

COMPASSION

magazine

www.compassionuk.org 2015 issue 1

REND COLLECTIVE INTERVIEW

The art of celebration

BEHIND PROJECT GATES

Five ways you're changing your sponsored child's future

MAKING DISCIPLES

One child comes to Christ every four minutes

WHEN YOU'VE
FINISHED, SHARE YOUR
COMPASSION MAGAZINE
WITH A FRIEND



Last year

126,600 children met Jesus

through the Compassion programme

Thank you for helping to make this possible

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DEAR FRIEND

I recently overheard someone say they thought sponsoring a child was a nice thing to do. Whilst I appreciated the sentiment, I silently corrected them. You see, I feel far more strongly about it. I think that child sponsorship is not just a nice thing to do; I believe it is the right thing to do.

And that's not because I work for Compassion and feel I have to say that. I work for Compassion because I whole-heartedly believe that they are living out the biblical mandate to not just "let the little children come" to Jesus [Matthew 19:14], but to "loose the chains of injustice" [Isaiah 58:6].

Last time, I wrote about the vision we have to see four million children sponsored through Compassion by the year 2020. It's an incredible goal, but the truth is that will still be just one per cent of all children living in poverty. One per cent. And yet, as a Church worldwide, we have the resources within our hands, today, to change the

lives of every child living in poverty. All of them and their families too.

So I want to say thank you once again for hearing the call and choosing to answer. I want to ask you to join us all at Compassion in a prayer. From the guys in the office in London to the pastors and project staff working out in the field, we share one prayer. It is a prayer that more people like you will respond to God's call "To help your brothers until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for you." [Joshua 1:14]. Together, we can bring justice to every child living in poverty.

IAN HAMILTON
Chief Executive Officer
Compassion UK



Compassion is an international Christian child development and advocacy ministry. Partnering with local churches, we are committed to the spiritual, economic, social and physical development of children living in extreme poverty, enabling them to become responsible, fulfilled Christian adults.

For just £25 or €30 a month, you can ensure your sponsored child attends a church-based Compassion project where they will receive the practical, emotional, social and spiritual care they need to escape from poverty. Each child is linked to just one sponsor and you can encourage the child you support through your letters and prayers.

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We'd love to hear your experiences of sponsorship or any comments or suggestions you have, so please get in touch.

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COVER
PHOTO: BEN ADAMS

NEWS



THE PHILIPPINES: ONE YEAR ON

Last November marked the one year anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan. The £442,644 in generous donations given by UK supporters has been crucial in assisting Compassion Philippines over the last 14 months. 4,000 severely affected families have been receiving rebuilding assistance and 44 church partners are using funds to replace or repair damaged buildings. As Philippines Country Director Noel Pabiona explains, "When most relief agencies have already left, when most politicians have stopped giving aid because there's no media attention anymore, that's when we continue to provide." Thank you to everyone who donated. ■



ly's home was completely destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan. Thanks to the generosity of supporters, Compassion Philippines was able to build the family a new home. PHOTOGRAPHY: Edwin Estilco



PHOTOGRAPHY: Dan Johanson

COMPASSION VOLUNTEERS ADVENTURE TO KENYA

A group of passionate volunteers have been to Kenya on the first of our new Compassion Volunteering insight trips. The group had a brilliant week seeing Compassion's work in action. They visited child survival programmes and Compassion projects and worshipped with a local Compassion church partner. To find out more about volunteering with Compassion, visit www.compassionuk.org/volunteering ■

COMPASSION SUNDAY

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in Compassion Sunday! Thank you for speaking up on behalf of children in poverty. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of supporters across the country giving up their time to encourage friends, family and church members to tell a child "I'm here for you".

If you didn't have the opportunity to take part in October, you can use your Compassion Sunday materials at any time including for Mother's Day. To order a pack, or register an event visit www.compassionuk.org/mothersday ■



PHOTOGRAPHY: Paul McEntire



Children in India were excited to receive new clothes. PHOTOGRAPHY: Catherine Ryan

THANK YOU FOR GIVING A GIFT OF COMPASSION

Thank you to every single person who donated to Compassion's Christmas Fund. As a result of your actions, over 1.5 million children were blessed with a gift such as new shoes, toys or clothing depending upon their greatest need. Christmas parties celebrating the birth of Jesus took place in local projects throughout the world, allowing Compassion-supported children and their families to join in celebrating Christmas. ■

YOUR NEW LOOK MAGAZINE

Did you notice that your Compassion Magazine has shrunk slightly? Integrity and stewardship are two of our core values and we continually review our resources to ensure as much of our income as possible goes to our field countries.

As a result, we've made the Compassion Magazine smaller and made changes to the envelope in order to reduce the cost of production. To find out more about our commitment to good stewardship, read our annual report or visit www.compassionuk.org/who-we-are ■

WHERE YOUR £25 GOES

Last year, this is how we used your monthly sponsorship donation:

The development and implementation of Compassion programmes that directly benefit the child.



Fundraising and finding sponsors for more children living in abject poverty.



Admin and governance



Child ministry to facilitate a personal, one-to-one relationship between the sponsor and child.



