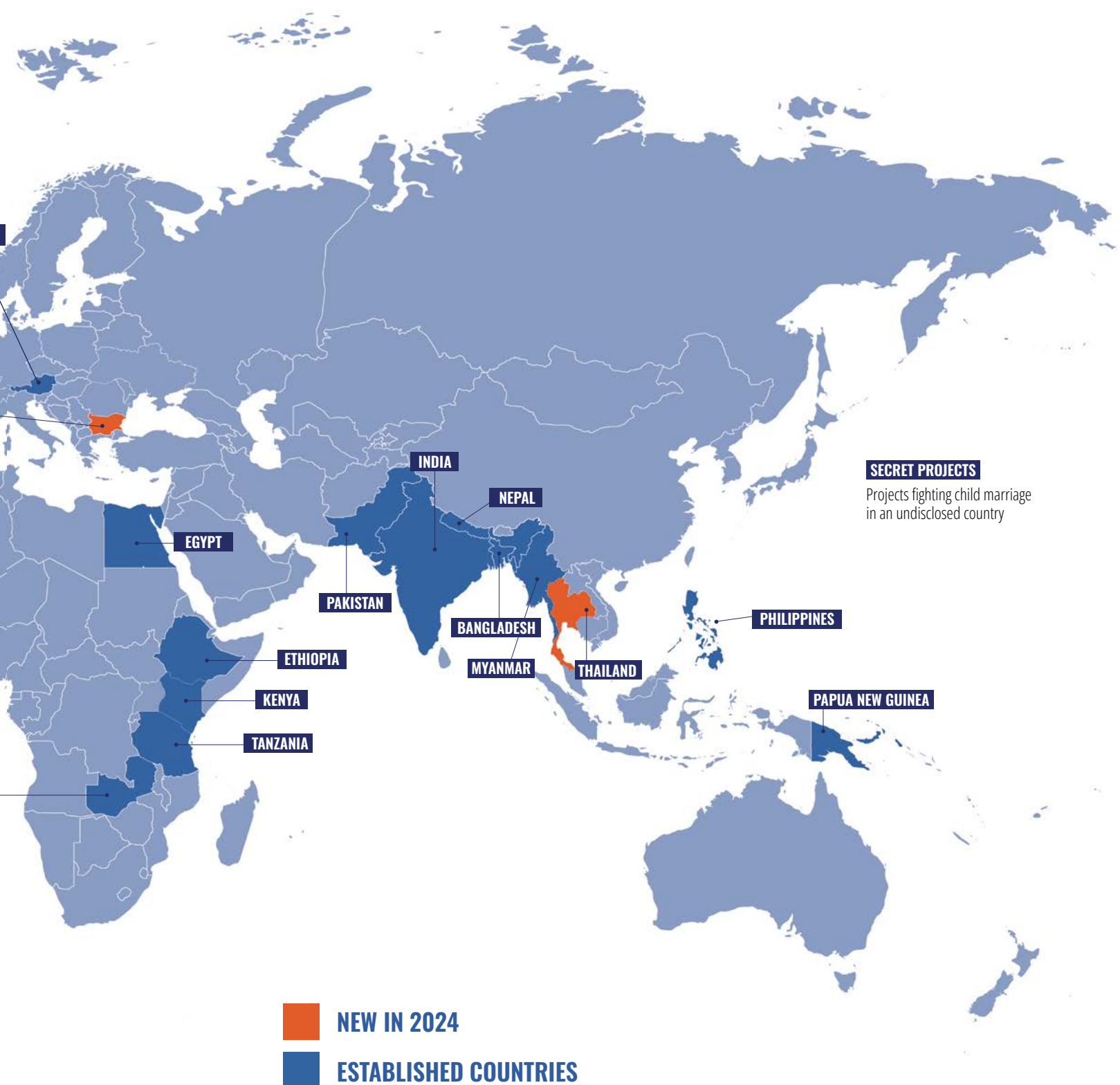


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"I heard a compelling message at the East Ridge SDA Church... and I was appalled by the reports of child trafficking, slavery, abuse, and molestation that were presented. The scale of this problem is much larger than I anticipated, and I felt compelled to do my part to help mitigate this huge problem by helping Child Impact rescue at least some of these children that would otherwise be hopelessly lost. Jesus died for each one of them and desires to see them in His kingdom, as He said in Matthew 19:14: **"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."** My wife and I feel blessed to be able to sponsor a few of these children and would like to strongly encourage anyone who is able to ask the Lord to give them a willing heart to do their part as well. As Jim Elliott so eloquently stated, **"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."**

—Isaias & Guiomar Coelho, sponsors of 10 children

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