

ALIVE!

THE NEWSLETTER OF KIDS ALIVE® INTERNATIONAL
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Love looks like never giving up

Ask Walkiris. Her young life was colored by harsh realities: her father died when she was five, her mother died as a result of domestic violence when Walkiris was eight. Ultimately, she and her three siblings (12, 10, and 4) lived alone in their small family home without electricity or running water. "There were days when there was only sugar water or nothing to eat, we shared one bed." Her older sister became a young mother at 13.

At eight years old, her future looked dim.

But God had another plan for Walkiris. She came to Kids Alive's Ark Jarabacoa in Dominican Republic and found so much she had been lacking; a home, food, a bed of her own, a bathroom and shower with running water, clothing, games and a good education.

She fondly remembers visiting service teams, especially those that came to play soccer in the rain and mud, and sponsors who wrote her letters she still has to this day. But she believes the most important and valuable thing she received in the Ark was the love of Christ.

She worked hard, this little girl who loved Jesus and loved to learn. She graduated top of her class in 8th grade and again in the 12th grade and set her sights on being a doctor. Quite a long way from the little girl we first met who had no home and no education.

It wasn't all smooth sailing. Like all of us, Walkiris has walked through challenges and consequences but has clung to the Lord. She has allowed God to reveal His faithfulness through her persevering faith, choosing to walk in the light.

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Love looks like protecting a childhood

A courageous team in Kenya is working with community leaders to prevent the child marriage of an 11-year old girl.

At age 11, Susan* found herself alone. Her mother had died, and her father was not in the home. We call these kids “lost kids” – children with no place to go, no family, no security, left to fend for themselves. This is when they are most vulnerable. They may be exploited for labor, abused, neglected, trafficked, sold into slavery or, often with very young girls, forced into marriage. These kids lose more than their childhood, they lose their options for escaping the cycle of poverty.

But God intervened when Susan found herself in a hospital. No one came to see her and there was no contact listed on her medical records. Susan was alone – until the Social Office got involved and called Kids Alive Kenya.

After several months of research, Kids Alive Kenya was successful in tracing Susan’s father, a night watchman and sometimes casual laborer, and reuniting the family. But an older man and some members of the community had other ideas. He wanted to marry Susan and the men of the community were pressuring the father to release his young daughter. Thankfully, through the reunification process, Susan’s father had grown to have other goals for her future. But he needed help.

So Kids Alive Kenya developed a plan to help secure Susan’s safety. An informal support team including a teacher we know and trust, the local government chief, Susan’s father, and even Susan herself all have vital roles to play.

*Name changed to protect privacy.

They agree to these safety measures:

- They will ensure that Susan is within eyesight of a trusted adult at all times (3 women neighbors have been identified as trusted). The teacher sends updates to Kids Alive staff often, and staff check in on Susan at home periodically.
- If Susan ever feels threatened with abduction (which is a real fear), she is to immediately go to her teacher’s or chief’s place for safety
- A quick dial to any of our staff cell phones will activate Kids Alive to immediately come to her rescue and formally report the danger to the police (child marriage is illegal in Kenya, even though it is still practiced in a number of communities).

The plan has been in place for four months. At the moment, there is no evidence of attempted abduction or forced marriage activities and Susan has remained safe and in school. The pressure on the father continues and he is feeling alienated among the men of the community because he will not release his daughter. We are continually reminded that these issues are complicated, and breaking the cycle of poverty is difficult and challenging work.

We would ask you to join Susan’s support network by praying for Susan, for her father, the network we have put around her, and all the other “Susans” Kids Alive is working with every day.

Help us be there for more girls like Susan: www.kidsalive.org/yearendgift

Young girls in Kenya find friendship and safety in Kids Alive school programs.



Love looks like never giving up

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Twenty-four years after she first came to Kids Alive, Walkiris is a doctor working with Kids Alive International at the Ark. She walks with the poor and needy patients who visit the clinic, and her heart breaks as she sees mothers struggle to feed and care for their children. She knows those realities all too well.

This past year, Walkiris had another heartbreak. She and her husband Miguel lost their infant Hallie Analiz, but she remains strong in her conviction of God's goodness and provision:

"He [God] is the one who sustains me, the one who lifts me up gives me security. I have learned that we are borrowed, that only he knows how long we will be passing through this land. In each of the processes that I have gone through, God has been there with me and my family. I do not deny that I would long for everything to be different, but there is no greater joy than knowing that I will see my little girl again. The Lord keeps me firm in Him until He comes or He calls me."