Thank you for generously investing into the life of a child living in poverty. To read the full 2013/14 annual report visit www.compassionuk.org/financial-integrity ■

★ SPONSORSHIP WORKS: LESLIE'S STORY

It's a sweltering June afternoon in 2002. A petite nine-year-old girl looks anxiously into the camera. Here in Valle del Sol, El Salvador, there are few opportunities for children; Leslie is unlikely to complete more than six years of schooling. She is in danger of getting caught up in gang violence and prostitution.¹ And yet the smile on her face tells a different story. She may be timid but there is hope in her eyes. Leslie knows she has a Compassion sponsor.

2002 A GIRL GIVEN HOPE

Thousands of miles away, Leslie's sponsor Jan has received her first letter. Her support means that this nine-year-old girl is now daring to dream of having a career. Having always thought she would follow in her mum's footsteps by running a petty trading stall, Leslie can now articulate her hopes for the future. "I want to be a dentist," she mutters quietly.

Sponsorship is also having a surprising effect on Leslie's mum, Maria. Once reluctant to send Leslie to the church-based project, Maria's been encouraged by the difference four months in the programme has made. "She's doing much better in her classes," Maria explains. This is the first contact Maria's ever had with church. "For me, it's been a blessing even though I don't go to the church."



2002: Leslie with her parents. After only four months of sponsorship, she has the confidence to dream of becoming a dentist.

2007: Leslie's mum Maria has found freedom in Christ.



2007 GROWING IN FAITH

It's 2007 and the reserved girl has grown into a self-assured teenager. Jan's sponsorship has enabled Leslie to continue receiving a school education and life-changing support at her Compassion project. With discipleship and weekly Bible classes, she's grown in faith. "I like sharing with other people about God," says Leslie.

Leslie's passion prompted her to explain the gospel to her mum. "Since I started being part of the project, I was constantly praying for her salvation," Leslie comments. Her prayers have been answered. After invitations from Leslie and her project workers, Maria started attending church. During a challenging time in which Leslie's father left the family, Maria found hope in Jesus. "They've helped me to come to church and for me to accept the Lord," Maria describes. "Jesus has changed me a lot."

WRITTEN BY REBECCA STANLEY

Counselling from staff at the project and words of care in her sponsor's letters have encouraged Leslie amidst her turbulent home situation. She has been able to concentrate on her studies and continues to make outstanding progress. "They teach me and help me out in things I cannot understand at school," Leslie explains.

Five years of sponsorship has given Leslie everything she needs to continue seeking after her dream. "My sponsor tells me to keep on going. I still want to become a dentist."

2015 A DREAM REALISED

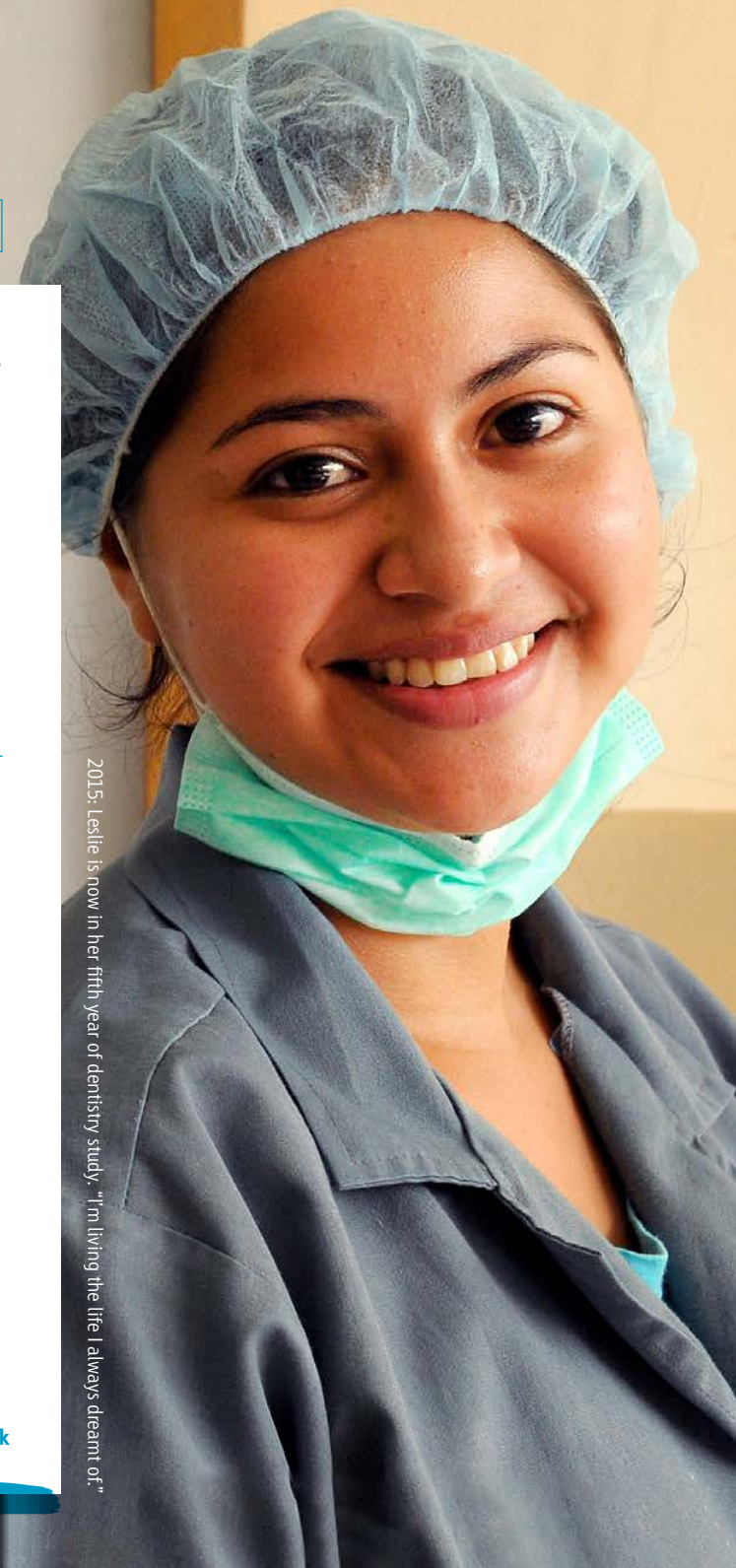
January 2015 marks over 12 years since Jan responded to God's call to care for the poor by picking up a photo of a petite girl from El Salvador. Leslie's story is a testament to the importance of her decision. Having graduated from the Compassion programme, Leslie has realised her dream. "I'm studying to be a dentist in the future. And it's because of the church and Compassion."

