

Coming in the Fall 2011 Update:

- Exciting new changes to the Child Sponsorship Program, including the development of two new ministries—Partners for Hope and the Kitanda Project.
- Lesson Three of Ministry from Darla Calhoun, our Founder
- Agape missionary highlight featuring Steve and Betty Bishop
- And much more!

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Lesson Two: Earning Trust

~Darla Calhoun, Agape's Founder

Editor's note: "Lesson One: Not Every Child can be Rescued" can be found in Agape's Spring 2011 issue, found on our website.

I really appreciate this opportunity to reminisce and share some of the things we've learned about working with street children. And I love the chance to stay in touch with so many of you who have walked through these experiences with us over the past 18 years.

Street children have little reason to trust adults. The majority of the children come to the streets because the adults in their lives have let them down. As a result they have lost their childhood. In fact, they have been forced to become little adults in children's bodies. They have to fend for themselves as none of their basic needs are being met, such as food, shelter, safety, love, and a sense of belonging.

"One day a Kenyan friend said, 'Your car can never be stolen in Kisumu because your best friends are the thugs!'"

When the boys come to the street, they usually find a group (gang) of boys they can stay with for protection and survival. I can still remember meeting little George Bush for the first time. He was the size of a four or five year old, but he behaved like a three year old. We hoped family members were



looking for him, so we left him in the care of some older boys who stayed in the bus park. But finally the boys said, "Please take him, Momma. He cries all the time and he's too heavy to carry around."

He could only tell us his nickname and couldn't remember a last name. Our Agape boys lovingly started calling him "Bush," as in bush baby. Later when he was taken to a Christian preschool, the teacher questioned



our houseparent, "But what of his second name?" Since this was during George Bush's term as President, our houseparent Lebaus thought a second and replied, "George would be nice." Now this little boy had a lot of trusting to catch up on. And frankly, I'm not sure he ever recovered from the survivor mode he was forced into at such a young age. He was good at doing what we asked him to do...if he thought it was a good idea. Otherwise he became very skeptical and withdrew from others. It took a lot of patience on the part of our houseparents and teachers. But looking back, I believe those were the best years of his life. Sadly, he died of TB in 2009 at the age of 22.

In general, the older street boys need time to test us as well. I watched a lady leave a shop where a street boy was sitting outside. When she saw him, she clutched her bag and quickly crossed the street. The message was clear...I don't trust you. It turned out that having weekly Sunday afternoon meetings with the boys was a wonderful way to get to know each other and build that needed trust. We tried to be consistent and to show respect to these dirty, ragged little outcasts. Lebaus had the wisdom to ask each boy attending the meeting to stand and introduce himself. It was obvious the boys felt respected by that simple act and it helped us to get to know their personalities at the same time.

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Contribution Opportunities

Nearly 80% of the money we send to Africa to carry out our ministry to street children comes from our General Fund. Support for the General Fund is one of the most direct ways to make a difference in Agape's ability to do the work the Lord has called us to. In addition to the General Fund, please consider making a tax-deductible gift to one or more of the current specific needs at Agape:

- Fund development of our rain water collection and distribution system on our main campus, including three 5,000 liter storage tanks, associated plumbing (valves, pipe, etc.), and labor \$2,600 (\$25 given to-date)
- Fund construction of a retaining wall to help stem erosion on the main campus. Materials to include cement, wall stones, re-bar, sand, gravel, and labor \$3,500
- Purchase Bibles for our boys and staff \$800 (\$390 given to-date)
- Fund remodel and fencing for our proposed new Transition Center. Labor and materials \$15,000 (\$760 given to-date)

If any item is over-fund, excess funds will be directed towards one of the other items or to the General Fund.

“Our Kitchen Remodel Project is fully funded thanks to many generous donations!”

Incredible Praise Highlights!

- All of the work accomplished by the Shelter Cove and Calvary Temple Team, and the Grace Chapel team, and for the way everyone blessed and encouraged our boys and staff.
- The progress being made on the terrazzo floor for our new Dining Hall and Kitchen. It will provide a durable, attractive floor that can be easily maintained and kept clean.
- Our Kitchen Remodel Project is fully funded thanks to many generous donations! Thank you!
- How well our boys are doing and for the way in which they are healing emotionally and growing spiritually.
- The Lord's provision for the ministry and supplying our needs.

Please Join Us in Prayer for:

- All of the children the Lord has placed in our care, including those we have been able to reintegrate back into their families or extended families.
- Chris and Tammy Page and their family as they move to Kenya and take up their responsibilities heading up our ministry in Kisumu. Please pray for a smooth transition for their children. They need our prayers for wisdom, understanding, insight, and grace as they take on their role of leading, guiding, and nurturing our staff and our children in Kenya.
- The estimated 150 million street children and children-at-risk around the world.
- The right facility and staff for a Transition Center for the boys when we first bring them off the streets.
- The financial needs of the ministry as we continue to grow and to impact the lives of more children and their families.
- Us to bring honor and glory in all that we do as individuals and as a ministry.



An Interview with John Mwalo, Agape's Reintegration Team Leader

When did you start working with Agape, what was your first job and why did you want to work with Agape?

I started working with Agape in December of 1999 as a House Parent and Children Welfare Officer. After attending the Word of Faith Bible School my employment with Agape came as an honest calling from God.

Please share about your role on the Reintegration Team.

