

Extending a Vision of Hope Through Hands-On Christian Love

Living Letters

Cristina's Story by Jacqui Knight

But the only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves! Your lives are a letter written in our hearts, and everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you. Clearly, you are a letter from Christ prepared by us. It is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on stone, but on human hearts.

-- 2nd Corinthians 3: 2-3 (New Living Translation)

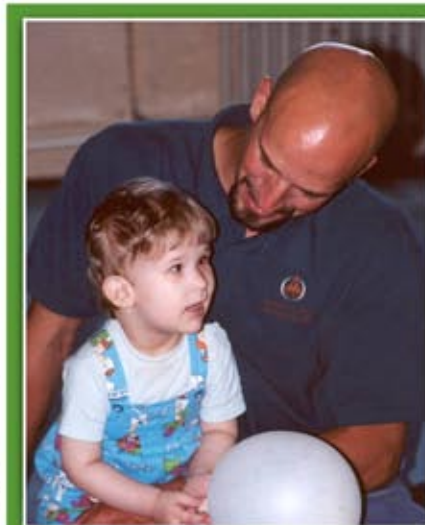


Nothing strengthens my faith like catching a glimpse of the Lord at work in the lives of our children. We know how "God so loved the world," but we don't often fully grasp, this side of heaven anyway, how much God loves us.

In the summer of 2000 a mission team joined me in Arad. The team had two massage therapists on board and I had visited the local orphanage ahead of time to see if I could get them in. As usual, the director showed reluctance—but there were two children who were showing obvious delays in development, and she was eager to see if our therapists could offer any solutions. We jumped at the invitation and our team members spent several days working with these two young children.

I made regular visits to that orphanage and was always happy when a woman named Dr. Laos was on shift. She had taken a personal interest in the Tamas siblings—Cristina and Marian, the 2 children that our therapists had worked with the year before—and every time she saw me, she asked if I could make room for them at the House of Hope. The idea of taking a new child wasn't even on my radar screen, so I would just shrug my shoulders and say, "we're full." About a year later, the orphanage "shut down" (it's still functioning to this day), and all the children living there needed new homes. So I was sent to bring one back.

It was a sunny afternoon and most of the older children were outside. I scanned the courtyard looking for the oldest little girl I could find. Dr. Laos was also out in the courtyard. She came over to ask how I was doing, and when I told her I was there to choose a child, her face lit up. Without hesitation she asked, "What about Cristina and Marian?" And that was it. I had walked into that orphanage with no idea what child I was looking for, and walked out with two! I knew immediately that God had been orchestrating this day for a very long time.



Cristina (2001) with Global Hope team member and massage therapist, Matt Gibble.

You see, Cristina's developmental delays had never been officially diagnosed and she had recently been moved to another center for the deaf, mute and blind. She was none of the above. At four years old, her eyes were severely crossed and she had only 4-5 words. We later confirmed that she is a victim of fetal alcoholic syndrome, and without proper care and attention, both Cristina and her brother would have been labeled "unwanted," and all but disappeared into the system.

Cristina brought a new dynamic to the House of Hope, and gave back every ounce of love and affection that we poured into her. She immediately got glasses (and who can say no to a four-year-old in glasses?), which also helped her sense of balance (she used to fall down a lot!). Each day she learned new words—my personal favorite was "urt" (yogurt), which leads me to her favorite activity: eating! From day one she could eat every other kid under the table! She was both silly and loveable—and impatient, and selfish—just like every other four-year-old!

Cristina and I shared numerous hospital beds and were practically "regulars" in the pediatric ward. We once spent 10 torturous days in the hospital together, waiting for an operation on her eyes. We struggled to pass the long days and uncomfortable nights. Eventually, Cristina was tired of being stuck with me and started approaching complete strangers in the hallways asking for food. When I'd say, "No, Christina, please come here," she'd say, "No!" and swing her hand through the air to keep me from getting too close.



Cristina, 2007

By the time they finally released us, I was unusually irritated and impatient with her. It wasn't until we were on our way home that I realized, I was mad at her. Did she think I enjoyed sharing a twin bed and emptying her plastic potty? She was completely dependent on me and I was the only person in that hospital who actually cared for her. Instead of returning my affection, she walked away—scoffing at me—and took things from strangers who gave her what she wanted, when she wanted it. I knew it was ludicrous, and I felt foolish that this 4-year-old had actually hurt my feelings.

My reaction bothered me for days, and finally I began to wonder if I had ever hurt the Lord the way Cristina had hurt me? He had provided for my every need. No one loved me more than He did. And yet, time and again, I looked to other places and other people to fulfill me. But He just kept on loving me, serving me, and forgiving me. When I think of Cristina I remember how God reached down and rescued her from that orphanage, and I think of how much He loves her... and me.