Sponsorship has had a long-lasting impact on her whole family. "My family, all of us go to church together now. We go to the church that's attached to the project I attended."

Leslie will be forever grateful for Jan's decision. "My sponsor was an important piece of all this. She helped make my dream come true." *cm*

We've also captured Leslie's story on film at www.youtube.com/user/compassionuk

2015: Leslie is now in her fifth year of dentistry study. "I'm living the life I always dreamt of."



¹ UNDP Human Development Report, 2013

BEHIND THE PROJECT GATES

FIVE WAYS YOU'RE CHANGING YOUR SPONSORED CHILD'S FUTURE

1 Access to education.

Depending on where your sponsored child lives, part of your £25 a month will be used to pay for their school fees. Alternatively, if education is free in their country, your donations will provide your sponsored child with uniforms, books and educational resources.

"If I was not part of the Compassion project today, I would be working at a roadside shop or somewhere to support my family financially." 12-YEAR-OLD PAWAN, EAST INDIA



2 Vocational skills training.

Every single sponsored child starts learning a vocational skill at the age of 12. This might be bead-making, woodworking, hairdressing or plumbing for example. Sponsoring a young person through their teenage years is vital as the Compassion programme will give them the skills they need to be self-sufficient in the future.

"Through Compassion I studied woodworking and now I get satisfaction through working." SAMESON, COMPASSION GRADUATE, ETHIOPIA



3 Encouragement through letter writing.

Never underestimate the importance of the words you write to your sponsored child. A study we carried out in Peru, Rwanda, Guatemala, East India and Thailand found that children who receive letters from their sponsors are more motivated at school and more determined to improve their circumstances.

"It excites me to receive my sponsor's letters, to hear from them and how their lives are going." 15-YEAR-OLD BRANDON, COLOMBIA



4 The opportunity to meet Jesus!

Your sponsored child will be given a Bible and taught about the eternal hope that can be found in Jesus.

"Receiving Jesus into my heart I felt something very special. The project has taught me that what is most worthwhile in this life is having Jesus in my heart." 9-YEAR-OLD ANAHI, ECUADOR



5 Support with planning and goal setting.

Christian staff members at your sponsored child's project will help them identify their passions and giftings in order to make plans for the future. Staff will encourage your sponsored child to fulfil their dreams.

"I enjoy doing My Plan for Tomorrow. Filling it out makes me dream. I am very excited to be a teacher." 13-YEAR-OLD SHAIRA, PHILIPPINES



Interested in finding out more about the career planning tool your sponsored child will be using? View a sample My Plan For Tomorrow at www.bit.ly/myplanfortomorrow. If you've got children or grandchildren, why not use it to help them start thinking about their future? *cm*

WRITTEN BY
REBECCA STANLEY

THE JOY LIGHTING OUR SOULS

Northern Ireland's Rend Collective was a band few outside of their native Bangor had heard of until just a few years ago. Now the UK Christian music scene has welcomed them with open arms, they have had hits in the secular charts, and the US has responded to them with unadulterated delight. Bekah Legg, Compassion UK's PR and Media Manager, caught up with leader and drummer Gareth Gilkeson on the last leg of their American tour:

The first song on your album is called 'Joy' and focuses on the joy of the Lord being our strength. It's a great song to sing along to but how can we practically live this out?

It's why we called the album 'The Art Of Celebration' rather than 'The Fact Of Celebration'. Celebration is an art form that we have to try and practise. Talking from our experience, we have a lot of rough days on the road; we've had days when we go somewhere where we're not treated that well, or we have cancelled flights, or we might be missing our families at home. All those things sound a wee bit silly, but when you're on the road all the time they can become big things. That's when we have to choose the celebration.

