RETOUCH

2017

YEAR IN REVIEW

RETOUCH



With Gratitude

A LETTER FROM CHRIS + JENN

Greetings in the mighty name of Jesus! Jennifer and I are delighted to share with you this annual report about the work of Retouch. Inside you will find stories about what God is doing through our children, teachers, and sponsors; this is a book of testimonies. As you read, we hope that you will see the difference you are making in the Kingdom of God and join us in giving thanks to God, for his amazing grace.

As we begin this year's edition of "Year in Review," I want to highlight to you the feeding ministry of Retouch and the 300 children who benefit each day. On this page, you may have noticed a photo of our Birikani lunch program, and some of our children eagerly waiting in line for mealtime. When we first arrived in Birikani, many of the children were sick and malnourished. Their hair was orange from a lack of nutrients and their skin was covered in sores. Many of their parents were unable to afford the basic nutrition needed to grow up healthy and strong. Through your giving, we have been able to provide breakfast and lunch for them 6 days a week. We've seen their hair change to a beautiful deep black and their skin & eyes clear up. We've watched energy and joy begin to fill their lives, as they are now happy, healthy, and strong. This friends, is your story. This is the testimony of Jesus being lived out through the giving, prayers, and love of our Retouch family.

Thanks for being a part of this and many more miracles. I hope you enjoy reading the testimonies from this year.

Lower Still,
CHRIS + JENNIFER HADSELL





Meet Our Kids

A LOOK INTO THE FACES OF BIRIKANI

cutest kindergarteners

In Birikani, there is no shortage of adorable kids, and we have some of the cutest attending our school. They start at around age 4 and begin learning their numbers, colors, and alphabet — just like Kindergarten in the West. Each morning begins with porridge and a nap usually happens right before lunchtime. These kiddos are the future of Birikani village. They will be the first in their community to never know a life without education. Education can change the shape of an entire generation. We believe this group of little smiles will be world-changers one day!



fabulous freshmen

This picture is of 5 of our brightest (and sassiest) girls. These ladies grew up together at our Mtwapa Primary School. They have been friends since the beginning of our sponsorship program 5 years ago. They all come from difficult family backgrounds, and have not known life outside of their one-room cinder-block houses. In January, they were all accepted to attend the same boarding school for their High School years. This means they no longer have to worry about their safety at night, or being kicked out because their families can't afford rent. They are able to devote their passions to studying and having fun. We are so proud of these girls, as they continue to grow into strong, intelligent women of God.

hard at work

In Kenya, schools are divided into Primary (Elementary) and Secondary (High) Schools. In order for students to go to High School, they must pass an exam at the end of the 8th grade. This year, for the first time ever, our school qualified to host these exams! Our 8th grade class has been working the entire year studying for the exam — they even brought mattresses and started sleeping at school so they could have more time to prepare. This exam will determine what level of High School they qualify for. It can be the deciding factor for job applications and college acceptance. We are so proud of these students and cheer them on as they take the exam this month!



emmanuel

Five years ago, we met a young man named Emmanuel. He was 13 years old, and had been out of school for several years. I can remember meeting him for the first time and seeing a young man that was desperate for a chance to learn. We enrolled him at the nicest Secondary School we could find, and he quickly became one our most faithful students. During that time, Emmanuel joined the local church worship team and became a junior Rotary member. Emmanuel has set his sights on becoming a influential business leader after graduation. He wants to help other children in poverty through his business. This December, Emmanuel will be the first person in his family to graduate from High School. We believe he is on the path to success, and we can't wait to see what this incredible young man does after graduation. Way to go Emmanuel!

Build for us A Church



God has always been about the local church, from the days of the Jewish Synagogue, to the establishment of new congregations today. God is working among his people in small pockets of community throughout the earth. The Birikani church is no different; a community of people wanted a church and God said 'yes.' I can remember our first trip to Birikani, before there was a church or a pastor, before there was a building or a congregation to fill one. It was just a village, a village filled with hungry people, people who needed physical food and people who needed what only God can provide. The closest church was a 3.5-hour walk, so gathering for worship was nearly impossible. The plea that day was for a church and then a school; it was always about God's house first. Even the Muslim elders agreed- a church was what they needed. So with no church planting experience and no manual on how to do this thing called missions, we agreed.

