

What is the value of a child's life?

Maybe, like me, you never even considered that the answer could be anything but “infinitely precious.” But, there was a day when I was literally asked to weigh the balance. A doctor explained to me and to Mama Karau, Hope's Promise (HP) Kenya Country Coordinator, that Esther's illness, though not yet diagnosed, would most likely be very expensive to treat. We would need to decide if HP was willing to commit the resources to care for her.



*My son Jedd helping us with Esther's doctor appointment in Kenya, June 2010*

Moni Orsillo, a member of the HP March 2010 Short Term Mission (STM) to Kenya, remembers meeting Esther several months before the doctor's appointment. “When I first met Esther in the Mathare Worship Centre Daycare, I was immediately drawn to her. I held her frail frame in my arms and was shocked when I learned her age - at five years old she couldn't talk, walk, or even stand independently! Not only that, but she looked like a toddler. Her disposition was sweet, but her affect was flat and expressionless.”



Chris Lehr, also a member of the 2010 STM remembers, “Esther was so small, about the size of an 18 month old. She was wearing a yellow dress. Her body was slumped on the floor until Mama propped her up. Esther could not sit up on her own. Mama took a bowl of porridge and fed her. She ate mouthful after mouthful. You could tell she was hungry.”

Esther’s face haunted team members’ return to the US, and mine. When I faced the doctor’s question during another trip to Kenya in June of 2010, I could feel the team surrounding me, as well as others who had met Esther in previous years, unseen but strongly supporting me. I turned to Mama Karau and told her that if she was willing to provide care for Esther, I was confident that the funding would fall into place. Her answer was that this was the child God had put in front of her, so of course they would care for her.

Esther came home to Sanctuary of Hope (SoH) soon after. A photo from July 2010, of Esther with Pastor Karau, requires no further explanation:



Moni is one of those team members who stood with HP for Esther, “I was overjoyed when I learned that she was taken to SoH because I knew she would be able to have consistent care and nutrition in a loving environment. (My husband) Matthew and I chose to sponsor her because I felt such a connection with her when we first met, especially because as a Speech Pathologist, kids with disabilities have a special place in my heart. I also know that many resources are required when kids have disabilities (and especially with Esther because so much was unknown about her condition and her needs were so severe). I remember the day I saw a picture of Pastor Karau holding Esther, both of them grinning from ear to ear. Not so long after, I watched a video of Esther taking a few steps towards him. She started walking! My heart was filled with joy to see how much progress she made in such a small amount of time, and to see how happy Esther looked with her new family.”



*Esther, in the very middle front row, just after her homecoming.*

Moni continues, “When we returned to Kenya in August 2011, I was shocked to see how many skills Esther had acquired in just over a year's time. That expressionless little girl who could not even stand up on her own was dancing and walking and trying to run and jump, and even starting to talk! Matthew and I loved being able to stay in the SoH home because I visibly saw her skills progressing even from day to day. When the rest of the therapist team arrived, they too were shocked to hear about her history and how much progress this little one has made. She truly is a miracle and a testimony to the power of Christ, the power of love, and the power of family!”



*Moni, Matthew, and Esther, Aug 2011*



*Esther, right, April 2012*

Caring for orphans around the world, whether the needs are as mundane as a vehicle to take our kids to school or as extreme as medical care for a child who might not otherwise survive, the affirmation is the same – *every child is a priceless gift.*

We thank God for each of you who stand with Hope's Promise to convince every orphan in our care of this very truth.

### **Prepare a place**

Early this year, HP US Staff dreamed, along with our international leaders in Kenya, Nepal, and Vietnam, of new “places” for orphans around the world. Please read about these “places” of preparation below, and pray about how God might invite you to get involved!

#### *Zimbabwe*



When HP staff identified our theme for the year we had no idea that God would soon reveal that He had prepared a place for orphan ministry in a new country! March 2012 brought the joyful merger of Compassionate Volunteers Foundation

(CVF) of Zimbabwe into HP. With the support of CVF/HP-Zimbabwe, thirty-one orphans of all ages are cared for by loving extended relatives. To learn more about HP-Zimbabwe, visit <http://www.hopespromise.com/orphan-care/projects/zimbabwe/>.

HP-Zimbabwe's greatest need at this time is funding for five college-aged students to continue in school. The sponsorship per student per term (3 terms per year) is \$588. To help sponsor these students, please visit <http://www.hopespromise.com/donate/> and indicate "HP Zimbabwe college tuition" in the comment box.

### *Nepal*



The application of our theme "Prepare a Place" applied literally for HP's Nepal orphan ministry. Indigenous house-parents, a pastor and his wife, were identified late in 2011 and waited eagerly to welcome five orphaned boys into their home as soon as funding could be secured. With great joy we share the news that before we could even publicize widely about this opportunity, God raised up partners who fully funded House of New Life to open this spring!

Even as the third home opens, three girls are available for sponsorship in Nepal's second home. Learn more about child sponsorship at <http://www.hopespromise.com/orphan-care/child-sponsorships-2/>. For information about specific Nepal children in need of sponsorship, please contact [holly@hopespromise.com](mailto:holly@hopespromise.com).

### *Kenya*



Last year, partners worked hard to “close the gap” in funding for SoH #1 and #2. Your abundant generosity ensured that HP-Kenya ended the year in the black. On-going support to keep the gap closed is crucial. However, a huge need for SoH is adequate transportation. Currently all 23 children and staff members cram into a 12 passenger vehicle when going to the same destination, such as church. In order to safely transport our current children and to “prepare a place” for growth when it is time to open the next home, SoH needs a bus. Owning two sizes of vehicles will allow SoH to continue to employ just one driver who can choose the size of the vehicle depending on number of passengers. Vehicles are extremely expensive in this developing country that relies on imports; the cost is estimated at \$60,000. To donate towards a bus, please visit <http://www.hopespromise.com/donate/> and indicate “SoH bus” in the comment box.

*Vietnam*



With great joy we share the news that funds have been provided for an orphaned baby literally named “Orphan,” pictured above with his grandmother above, to come home to Home of Hope #3 within the next couple weeks to an indigenous house-mother! We also celebrate that a portion of necessary funds has been pledged to bring Orphan’s two older brothers (one in photo above) into a home, Home of Hope #4, full budget below:

Total monthly pledges needed: \$908/month, Current pledges: \$125, Remaining need: \$783/month

Total start-up costs needed (one-time donation): \$2160, Remaining need: \$2160

Half of annual budget needed (one-time donation): \$5451, Remaining need: \$5451

To donate for the two brothers to come home, please visit

<http://www.hopespromise.com/donate/> and indicate “Vietnam HoH #4” in the comment box.

Wherever they are, in whichever country they live, *every child is a priceless gift.*