In a more serious situation, or a real struggle where people are going through really tough times, it's easy to choose the cynical response. It's a harder step to say, "Life is good; God is good. This is a terrible situation, but you know, I'm going to get through and trust God through it." That trust leads to celebration.

Rend Collective are passionate Compassion ambassadors. "We love that Compassion makes a real difference."



Last year you went to Kenya with Compassion. How do you think that message translates to the people you met there?

It's funny because the people I met living in poverty didn't seem to have a problem with the art of celebration; it's more the people who aren't in poverty. It's such a sickness isn't it, whenever people have an air of entitlement? And that's one of the beautiful things we've learnt from our brothers and sisters who live in places where they are not so fortunate; they have a zest for life and a longing for life without that entitlement.

We've seen that at work all over the world, because they're not after the world's riches, they find something sweeter. It's an amazing thing to learn and I was really humbled by the people we met in Africa.

There are a lot of amazing charities working in the developing world. What made you choose to be an ambassador for Compassion?

That's an easy one to answer. We love that Compassion makes a real difference and that you do it in the name of Jesus. That makes a big difference to us. Because everywhere we travel, we don't want to bring a message of just practical hope, but we want to bring a message of spiritual hope, so Compassion is perfectly aligned with what we do. *cm*



GOD INTENDED DIFFERENTLY

WRITTEN BY LUKE HAMILTON, WITH ROSETTE MUTONI



Struggling to survive earning 50 Rwandan francs a day (around 4.5 pence), life was hard for Françoise. The subsistence farming that she and her husband carried out was just enough to put food on the table. That was until the day Françoise discovered she was pregnant with quadruplets.

"I only wanted one child but God intended differently," says Françoise, who gave birth just a month later. As the four loving faces gazed up at her, the happiness slipped away as it became too much for her husband, who abandoned his family at the hospital. Suddenly the realisation hit Françoise; she now had four babies to care for and feed, alone. "I found her crying in despair at the hospital because she was given only one tin of baby formula for her four babies and then discharged," recalls Uwimana, the Child Survival Programme implementer.

"If Compassion had not helped us, I would not have managed. We live by Compassion," explains Françoise when praising the Child Survival Programme she was invited to be a part of.

The project immediately gave her eight tins of baby formula, enough for the first two weeks. Each tin costs 8,000 Rwandan francs (around £6.82), which is a world

away from the 50 francs she was earning each day. The assistance didn't stop there. Compassion provided her with clothing, medical insurance, porridge, soap, baby lotion and to this day has continually supplied her with formula, which if she had bought herself would have come to 1.6 million francs.

Nurtured through the Child Survival Programme these 11-month-old quadruplets are now thriving, but their story


does not end there. Soon after their birth the Compassion project staff got in contact with Françoise's husband. After being reassured that there was help available to take care of his expanded family, he was persuaded to return to the family home. "I am grateful that Compassion came to my rescue," Françoise explains.

Thanks to the intervention of Compassion's Child Survival Programme, this family's future has been secured. *cm*

Every day 17,000 under-fives die from largely preventable causes. Despite falling infant mortality rates in the past two decades, at current progress, the 2015 Millennium Development Goal of cutting infant mortality by two-thirds won't be achieved until 2026.¹ Since 2003, Compassion's Child Survival Programme has been helping children survive the early years when they are most vulnerable to disease and malnutrition. Find out more at www.compassionuk.org/csp

The healthy babies earlier this year, no longer just surviving but thriving. PHOTOGRAPHER: Rosette Mutoni

¹ BBC, 2014; UNICEF, 2014



Last year, 378,536 Bibles
were given to children in
Compassion's programmes.

MARK 16:15

**"GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH
THE GOSPEL TO ALL CREATION."**



A BETTER WORLD FOR OUR GIRLS

WRITTEN BY **KATE SHARMA**, WITH **JONATHAN L. SUWARATANA**

Once upon a time in the hill top village of Nadoi in Northern Thailand there was a young girl named Suemue. At night, the 16-year-old would gaze at the stars from her wooden hut and dream. Suemue had just one wish; she longed to read her children a bedtime story.

Was she also longing for a handsome prince and a fairytale wedding? No. Suemue was already married. She'd been married since she was 12 and had the first of her two children at 13. Suemue didn't finish school and never learnt to read. So not only were storybooks a mystery to her, so too were instructions on medication and road signs in the city.

Achieving gender equality in education is one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Progress has been made as girls' enrolment in both primary and lower secondary education increased by more than 10 per cent between 2000 and 2012.¹ However, 31 million girls of primary school age are still not attending school.² These young women are denied a fundamental human right that will impact not just their future, but generations to come.

The statistics are really quite simple. By spending an extra year in primary school a girl's eventual wages are likely to be 10-20 per cent higher.³ An educated



Suemue dreams of being able to read to her children.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Jonathan L. Suwaratana

girl will reinvest 90 per cent of her future income in her family, compared with 35 per cent for a boy.⁴

Thankfully, there are others who share Suemue's dream. At the Mae Um Lo Child Development Centre, Pastor Ku and his team have been working hard to give girls from the community the education they so rightfully deserve. Alongside educational programmes, they are showing families the merits of educating their girls and delaying marriage. Girls and boys now learn happily alongside one another, well into their teenage years. For years Pastor Ku dreamt about extending these opportunities to young mums, like Suemue. In September 2014, their hard work paid off when the Mae Um Lo Child Survival Programme officially opened.

