



Spring 2024

Dear Friends,

I'm sure you may have wondered what became of the children you sponsored and what they made of their lives once they left the sanctuary of their orphanage as young adults. Perhaps you've wondered if the help you gave through sponsorship motivated them to want to help others. We have learned that very often as an adult the kindness and generosity many children received from their sponsor caused them to do the same for an impoverished child in their country.

When sponsored children grow up

I want to tell you the story of two young men growing up in Africa who were sponsored when they were boys and how they later dedicated their lives to finding sponsors for children who are just like they were as young boys.

Last year World's Children began assisting the Rwanda Children's Education Program (RCEP) in Africa. It is a brand new educational program to ensure that children from impoverished rural families have the resources they need to attend school. It was started by these two young Rwandan men: Alexis Hakizimana and Patrick Niyitugize, who both had a sponsor help them get an education.

Patrick's story

Patrick and his three siblings were raised by a single mother. When Patrick was seven years old he was sponsored by someone in America. His sponsorship paid for his school fees and included a meal every Saturday. Understanding what a wonderful gift he was given, he studied hard and later received a scholarship to the University of Nebraska. After finishing college he went back to Rwanda, determined to do for village children what someone had done for him.

"I found hope. I knew that someone, somewhere cared that I become the best version of myself and I have strived to do that everyday since."

— Patrick Niyitugize, Administrator, RCEP

Patrick says that children without a sponsor frequently drop out of school and become street kids. Many lead criminal lives that turn into prison terms. The girls who drop out generally get pregnant before age 15.

A new style of child sponsorship

The Rwanda Children's Education Program is helping 105 children who live with their parents and have no income to pay for school needs. This is a new kind of child sponsorship program for World's Children because sponsored kids do not live in an orphanage — they come from extremely impoverished families who cannot afford to pay for their children's education. Sponsorship of a child will pay for textbooks, notebooks, pens, backpacks, two school uniforms with shoes, socks and sweater, toileteries, school fees and one meal a day.

Rwanda families survived tragedy

If ever there was a generation of children who deserved our help, it is the children of Rwanda. Sadly, Rwanda may be best known for the genocide that happened three decades ago. The two major tribes in that country, the Hutus and the Tutsis, have a history of animosity. In April 1994 members of the Hutu tribe suddenly rose up all over Rwanda and killed their neighbors who were Tutsis. Over the course of the next 100 days an estimated 500,000 to one million Tutsi people were killed. To its credit, the country and the Tutsi people have chosen forgiveness over revenge. Sponsorship will help educate the children of people who survived that tragedy.

Rwanda – scenic beauty but extreme poverty

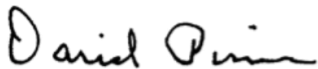
The Republic of Rwanda is a landlocked country located just below the equator in central Africa. It is called Land of a Thousand Hills because of its green, rolling hills comprising 50 percent of the country. Mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, monkeys and over 670 species of birds live in the hills, while lions, leopards and elephants are in the lowlands. But as lush and beautiful as the country is, within it lies some of Africa's worst poverty.

The average monthly income in Rwanda is US \$77/month or \$2.57/day

Village people make even less than that amount and educating their children is an expense many of them simply cannot afford. But, thanks to Patrick and Alexis — two young men who once had a sponsor lift them up, there is hope that at least some of these children can get the help they need to attend school.

Please consider sponsoring a child in Rwanda or making a donation to the Rwanda Education Fund.

With gratitude,



David Purviance
Executive Director



World's Children

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Rwanda Children's Education Program



Patrick speaks to students being helped by the Rwanda Children's Education Program (RCEP) on their first day of school.



Inside one of the schools attended by sponsored children.



Patrick (on the left) talks to a village family about how the RCEP can help their child attend school.



Alexis makes a soccer ball out of plastic bags for the students to play with during recess.

“Our childhood was different from that of a child from an average American or European family. While many of them were busy reading the instructions on how to build a Lego spaceship, I was collecting plastic bags expecting that I would be able to make a soccer ball... Generally speaking, the most popular toy in Rwanda is a soccer ball. We all tried to make ourselves happy with the supplies we had available.”

- Justin, a boy who grew up in Rwanda



GIVE TO THE RWANDA EDUCATION FUND

worldschildren.org/projects/rwanda-education-fund

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