My role is to oversee the full implementation and realization of Agape's Mission, the Four "R's"; Rescue, Redeem, rehabilitate and reintegrate. My Team includes five equally dedicated members and one volunteer. The policies of the reintegration ministry are rooted in the word of God and support the importance of family values as core to the society as it was God's original plan before the fall. The core goal of reintegration is to reunite the children with their immediate families or other extended family members and to help bring forgiveness among the family members and the children.

What is the most challenging part of the Reintegration Team's work?

It takes quite a long time to fully reintegrate children who have been separated for a long time from their family – forgiveness

between all parties is often difficult. Additionally, we have to travel very long distances, taking many hours to get to the villages where we are reintegrating children. Also, we sometimes need to use public transportation (which is usually inadequate and unreliable) as we have only one Reintegration vehicle for the Team to share. Lastly, with nearly three hundred reintegrated children from all over Western Kenya, including some children in Tanzania and Uganda, we need to work very hard to understand the different cultures that the children come from and then try to share a culture of Jesus Christ with just our five staff.

How can we best pray for the Reintegration Team?

First, please pray for the challenges affecting the Reintegration Team mentioned above. Secondly, the benefit and joy I desire from our work is that I and my team are in God's plan as it is written in the Book of Malachi 4:6 seeking families united and knowing God as their father and Jesus as their savior! Finally, please pray that our opportunities to minister the word of God to the immediate and extended families of the reintegrated children would be used by the Holy Spirit to change lives!



John works tirelessly to help our boys become successfully reintegrated.

“The core goal of reintegration is to reunite the children... and to help bring forgiveness...”

Meet our Newest Agape Board Member: John Britton

Agape currently has five Board Members: Blake Gibbs (Agape's Director), Darla Calhoun, Joel Midthun, Jeff Alger, and the newest member of the Board, John Britton. John and his wife Alberta have lived in the greater Modesto area for over 40 years. Both John and Alberta have served in various aspects of church ministry and leadership for over 30 years.

John traveled to Kenya last year and spent a couple weeks at Agape working with and thoroughly enjoying the staff and boys he met while there! The trip was a wake-up call for John as even though he has international travel experience, he was amazed at the

incredible level of poverty he found in Kenya.

When asked what excites him about Agape, John will talk about the Reintegration Team. John praises the Team's hard work and sees it as significant and sustainable. He saw first-hand how real change can happen in the lives of the boys who are reintegrated.

Thanks, John, for your love of Christ and your love of Agape and the street kids in Kisumu. We are all truly blessed and better now that you are sharing your heart and your passion for the Lord and His ways with all of us at Agape!



Other Opportunities to Help Agape:



Sign up to receive our newsletters by email.



Switch your monthly donation to auto-pay through your bank or credit/debit card (we'll send you the appropriate paperwork).



Opt out of a monthly giving receipt; you will still receive your annual year-end receipt!

Please indicate your reply on the enclosed response slip if you are interested!



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As a result, when I was in town, the boys would come running. They often wanted something to eat and I wanted to give them a sense of dignity by letting them earn it. The best thing they could offer was to "watch" my car. One day a Kenyan friend said, "Your car can never be stolen in Kisumu because your best friends are the thugs!" I had to laugh because I didn't see these 10 and 12 year old boys as thugs. They certainly did start "protecting" me, and perhaps it was because they felt like I trusted and respected them. A few slices of bread or a packet of juice went a long way in building relationships when that was all I had the funds for in those early days.

Soccer games were another way to build trust. And sports also taught the boys about teamwork and forgiveness. In the

beginning, if the ball was kicked out of bounds, the boy who had the bad aim had a lot to answer for. Sometimes that would lead to fighting, which was the only way they knew to solve a conflict. It was music to my ears to finally hear them laughing when someone made a mistake during a game. We were making progress! They were learning to be friends. Thank God for several national volunteers who were sincerely committed to helping these boys.

God gave us wisdom beyond our own, as we ourselves had to learn to completely trust Him. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."

In Closing—from Blake and Esther Gibbs, Director



One of the joys of being Agape missionaries on the field is hosting visitors. Individuals, families, teams

(big and small) are pretty much all welcome because we love sharing what the Lord is doing in and through Agape.

It encourages us when visitors come. They often react with considerable surprise and amazement to the size and scope of the ministry and at the ways in which the Lord is using Agape to transform children's lives and to impact the lives of their families as well.

Often the question people ask when contemplating a trip to Africa to visit Agape is, "What will we do?" It is interesting that most of us from America have to have a specific project we want to accomplish. We assure you, there are plenty of projects to fit just about every bent and skill. We need concrete poured; rooms and buildings painted; curtains sewn; vehicles serviced and maintained; walkways paved; drainage systems designed and constructed; retaining walls

built; plumbing repaired; and the list goes on and on.

But beyond the physical work, we need people to just come love and interact with our boys. We need people who will read Bible stories to them and to mentor them in their spiritual walk. We need visitors who will tutor our students, particularly in math and English. We need people who are savvy on the computer to help instruct and train our staff. We need clerical help to organize and coordinate our files.

In short, no matter who you are or what your skills and talents may be, the Lord probably has something for you to do at Agape. So, be listening carefully to His small voice and see if He might be calling you to spend a couple of weeks having the adventure of a lifetime making a difference in the world by helping at Agape. Now is a good time, we're here until the middle of November!

If He is tugging at your heart, we'd love to hear from you. Call Lisa Kjeldgaard at our office 209-543-9255 or e-mail her: Lisa@agapechildren.org.



Summer 2011

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Phone: 209-543-9255
www.agapechildren.org

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