
RETOUCH
2015: A YEAR IN REVIEW



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

This time last year I was writing to tell you about the children of Birikani and the opportunity to build a school there. This year, I want to tell you the amazing things that God has done.

At some point late last year, we realized that we were actually going to start a school in Birikani. The money was coming in and everything seemed like it was going to move in the right direction. We began making plans, writing vision statements and dreaming about the possibilities before us in Birikani. Our goal was to move forward with wisdom, to make a land usage plan and to ensure that we had enough funding to continue the school for a generation. In early January, we made a quick day trip to the Birikani land to prayer-walk and to show our teacher-trainers who had come from the States what God had already done.

The road to Birikani is bumpy, dusty and long, the rolling plains of Africa stretch out before you in a way that makes you feel like the earth never ends. We talked and laughed as we made our way along the road, dodging herds of goats and cattle. We arrived to a meeting with the entire village, who had heard we were coming and wanted to welcome us with open arms. After a few minutes of shaking hands and greeting mamas, we went inside the small mud church where our Kenyan pastors sat us down and asked us to go into the fire.

"The School year is supposed to start Monday" (it was a Friday afternoon) one Director said, "I think we should start the school now rather than waiting a year." With looks of bewilderment we stared at each other and back at our Kenyan pastors, "but... we don't have a building or really very much money, we're just not ready yet" Jennifer said. With a trembling voice of conviction our lead pastor responded, "I know...I'm asking you to go into the fire and trust that the fourth man will appear."

We've made it a point in our ministry to submit to local leadership, even when we don't quite understand, and that has been relatively easy up to this point. Here's a man asking us to step out into a wild place of faith that God will show up in three days, build a school and provide enough money to pay salaries and get some books. It wasn't the land usage plan I had prayed for, it wasn't going to be the perfectly engineered brick buildings I wanted or the manicured gardens or really anything that I had hoped it would be. And yet, Kids would go to school and families would be changed.

As the "yes" fell from our lips in almost spontaneous tandem, our pastor stood up, walked outside and held our first ever PTA meeting with the village. He instructed them on haircuts and washing clothes, discipline, and a whole host of things you would tell families who were sending their kids to school for the first time.

By the time we left that afternoon, carpenters had already arrived with tools in hand, ready to build bamboo and mud structures that would become the Good Samaritan Primary School. In three days time, we had 4 classrooms, teachers, books and a few supplies. We had 140 students ranging from preschool to the third grade, with one class meeting under the tree until we finished their building. A few weeks later an anonymous donor offered to build a kitchen and pay for all the kids and teachers to eat 2 meals a day.

It was a miracle in the village, and we're not done yet. As of today, we still need to build 2 more classrooms, hire a few additional teachers and buy books, shoes and a bunch of uniforms. It's not a perfect school but it's a beacon of hope for the community.

We are believing God for miracles in 2016. We need His help to get our Birikani school fully funded and the new classrooms built. We can't wait to see what he will do! If you'd like to join us, there are many ways to get involved, such as classroom sponsorship or assisting with our building projects. You can find all of the information on our new website, WWW.RETOUCH.IS

We believe that 2016 is going to be the best year yet for Retouch. We are going into the fire, will you join us in watching the fourth man appear?

Love, CHRIS AND JENNIFER HADSELL

A MIRACLE IN THE VILLAGE

On a hot African morning, you can hear their singing even as you come down the road. Voices lifted in their native Duruma language, singing songs of worship and praise to their God and King.

Just 1 year ago, this place didn't exist; the few Christians around walked for over three hours to get to church and most had yet to be exposed to the Gospel message. Now, on the same ground as our small school there stands the Good Samaritan Church with a congregation of about 75 people. The church is a beacon to the community of the God who hears and answers prayer, and his people who respond to the needs of the poor. Filled with new believers, many of whom have come to know Christ as a result of the school, it is a breeding ground for passionate, exuberant worshippers. They crowd into our small mud classroom and believe God for the impossible.

This year we began construction on a permanent church and training center, which will be used not only for Sunday worship but also for school assemblies, Pastor training seminars and as a resource church for future plants. Placed strategically in a Muslim area, we believe this church will be a 'sending' church that will develop and train local missionaries to take the Gospel to all of the small unreached villages.

Through the generous support of many, we were able to quickly raise $10,000 for the church. While we thought this would cover the costs, as we began construction we kept hearing God say, "Make it bigger!", and "The bigger you make it, the more I will fill it!". We now have built the foundation to the biggest building the area has ever seen. Our Muslim neighbors travel to view it and are astonished what God is doing. We are so excited to continue construction on this incredible miracle in 2016!