"Someday, I want to be able to read to my children and help them with their schoolwork," Suemue says with a smile. The fulfillment of her dream is the ultimate fairytale ending, because a better world for our girls means a better world for everyone. **cm**



469 LIVES CHANGED BY WEARING LOVE OUT

"Wear love out. Love the least and the last as scripture tells us. Step in and sponsor a child." Charlotte Gambill's bold challenge resonates around the crowded arena. The lights go up on a sea of women lost in worship and prayer. As volunteers look up and begin to hand out profiles of children awaiting sponsors, they are astounded. Hundreds of hands are raised in response to Charlotte's call.

Eight months on from Cherish Conference 2014 and that moment is still fresh in Charlotte's memory. "God's presence was so close," she explains. "The core message of Cherish since its beginnings has always been about helping others. So I knew the girls' hearts would be ready to respond. But when I found out we had exceeded all the expectations for children sponsored, I was just amazed at the willingness of these women to be an answer."

Behind the numbers are individual lives that have been changed. Thanks to this group of courageous women, 469 children have wept, laughed and smiled as they've been told by Compassion project workers that they have a sponsor. 469 children have rejoiced in the news that someone they've never met is praying for them and writing encouraging letters. 469 families have experienced joy and relief as their financial

burdens have lessened by their child being given access to education and healthcare.

The call to step out and respond to God's command to care for the poor was at the heart of the conference. As Charlotte recalls, "The Wear Love Out theme came from a scripture in Colossians 3:14. I wanted to empower an army of women because we need to model Jesus to a world that doesn't need to just hear what we believe in, but also needs to see it in action."

Charlotte's passion for equipping women for mission is contagious. Cherish has grown from a church venue to the 14,000 capacity Leeds Direct Arena but Charlotte is still believing God for more. As the countdown to Cherish 2015 continues, she gives another invitation: "I encourage every woman young or old to join us in 2015 for Cherish, where we will touch heaven together so we can change earth. I am

expecting more lives to be changed, more children to be helped and an army of women to be strengthened and empowered. Hope you can be there." **cm**

Cherish 28-30 May 2015

First Direct Arena Leeds

Hosted by Charlotte Gambill with speakers Priscilla Shirer and Andi Andrew and worship leader Jenn Johnson.

For more information visit www.cherishconference.com

A personal message from Charlotte to all those who have sponsored a child at Cherish:

"I want to say to every woman, you are amazing! You are giving a child hope, love and a future. Sometimes the distance between you and your next letter from the child you sponsored can cause you to forget what an incredible difference you are making. When I had the privilege of meeting many of the children we sponsored through Compassion, the joy and gratitude in their faces was so evident. So to every sponsor I say thank you for what you are doing."

Charlotte Gambill speaking on the theme "Wear Love Out".
PHOTOGRAPHER: Cherish



EDUCATION RESPONSE: OVER AND ABOVE

Education is vital. From the very beginning, it impacts a child's life. Statistics show that one of the greatest influencing factors on child mortality is the literacy of a mother. And as a child grows and develops, their access to schooling will affect their likelihood of gaining employment in the future.¹

Set this knowledge against the fact that in Sub-Saharan Africa, only 32.6 per cent of secondary school age children are enrolled in school, and you can see the disconnect.² The disconnect where Compassion's RESPOND ministry is working.

We have been working in the region since 1980, breaking the cycle of poverty through long-term investment in the lives of children. In Kenya, over 95,000 children are receiving the support they need to attend school through our sponsorship programme. Project staff are also working hard to teach parents the value of education so they continue sending their children to school rather than out looking for work.

In some cases though, despite their efforts, poor secondary schooling prevents many children from gaining access to further education that they could easily qualify for.

The Kenyan Government is doing their part too. Students reaching fifty-five per cent and above in the national secondary school-leaving examinations qualify for grants to attend university and gain access to specialist courses, including medicine and engineering.

Through our RESPOND ministry, we are piloting an initiative to give children a greater opportunity to receive the government grants. We have identified 50 students who are excelling in their schooling and given them scholarships to attend quality secondary schools for the next four years. By giving them the resources to excel in their studies and enabling them to qualify for the

WRITTEN BY KYLIE SCOTT

government grants, they will be able to receive a university education many of them could only have dreamt of.

After just one term in their new schools, 90 per cent of the children are performing significantly above average. With dreams of becoming doctors, lawyers and country changers, these children are on the way to realising their potential. *cm*

If you would like to find out more about Compassion's RESPOND ministry, or donate to the Kenyan scholarship initiative, visit www.compassionuk.org/respond or contact the office.