Within a few short hours, we had 3 converts, then 4, then 5, and before you knew it, we had a congregation of 20 ladies, 200 children, and one old man who found Jesus at 83. Pastor Patrick took the reins and moved his family to a one-room block house, determined to be what God had called him to be: A pastor of a tiny village; A shepherd of a desperate flock.

For almost three years now we've been building the Birikani church and school. It's been slow - painfully slow. Workers had to be found and contractors arranged. Blocks had to be brought from quarries far away and doors had to be cut from trees. The building is almost finished but the church is already established. The doors and windows are installed, they even added decorative glass and smoothed out the rough walls. The only things left to do are paint it and add the chairs, in January this congregation in the bush will be blessed with their permanent home. A place to worship out of the dust and rain, a place to raise their children in the gifts of the Father, a place to pray, to learn, and to fall in love with Jesus.



A Life Reborn

Earlier this year we held an evangelistic meeting. We brought a generator and a keyboard, this was big-time! However, the generator refused to work and we were left to yell our sermons to the crowd. The crowd was our small flock and one Muslim elder who was so drunk he didn't really know where he was. I preached my heart out to this old drunkard, pleading with him to follow Jesus. And in the end, he gave his precious life to the Lord.

The next day, we held baptisms in the cistern we had built for mixing concrete. We took school desks and made steps for the church to get inside, Jennifer joined our pastors in the water while a line of 20-30 people lined up. Joining them was the man from the night before, so excited to publically commit his life to the Lord Jesus. It was a tender, precious, and joyous occasion. We sang worship songs and cried, we laughed at everyone's fear of the cold, dirty water. And there in that cistern, we watched the old man get washed away and a vibrant bride emerge.

We learned something that day. Sometimes our ministries ideas don't go as planned. Sometimes all we can do is show up, try our best to love, and then let God do what He does best. He loves stopping for the broken and forgotten. He leaves the ninety-nine. He is a God of restoration and new life. We learned that day that one drunk village-elder can be the catalyst of rebirth for an entire congregation.



A Journey to India

BY SETH AURA

Earlier this year, we sent one of our teachers to India to receive medical care for Hodgkin's Lymphoma. This is his story.

I never imagined that I would leave my hometown, much less my country. Having cancer in Kenya has never been easy. My nation is beautiful but it doesn't have good hospitals and lacks many of the treatments available in wealthier places. Many times I would travel by bus 10 hours to the hospital, only to have my doctor not come to the appointment. Other times I would take the chemo and board the bus home, where I would pass out from the sickness. The bus driver would have to wake me when we finally reached our destination.

I first heard about treatment in India from another patient at the hospital in Nairobi. My friend was able to go to India and receive treatments, then he returned cancer-free. When I was first diagnosed with cancer, my village took up an offering. My parents gave everything they could for my treatments but no one could understand why I wasn't getting better. Cancer is uncommon in my country so people expect that you will just feel better or that nothing is wrong because they can't see the problems from the outside. I was beginning to lose hope.

I started talking with Chris and Jennifer about India, and we prayed together for God to help us. We went together to a private hospital in Nairobi, hoping for answers but received none. The doctors could not help us. We didn't know where to turn. So we prayed together again and again.

After a few months, Jennifer called me and said that we could now go to India. I would be flying out in three days and Jennifer's brother would meet me in New Delhi! I was amazed at the miracles God had done. Who could believe that a boy from a small village could travel all the way across the ocean?

I traveled by plane to India and met Josh at the hospital, it was a long journey but I was so happy to be there. We met with doctors and began a treatment plan. Josh bought a blender so that we could have healthy vegetable juice and fruit. We rented an apartment and I started taking chemo again. Josh took me to see the Taj Mahal, it was truly amazing. After a few weeks, my brother Esau was able to join me to take care of me during my treatments.