Walkiris' story is a reminder to all of us that our decision to follow Christ is not a "one and done" event, it is a journey. That's true for ministry and why your partnership with Kids Alive International is so significant. The true power of impacting communities and families for the long term is being there for the months and years ahead as children grow, dream, and sometimes fail.

We asked Walkiris what she'd like you to know: *"I am a living example that [because of] God and all those who He caused to support me in one way or another, like my sponsors, I have been able to achieve great goals, be a doctor and be able to work for the ministry. I encourage you to be part of our great family. With your help you can make big changes in the lives of children who have lived through difficult circumstances."*

"[God] is the one who sustains me, the one who lifts me up and gives me security.

— Walkiris

Dire circumstances require tough love

Haiti



An uneasy calm has settled in Haiti since the kidnapping of the 17 foreign missionaries for ransom in October. Even though armed gangs patrol highways and extort money for protection, our dedicated staff continue to minister to the children in our school and residential program. God has called us to the hard places to serve in His name, and so our work continues. Out of caution to protect our children and staff, we have removed most Haiti updates and information from the website. Please continue to pray for God's protection of our children and staff and their families and communities.

Lebanon



Even as Lebanon goes through a long-term crisis, the Kids Alive team is working to full capacity ministering to our children and their communities through these challenging times. While people struggle to re-prioritize scarce resources such as money for food over rent and gas due to the high costs of essentials, our campus is a haven for the children in our care. Kids Alive continues to provide education, counseling, and spiritual truth while meeting the physical needs of the children, some of whom are refugees from Syria. Please continue to pray for all the children and the refugee communities who long for home and our staff who serve these forgotten families in the name of Jesus.

Restoring Joy and Songs of the Heart!

Throughout Scripture, we hear of people breaking out in song in response to God's goodness. Your gifts to children and families who have had their lives and hearts broken are bringing hope and healing – and JOY. You can listen to that joy as kids in our programs sing Christmas songs at www.kidsalive.org/songs

If you haven't given through the Gift Catalog yet and are looking for a way to benefit a family or child with something special, here are a few gifts you might consider.



Chickens

Eggs are a great source of protein for a growing child, and a healthy chicken can produce over 500 eggs during its laying lifetime. When there are extras, they can be shared or sold for income!

\$10



Christian Storybooks and Games

Reading and play are two essential elements in a child's developing spiritual and intellectual life. Help God's truths come alive with inspiring stories, biographies, and games. Think about giving this gift in your kids' names!

\$15



Vaccinations and Medical Exams

COVID-19 is still a threat, *but 1.5 million children, including many babies and toddlers, still die each year of easily preventable diseases* such as measles and pertussis (whooping cough). Give the gift of life with vaccinations and medical exams – and honor the medical provider that helps keep you healthy!

\$25 for one child



Safe Water

Every 90 seconds a child dies from a highly preventable waterborne disease. Safe water is especially important in cleaning and preventing COVID. Help families stay hydrated and safe with life-giving water filters.

\$ 50 for one family
\$100 for two families
\$500 for ten families



Babies Behind Bars Kit *New!*

In Zambia, mothers who are incarcerated while pregnant or who have toddlers under four are allowed to keep their babies with them, but the prison does not provide any food, clothing, or learning materials. Give a kit with essentials – meals, soap, toothbrushes, clothing, toys, and books to help keep a precious baby nourished, safe, and learning.

\$ 75 for one baby
\$225 for three babies



Soaps

A gift you can give a friend or family member. Handcrafted at our Kids Alive Park School in Caraballo, these fragrant soaps benefit at-risk children and unemployed families in the Dominican Republic.

\$10 for two soaps*

(Your purchase of these soaps, less the fair market value of \$7, is eligible for a tax receipt.)

*while supplies last

When you give through the Kids Alive Christmas Gift Catalog (www.kidsalive.org/gift-catalog), you are making important resources and services available to kids and families who otherwise would not be able to access or afford them. You are helping meet physical, spiritual and emotional needs and helping hope be reborn in their lives.



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