Brian Siara achieved the third highest grades out of all Compassion-assisted children.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Silas Irungu



www.compassionuk.org

LEAD 

17

Margret is bringing change to the children in Namayingo.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Caroline Mwinemwesigwa



THE CHANGE MAKER

Meet Margret Makhoha. Passionate advocate of people in poverty, a Member of Parliament in Uganda since 2011 and a Compassion Leadership Development Programme graduate. Determined to make a difference in her home district of Namayingo, Margret has introduced a number of initiatives to help improve the lives of local people.

Margret has set up income generation programmes through the local churches, training people in jewellery making and pig rearing so they are able to set up businesses to support their families. She has also distributed one tonne of improved maize seed procured from the government through lobbying and 20,000 coffee seedlings to help crop cultivation.

Namayingo suffers from a myriad of problems including a lack of safe drinking water, no electricity and few hospitals. One of the most heartbreaking moments for Margret was a trip to a health centre in her district. "I went to the health centre and found a patient with a drip

on the floor. Another one lay on the bare metal slats of the bed," says Margret. Using her savings, she immediately purchased 200 mattresses and distributed them to all 30 health centres in Namayingo. Margret also lobbied the Ministry of Health and as a result more staff were employed and an ambulance provided for the main health centre.

A lack of electricity meant women giving birth at night in hospital were forced to do so

by torch light. Upon discovering this, Margret lobbied the government and the district is now due to receive electricity very soon. Two district roads have also been successfully lobbied for, providing better access to the remote villages.

Even though the community faces many challenges, Margret is determined to keep making a difference. In 2016, Margret intends to stand for re-election. She says there is still so much to do that she will not be able to complete in her current term of five years. Margret is just one of the many Leadership Development Programme students who have gone on to make a difference in their communities. *cm*

For more information about the Leadership Development Programme, visit www.compassionuk.org/ldp

WRITTEN BY ROZ WALSH,
WITH CAROLINE
MWINEMWESIGWA



A LIFE CUT SHORT BUT A LEGACY THAT LIVES ON

I had worn that blue Compassion t-shirt before, but never had it felt like this.

I remember an instance when, sitting in an armchair in our house, Nathan, our eldest son, sat and listened as his younger brother talked about quitting the job he no longer enjoyed. It was an eye-opening conversation for my wife Wendy and I, because Nathan was known for being hot-headed at times, but this time his irritation wasn't just a teenage strop or a moment of rebellion. He was welling up at the thought that the Compassion child he and his brother sponsored might, as he put it, "end up back on the scrap heap of life."

It was then we realised that his weekends away volunteering with Compassion and his collection of blue t-shirts weren't just another thing he did. This was something he was truly passionate about.

Skip then to the early hours of July 7, two years ago.

We had only been in a few hours ourselves after celebrating the wedding of Nathan's best friend Dan. We had left Nathan and his fiancé, Jess, at the reception, laughing and counting the days until their own wedding, before we drove home in the rain. When the door bell rang I just thought, "I bet

that's Nathan forgetting his key." But it wasn't him. It was the police. And from then on our lives have never been the same again.

The same rain we drove home in claimed the life of our 21-year-old son as his car crashed that night, leaving us without our boy, Jess without her fiancé and three Compassion children without their sponsor.

I'm not sure who suggested it, but as we got up the next morning, heartbroken and numb, we made a decision that we would go to church that day as usual, and we would wear Nathan's Compassion t-shirts. As we stood and choked through the words of his favourite worship song, we let that whole congregation know that our son stood for something incredible. He had been someone who fought to change lives.

As the weeks and months passed the loss of Nathan didn't lessen. If anything, our larger-than-life firstborn son left such a hole the pain, at times, has been unbearable. Grieving that we would never see his forthcoming wedding, or his children's dedications, we became profoundly aware that he hadn't had the length of years behind him to leave a legacy of his own.

And so we decided as his family that we would keep his passion alive and continue volunteering with Compassion. Instead of flowers at his funeral, we

fundraised for Compassion. We have now raised close to £7,000, and thanks to Compassion we have been able to help fund a library in Tanzania, leaving a legacy that will change lives through education. One day Wendy and I hope to stop off at that library, where a plaque on the wall simply says: "In loving memory of Nathan Paul Gray, a life cut short but a legacy that lives on."

Who but God could turn the darkest and most harrowing of circumstances into an opportunity to bring hope and light?

You know, it might have been Nathan's passion initially but we made a decision as a family to continue this work, understanding that poverty isn't someone else's responsibility, it's ours. *cm*

WRITTEN BY **PAUL GRAY**.
PAUL AND HIS FAMILY SPONSOR
TWO CHILDREN WITH COMPASSION.



Will you join us, as we volunteer with Compassion, in seeing lives changed in Jesus' name? To find out more visit www.compassionuk.org/volunteering, e-mail volunteers@compassionuk.org or call 01932 832250.

COULD YOU VOLUNTEER WITH COMPASSION?

Four ways you can volunteer with Compassion:

1 LOCAL CHURCH ACTIVIST



Our Local Church Activists are passionate sponsors who agree to represent Compassion in their churches.

2 EVENT VOLUNTEER



Do you have experience in hospitality, catering, exhibitions or public speaking? We're always looking for outgoing, friendly and passionate people to join the Compassion team at the events we attend. If you're a team player who is passionate about justice and ending poverty, we'd love you to join us!