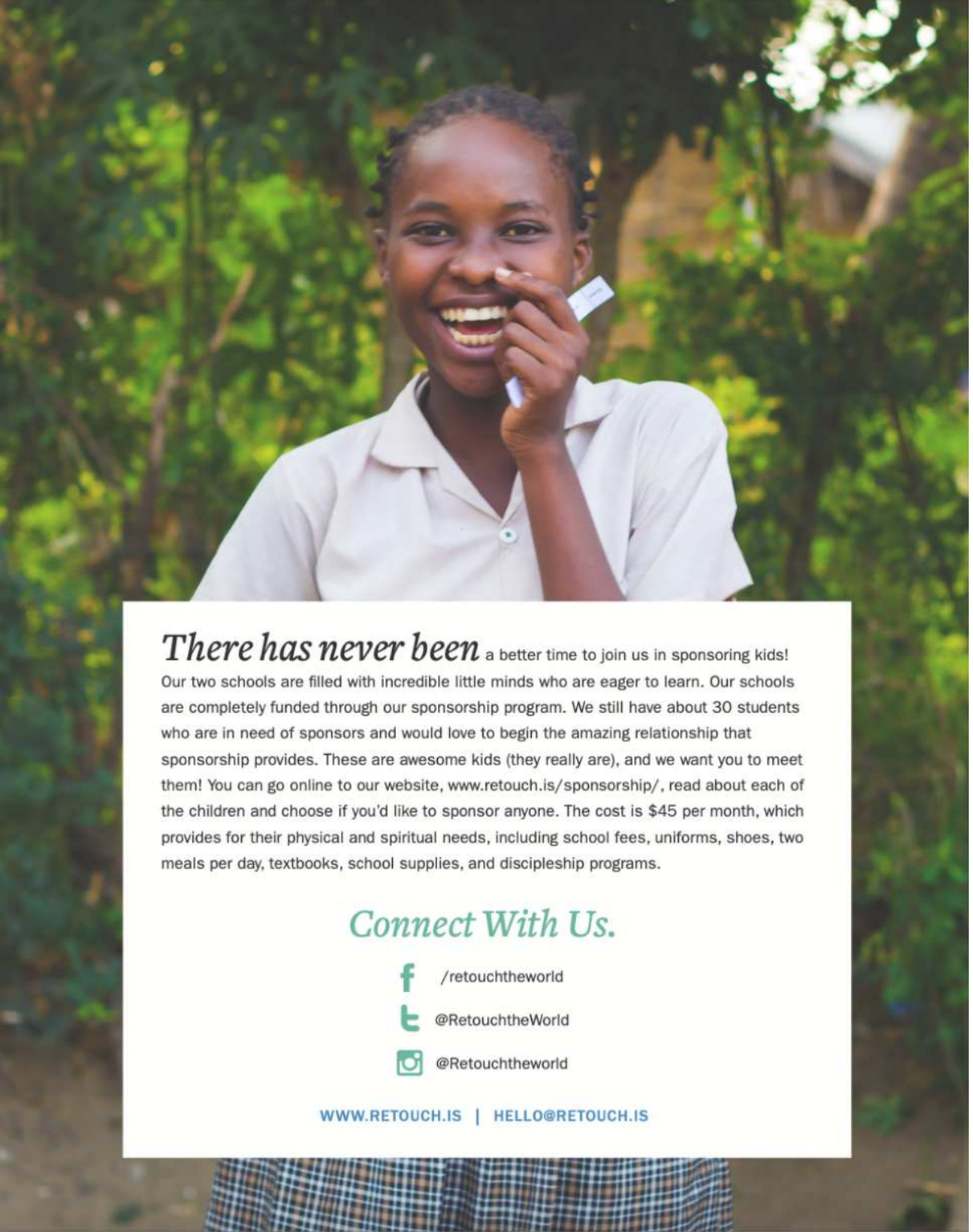
Our school IS THE FIRST SCHOOL FOR THE VILLAGE OF BIRIKANI. HERE, YOU SEE OUR FIRST GRADE CLASS LEARNING IN THEIR NEWLY CONSTRUCTED CLASSROOMS.



EDUCATION BREEDS ROYALTY

As part of our ongoing commitment to literacy and student engagement, we were able to begin a library and computer lab at our Mtwapa school! Through a partnership with Pearre Creek Elementary and some amazing donors, we were able to stock a new library for our students. This was the first of its kind in our small village! Our literacy coordinator, Sarah Roberts spear-headed the project cataloging books, training student librarians and introducing the joy of reading to the students of Good Samaritan-Mtwapa. For many of the students this was their first time to read a book simply for fun and it was a true delight watching them look for the perfect books to read. It was a pure joy listening to our Education Coordinator, Dusty Strickland, reading to the students and spending time training the teachers on becoming the best they can be!

Attached to the library is a small computer lab featuring laptop workstations with internet access, typing programs and the Microsoft office suite. The school recently hired a teacher to help the students learn the basics of computer usage. We are beginning to teach the students using Code.org, a program designed to introduce Elementary students to computer science and programming. The computer lab is an incredible opportunity for our students to learn about the world, develop valuable job skills and increase deep thinking and engagement. We believe it is an invaluable tool that is truly taking kids who live in a slum and making them Kings and Queens!



There has never been a better time to join us in sponsoring kids! Our two schools are filled with incredible little minds who are eager to learn. Our schools are completely funded through our sponsorship program. We still have about 30 students who are in need of sponsors and would love to begin the amazing relationship that sponsorship provides. These are awesome kids (they really are), and we want you to meet them! You can go online to our website, www.retouch.is/sponsorship/, read about each of the children and choose if you'd like to sponsor anyone. The cost is $45 per month, which provides for their physical and spiritual needs, including school fees, uniforms, shoes, two meals per day, textbooks, school supplies, and discipleship programs.

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