New Friends and New Horizons

by Jacci Knight

"He who dies with the most toys wins"— the mantra of capitalism and the phrase that describes our culture of consumerism. As I packed for my first trip to the continent of Africa, I knew I was about to witness the harsh reality of impoverished people fighting to adapt to such a world.

How did I get to Africa? The story began last Spring when we received an email from a Kenyan woman seeking sponsorship for her ministry, The Hope for Orphans Rehabilitation Center (HOREC) in Nairobi. Ike Elliott, our president, receives similar emails daily, but a nudge in his spirit made him open this one, and reply. After several conversations by email, the board voted to invest some time and resources into learning more about HOREC, and the children who live there.

So, almost a year later, here I was. After a hot, dusty, and congested drive through the city of Nairobi in my friend Jen's SUV, we turned onto the road that would take us to HOREC. (Jennifer Phillips is a friend of mine who also worked with abandoned children in Romania and now lives in Kenya). Since many side roads do not have proper names, Christine Wambui, the resourceful founder and director of the orphanage, agreed to wait for us on the main road. We kept our eyes peeled for a woman in a red shirt and finally spotted Christine on the side of the road, waving to us with a broad smile on her face. She jumped in the car and led us a short way to the orphanage.

I was greeted by a chorus line of children—from the front gate to the front door—holding signs that said, "Welcome to HOREC," and "Please Feel At Home." As they sang, I made my way down the row and shook each one of their hands, trying to look into each of their little faces. That's when I realized what a big event this was for them. This foreigner will blow through town over just a few days, with means to bless their lives. When she leaves, she might leave them with just a little more than what they have. They were eager to make a good impression.

HOREC is home to 24 children: twenty-one girls and three boys. The oldest is 14 (and entering her first year of high school—she wants to be a doctor) and the youngest is 3. Five of these 24 children are HIV positive. All of them have lost one or both parents to HIV or AIDS.



HOREC is home to 21 girls who have lost one or both of their parents to HIV or AIDS.

Per our request, Christine had sent us a monthly budget. Within the first 15 minutes of being with them, I realized that the budget she sent was not the budget they have, it was the budget they need. They have no consistent income—only random donations, some foreign and some local. Wherever they come from, they don't come often enough. When I arrived, they were 5 months behind in rent. The corner of the "office" served as their pantry—stacked with three large bags of beans, grains and "cream of wheat." I suspected then that this was all their food, and I was right—there were no fruits or vegetables, eggs or milk stashed away in an icebox somewhere (in the house with no electricity!)

No one who serves at HOREC receives a salary (there are 2 house mothers, a part-time social worker, and Christine). They are literally living day-to-day, believing that God will provide what they cannot see, and accepting the generosity of their community—one kind neighbor brought a pile of kale during my visit.

Anyone living in America under these conditions would probably feel a little less than blessed. In fact, we might question whether or not God was paying attention! But the overwhelming impression I received from these

children—these people—was one of joy and optimism. How was this possible? I had to take some time to hear their stories before I could understand: they praised God because they had been *rescued*.

Many of these girls cared for their dying parents while also caring for younger siblings. School was no longer an option for them. In Africa, girl orphans are often vulnerable to extended family members who survive their parents. One girl from HOREC saw her mother murdered by an uncle over land issues. Others were sexually abused (*repeatedly*) by the men who took over their homes.

Their faith is not based on their condition, but rather the joy and relief they feel when think of what *might have been*. As the Psalmist said, "If God had not been for us when everyone was against us, We would have been swallowed alive..." (Psalm 124:2-3, The Message)



I received a beautiful and melodic greeting from the children at HOREC.



New Friends

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It made me think: Where would I be if God had not rescued me? If He would have given up on me when I turned my back? If He had not provided Christian peers during my high school years? If He had not shown me mercy when the consequences of my own sin threatened to swallow me alive?

One of my most memorable experiences from this trip didn't take place at HOREC, but at another orphanage tucked away in the mountains of Naivasha, Kenya where my friend Jen works. I was sitting in her room reading a book as she was getting her kids in and out of the showers before bedtime. For the sake of time, she sent two little girls to the shower in her private bath. When they arrived, with their little towels wrapped around their tiny bodies, these girls were in the middle of a full-blown giggle fit—and they could not stop! I listened as they dropped the soap and knocked things over—even the sound of the water couldn't drown them out. Every event caused another eruption of giggles. As I sat there listening, my back to the shower wall, I thought to myself: *this works*. The work that we do, reaching out to the most vulnerable and giving them a safe place to grow: it works!

In just a few short months, by God's hand, Global Hope has been able to provide almost \$2000 in donations to HOREC. Through other ministries, He has provided an acre of land, the foundation for a new house (a literal concrete foundation), and a cow to provide fresh milk for the children! Needless to say, there are many opportunities for Global Hope to come alongside and support Christine Wambui, and her vision for the children at HOREC. We are committed to helping them reach the next step!