3 SHARE WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS



Combine your passion with our resources and challenge people within your sphere of influence to sponsor a child through casual conversations and social media.

4 PRAYER PARTNER



Prayer is at the heart of all we do. We need people who will commit to praying for our work and the activities our amazing volunteers are involved in.



PASSIONATE ABOUT MISSION

Compassion Church Partnership is a fantastic opportunity for everyone in your church to become personally involved in mission. We caught up with three church leaders to hear how partnership has had a direct impact on their congregations:



RICHARD JAMES,
CHRIST CHURCH,
COCKFOSTERS
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

"We've seen people being transformed through our partnership with Compassion. A highlight was taking a team out to visit Compassion projects in Uganda. The faith and quality of the Compassion staff and church pastors was inspirational."

Why do you partner with Compassion?

As the vicar of an Anglican evangelical church looking for a way for a local church like ours to make a difference in the lives of the poor, I was very impressed by the work of Compassion – the professionalism, the experience that they've gained from seeing sponsorship over decades and the church-based nature of it. I'm a great believer in the importance of the local church.

We began a church partnership in 2008 and were sent the details of 50 children to get sponsored. Lacking faith, I hoped that at most ten of these might be sponsored. By the end of the morning all 50 had gone and there was a waiting list for 20 more! Since then over 150 children have been sponsored, and one by each class at our church school who have caught the vision too!

In 2011 we were privileged to take a small team of church members to visit the projects. It was so encouraging to see that often the child being accepted into the project is part of a spiritual journey to faith, not just for them, but for the whole family.

What difference has partnering with Compassion made to your church?

We've seen people here being transformed by sponsoring a child, people discovering the joy of giving. And it's increased our faith levels. People have actually found something they can make a difference with.



DOMINIC DE SOUZA,
LETCHWORTH
GARDEN CITY CHURCH
ELIM PENTECOSTAL

"Since partnering with Compassion there's been an increase in the mission-consciousness and activity of our church. We've sent regular teams out to visit Compassion projects, fundraised to support a Child Survival Programme and been involved in supporting Richmond Wandera, a formerly sponsored child who is training pastors across Uganda."

Why do you partner with Compassion?

Compassion takes this huge issue of how you can help people in poverty around the world and makes it personal and accessible. I think it provides a viable entry point for all church members to engage tangibly in mission.

What difference has partnering with Compassion made to your church?

It's had an impact not just in the international sphere where we're helping the children but also here in Letchworth.

More church members have been moved to compassion and practical action in order to see lasting and meaningful change in the lives of the precious children they sponsor. God has done a work on our hearts in the pursuit of justice and the giving of time and money into missions-related causes – often well beyond the arena and scope of Compassion.

"...it provides a viable entry point for all church members to engage tangibly in mission."



STEVE PETCH,
GRACE CHURCH,
CHICHESTER
NEWFRONTIERS

"We've been sponsoring children with Compassion ever since we began as a small church plant – it's been vital in helping us engage with the poor. We sponsor children in the Philippines and when Typhoon Haiyan struck in November 2013, I was humbled by the sacrificial response of church members."

Why do you partner with Compassion?

We started right back in the early days when we were a church plant looking for a way for people to connect with the poor that was personal, achievable but also linked to both the gospel and the local church.

Through the child sponsorship relationship we get to put into practice values of mercy, sacrifice, generosity and compassion.

What difference has partnering with Compassion made to your church?

Compassion child sponsorship was the first thing we did to engage with the poor and it really put it on the agenda. We have now begun to do other things locally as a result.

I've had several people in the church thank me for introducing them to the sponsorship scheme, saying what a real difference it's made to them. If they've had a letter from their child they tell me bits and pieces of news which I find really encouraging.



We'd like to invite you to share this article with your church leader. A member of our Church Partnerships Team would love to have a coffee with them and share more about how a Compassion Church Partnership could grow your church's passion for mission.

To arrange this or to order a copy of our church partnership brochure, call 01932 836499, e-mail partnerships@compassionuk.org or visit www.compassionuk.org/church-partnerships *cm*



EVERY FOUR MINUTES A CHILD ACCEPTS CHRIST THROUGH THE COMPASSION PROGRAMME

COLOMBIA



"To know God's life has been an amazing blessing to me. It is like living a new life with the Lord."

13-YEAR-OLD AMANDA ROSA

BRAZIL



"I know that I don't have much in common with my dear sponsor. I'm not his age and my house is very small. I don't have even a dog! But we both know Jesus."

8-YEAR-OLD VINICIUS

THAILAND



"I decided to give up my life for God. My sponsor told me to be strong in the Lord."

COMPASSION GRADUATE SURAKKANA

MAKING DISCIPLES

WRITTEN BY REBECCA STANLEY, WITH CHARITY AINEMBABAZI

Sumayiya came to faith through her Compassion project. She now teaches her siblings about Jesus.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Charity Ainembabazi

15-year-old Sumayiya huddles under a thread-bare blanket. She strains her eyes as she struggles to use the first light of dawn to decipher the words in her Bible. Despite being afraid of even uttering the name of Jesus in her house, she begins to pray. It's six years since Sumayiya first heard about Jesus at her Compassion project. As she finally summons the courage to pray a prayer of commitment, slowly and softly tears of joy begin to fall onto her pillow.