My body made a lot of good progress during those few months. My cancer went into remission after some time and the doctors wanted me to complete a bone marrow transplant. We were not able to find a match and the funding stopped, so we had to return to Kenya to look for a match from my other siblings.

I returned home feeling much stronger and healthier, I was even embarrassed by how much weight I had gained living in India. Today, I am back living in Mombasa and working at the school. I found an apartment and am enjoying my life again. My body feels strong and I am grateful to God for his love for me. We pray that my cancer stays in remission while we raise more funds, and search for a bone marrow match.

Chris and Jennifer tell me that many people gave their money to help me go to India. They tell me that so many of you donated to help my life. I want to say thank you to everyone who prayed for me and who gave money so I could receive treatment. I am so happy and grateful to God.

— SETH AURA



Ministry *isn't tied to* A Pulpit

When I try to put into words what Kenya has meant to me, I stutter, stumble, and come up wordless. It's not that Kenya hasn't transformed me or changed how I look at the world or even how I look at myself. I stammer to a stop because it is so hard to put into words the change it has brought, the new way I look at myself, and the new way that I imagine the Almighty see's me. The closest way I've found to explain this change it so to tell a story and hope that through this you catch a glimpse of what my heart is trying to sing.

I grew up in a family full of preachers. Three uncles, my brother, my brother in law, my dad, and both of my grandfathers- so you can say it's a family business. Well, I'm not a preacher, I'm a teacher, and for the longest time I felt like a second-class Christian. I mean it was never anything that was explicitly taught in church growing up, but I got the distinct impression that the folks who were on the stage were the real Christians. Sure, everyone one that accepts Christ as their savior becomes a Christian, but the really important Christians enter into the ministry. The rest of us do the best we can, share our faith when possible, but leave the heavy lifting to the professionals. They were the first class Christians and the rest of us... well, we were subpar and maybe should pray a bit harder.

All of this changed when I went to Kenya and began working with our schools. You see I've spent the last decade teaching. I started out in elementary school teaching 5th grades Social Studies and Science and then moved to the high school as a reading interventionist. From there I became an Instructional Coach working directly with teachers to help them become better at what they do. If a teacher is struggling I help them and if they are knocking it out of the park I act as a cheerleader. As an Instructional Coach, I've worked in an elementary, middle school, and now an alternative school coaching teachers. Yet through all of this, I still felt second-class.

I didn't know Chris and Jenn; I actually met them randomly when I was visiting a college buddy. Within six months of meeting them, I was flying to Kenya for the first time. When we arrived and I began working with our teachers, I realized that EVERYTHING I had been trained in as a teacher and an Instructional Coach was specifically needed for our schools in Kenya. On that trip, I heard the Almighty speak to me and let me know that I was not second-class. I wasn't some subpar Christian but rather I was loved deeply. Deeper than I could ever imagine and that He had a purpose for me. My calling wasn't to the pulpit but rather to the classroom. My calling was to empower those who taught his children. I wasn't a second class Christian; I was a child of the King; made for a purpose.

So hear me today. You are not second-class. You are loved deeper than you can fathom, and the Almighty above has a plan for you. It may be in the job you hold now, in a pulpit, or at a school in Kenya, but regardless of it you are not subpar. You are loved. You are His and He knows the plans He has for you. Listen to His voice and do His work, regardless of what your day job is. Because not all ministers stand in a pulpit and preach, some teach in a classroom, some rig up power lines, some serve food to the hungry, and some raise their children to be warriors for Christ.

You are loved. Be His hands.

— DUSTY STRICKLAND



this holiday season, join us in changing lives.

Our two schools are filled with incredible little minds that are eager to learn. We currently have 50 kids who are in desperate need of education and we would love to get them sponsored before the school year starts in January. You can go online to our website, www.retouch.is/sponsorship and meet these awesome kids. The monthly cost of ***$40 a month*** *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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