A Note From Walter Williams

Things are moving right along, the beautiful weather of May has passed and now the days are quickly heating up into June. So much new life and growth awakens during the spring months here. The changes come fast and they happen right before your eyes, if you take the time to watch. From the early days of preparing the soil and the planting of gardens, soon follow all of the amazing fruit blossoms: apple, peach, prune, apricot, pear, and of course, the cherry trees, which are now producing a bounty of God's many wonders and blessings. The strawberries come first, and I understand that some of the finest and sweetest in all of Romania are grown in this western region, even right here along the line of villages where I live, and I have eaten my share indeed. The Global Hope kids are busy picking cherries and helping in the gardens. The prunes will ripen next, and so on, the natural course continues through out the summer. Oh yeah—then there are all the vegetables! Nothing grows like it does here in Romania—another bounty, another story—the gardens of rich, rich life! Someone told me when I first arrived that it is a pastime for some to sit by their gardens and watch them grow. I have come to believe this is true. The veggies grow that fast and if you are patient you can see...

I am so blessed to work my own little piece of land. It is so humbling to learn more, to come closer by experience in understanding how much commitment is needed and how much self satisfaction comes from tending a garden. This is still a way of life for many in the small villages, and this is why it is so valuable and important to share with our children. The utilization of produce and fruit our houses actively do is outstanding. They preserve and jar everything, filling their pantries for the year to come. It's an amazing reality that I think can get overlooked, until you are a part of it. The money saved is valid, but the life lessons and self worth gained—from using the most of what mother earth gives (God's bounty & creation)—is huge! It's *priceless*.

I have been a busy worker in my garden, and serving in some different ways of late. There is ministry out here in the village of Cuvin where I live. As I take time to be here it has evolved into other opportunities to serve, especially with a small church, and with my neighbors who need and appreciate my time and help. It is a real confirmation for me that my time in Romania may never be done, and that I need to be patient with how I can truly serve effectively.

Walter Williams, Global Hope Missionary, has been serving in Romania since 2004.



The House of Hope NEEDS New Wheels!

Driving in Romania is liberating at best (who needs lanes, anyway?) and downright scary at its worst! I had the privilege of learning to drive in Arad in the Yellow Dragon, a.k.a. the ex-ambulance Volkswagen van that we bought second-hand in 1999 from Germany (I have no idea how old it was when we bought it!). Perhaps it was no longer of use to the German EMTs, but it served us very well. Now, after 250,000 kilometers and several years of repairs—with more to come if we don't act soon—we must say goodbye to our beloved vehicle (it's a love-hate relationship actually) that has toted our kids and mission teams around for the last ten years.



The Yellow Dragon and its precious cargo from the House of Hope.

Our goal is to raise about 13,000 Euros to purchase a good, used vehicle—and we are already on our way with a generous \$2,000 donation!

Please consider giving a gift to help us purchase a new vehicle for the House of Hope. With 9 children, the transportation is an invaluable resource for the family.

Looking for a new sound and meaningful message to add to your playlist?

Jeff Caylor, musician and songwriter from Colorado Springs, offers a snapshot of the human heart in his debut album, *Okay*. For every album sold at jeffcaylor.com, Jeff will donate 10% to Global Hope! Go to jeffcaylor.com/heart to order your copy of *Okay*. (Click on the 'Heart' link to find Global Hope!) And while you're there, drop Jeff a line to say "thank you!" Offer good for the month of June.

Don't forget to let your friends know about this special opportunity! www.jeffcaylor.com/heart



www.globalhope.org

Please mail contributions to:

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Global Hope Golf Tournament ^{7th Annual}

Modified Scramble Format

The format will be similar to last year: a modified scramble with teams of four teeing off, taking the best shot, and each golfer playing their ball in from there. The best individual score is taken as the team score. We'll have a slightly more civilized start time, with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start! Bring your golfing buddies!



\$30,000 Fundraising Goal

We are looking to beat last year's fundraising total of \$30,000, so please let us know if you have a line on a tournament sponsor or a prize donor. You can call Ike Elliott at 720-227-0230, or email him at ike@practiq.com to help with finding great sponsors and prizes!

Registration

Register online at
www.egolftourney.com/vistaridge
OR
register by mail by sending your entrance check to Global Hope at
P.O. Box 1052
Broomfield, CO 80038-1052.



Fees

Register by July 1st
\$130.00

After July 1st
\$140.00



Supertickets

Supertickets are \$40.00 which includes a chance to win

-  \$100,000 Hole-In-One Contest
-  A Vacation to Mexico
-  5 feet of hole-enlarging string
-  Two mulligans
-  One move-up-a-teebox certificate
-  Entry into all game hole competitions*

**you must have a Superticket to be eligible to win the game holes (closest to the pin, longest drive, etc.)*

Vista Ridge
Golf Course
in Erie, CO

August 23rd

8:30am
Tee Time