Last year, 126,600 children in Compassion's programmes prayed the same life-changing prayer as Sumayiya. That's a child coming to Christ every four minutes! Coming to faith is the single most important part of releasing a child from poverty. This is why Christ is at the centre of everything we do.

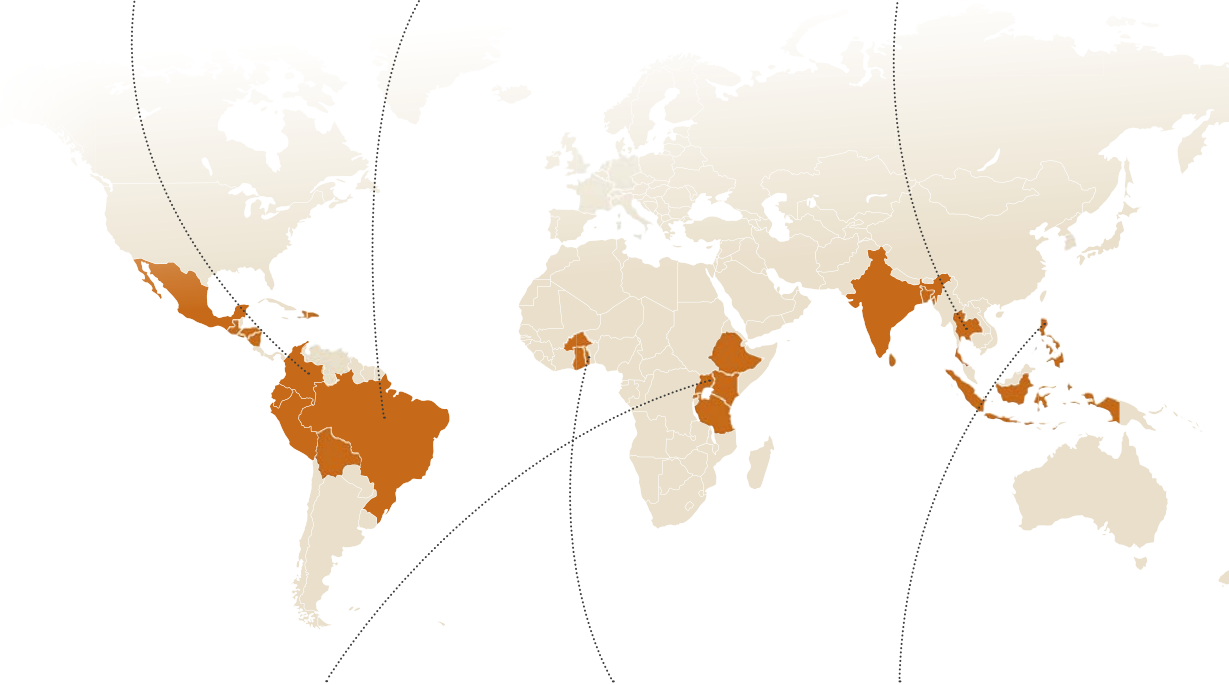
We work exclusively with the local church to deliver

the Compassion programme. At Compassion projects, children are given their own Bible, disciplined by Christian staff members and taught a curriculum specifically developed to help them mature in their faith. From El Salvador to Togo, children are learning about their identity in Christ and the importance of Bible reading and prayer.

Your part in their journey of faith is also vital. Not only do your donations enable your sponsored child to attend their project where they receive Bible teaching, the words you write in your letters can be faith-building.

This support will be invaluable for Sumayiya as she grows in faith. As the only Christian in her family, her sponsor's letters will remind her that she's part of a global body of believers. In a home where her parents are reluctant to allow her to attend church, project staff members from the local church are already discipling her every Saturday.

As the shadows withdraw and the sun rests in the sky, Sumayiya pauses anxiously as she hears her family beginning to stir. She mutters another fervent prayer to God: "I want to live a life that is pleasing to you Lord. I want to be a living example to my friends and siblings so that they can also give their lives to you." *cm*



UGANDA

"Thank you God that I can be a Christian."

15-YEAR-OLD SUMAYIYA

TOGO



"I've learnt to love the word of God. I learnt about Abraham, Moses, Jacob and Jesus."

11-YEAR-OLD MADELINE

THE PHILIPPINES



"Going to the project assisted me in my studies and in knowing the Lord."

16-YEAR-OLD MARK

Mother's day 2015

MAKE A MOTHER'S DAY

MAKE A
MOTHER'S
DAY

15 MARCH 2015

Every mother has hopes and dreams for her children. For some mothers, it is simply the hope of survival. Make a mother's day today by speaking up to find a sponsor for a child in desperate poverty. By giving a brief presentation to your friends over coffee, at your church or to your family, you will be helping a child in need access food, medical care, education and the opportunity to hear about Jesus.

Order your FREE Mother's Day planning pack today.
Order online at www.compassionuk.org/mothersday
or call us on **01932 836490**.


Releasing children from poverty
Compassion
in Jesus' name