

# COMPASSION

SUMMER 2020 MAGAZINE

## The impact of sponsorship

They were sponsored, now these alumni rate our program — PG 16

## Making the most of summer

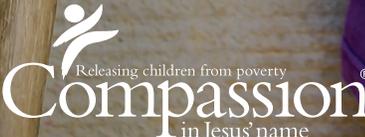
Tips from the NHL's Reimer family — PG 24

## Build your own summer media list

Mindful summer entertainment in a time of COVID-19 — PG 31

## One faithful next step

Allison Alley on the noble goal to end poverty — PG 10

  
Releasing children from poverty  
**Compassion**  
in Jesus' name



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## CREDITS

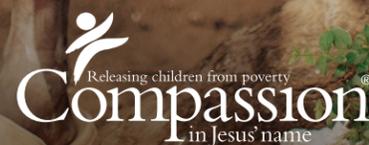
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# Editor's note

**I** HAVEN'T MET A SINGLE person whose life has not been touched in a profound way by COVID-19. A friend whose chemotherapy treatment is delayed and anxiously awaits word of her next appointment as she prepares her will and gets her house in order *just in case*. Family in the medical profession on the front lines of what, overnight, became a global war effort to combat an invisible enemy. Parents who, with family life upended, balance the new reality of the work-from-home routine thrust upon them while finding ways to occupy children no longer in daycare or school. The small business owner who has sacrificed so much for so long to stay afloat who can no longer open his doors or offer her services. People everywhere whose classes, graduations, treatments, dream vacations, mission trips, concerts and playdates have been cancelled.

This short list of disruptions only scratches the surface of the sea of changes we all face. Going to get groceries, meeting a friend for coffee, attending church, sitting near someone on the bus, shaking a stranger's hand—once normal activities are suddenly unfamiliar to us. When we set out to put together this issue of our magazine,

the global pandemic wasn't on our radar. Our hope then, before the world seemed to change under our feet, was to collect a series of stories, photographs and resources that would bring encouragement to you, our readers, and inspire you with an up-close look at how your generosity impacts the lives of so many children around the world.

As our deadline approached in the midst of a national lockdown, we had to make the choice about whether or not to go to print in the time of "cancel everything." Upon reflection, it seemed more important than ever to deliver this issue into your hands. We want to share meaningful content that will expand your heart in unprecedented times. We also want to keep in front of you the hope-filled reality of how your generosity truly transforms precious lives: the children in our programs bravely overcoming poverty.

In this issue you'll find a unique blend of stories. Our President and CEO, Allison Alley, shares about her experience in Bolivia (pg 10) before the pandemic broke out and how what she witnessed in Compassion's program there reaffirmed her resolve to see every life changed. You'll read how the Reimers, an NHL family, find meaningful ways to connect after a busy hockey season

(pg 24). Alyssa Esparaz introduces us to Compassion alumni who rate their experience in our sponsorship program (pg 16) while Laura Phillips gives an in-depth look at the very real vulnerabilities children in poverty face every day (pg 12). We've also curated a summer media list of books and films, included a must-make recipe from Indonesia and shared a behind-the-scenes feature on our heroic photojournalists around the world. With more great content in between.

Whatever your circumstances look like as you read this issue, we trust that in these pages you will find content that touches your heart, spurs you in your faith and reminds you of the great joy it is to help and serve children living in extreme poverty. ✨



**ANDREW KOOMAN**  
*Managing Editor*

# Real life, good news

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND OUR BLOG FOR EXCLUSIVE STORIES AND AN UP-CLOSE LOOK AT HOW YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES ETERNAL IMPACT.

## POPULAR ON SOCIAL



**Cecilia**  
**COMPASSION ALUMNI, EL SALVADOR**  
 "My sponsor changed my life, and now I'm happy to be translating letters to other children and reading so many encouraging words that will make a huge difference for them."



**Ryany**  
 Ryany, who lives in Brazil, dreamed of visiting the beach. We got to witness her joy the day she saw the ocean for the first time.



**Shakul**  
 Two years ago, we shared the story of Shakul, the incredible Ugandan boy born with ocean blue eyes. Today, he's thriving and stealing hearts in his community.

## POPULAR ON THE BLOG



**Escaping slavery on the most dangerous lake**  
 Orphaned and trafficked, Ebenezer's is a story of powerful, unfolding redemption.



**Meet amazing Canadian supporters from coast to coast**  
 We ask a few of our more than 82,000 supporters what they love about sponsorship.



**A future for street kids**  
 A glimpse at what it means for a child to escape a dangerous place to find security and hope.



@COMPASSIONCA

# Stepping up towards global goals

[READ ALLISON ALLEY'S ARTICLE ON PAGE 10 ABOUT HOW GOD EMPOWERS US TO TAKE FAITHFUL STEPS TOWARD THE GOAL OF ENDING POVERTY.](#)

**IN** **HER ARTICLE**, Allison Alley, President and CEO of Compassion Canada, encourages us to take one faithful step in the ambitious goal to end poverty. We want you to know that the generous steps you take truly help children and families around the world thrive! **Here's how your generosity is helping to achieve some of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.**



**GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**  
*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*

**Targets 3.1 and 3.2: Reduce child and maternal mortality rates.** Our Survival initiatives tackle both of these targets, specifically addressing the critical needs that mothers and babies face. This year, we have Survival programs operating in 17 countries that span all four regions where we work. We care for moms and babies living in poverty through strategic pre- and post-natal care initiatives, which include regular medical check-ups and vaccinations, training on breastfeeding, hygiene, healthy self-esteem and healthy homes, and help with home renovations to ensure families have safe shelter.

**Target 3.3: End epidemics and fight the spread of disease.** We have initiatives all over the world to address both the outbreak and prevention of disease. The global COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of hygiene training and clean water initiatives—things that have and continue to be a top priority of Compassion's global programs. We also combat the spread of disease in a wide variety of other ways, including HIV/AIDS awareness and screening, mosquito net distribution and awareness campaigns to prevent the spread of dengue fever as well as dental treatments to prevent oral disease.



**GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION**  
*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*

Sponsorship enables children to be enrolled in primary education. The generosity of our sponsors ensures that children in Compassion's programs have the school uniforms, school supplies and fees that are needed for them to attend school. Sponsorship also provides tutoring and extra educational support that make for a robust educational experience to set children up well for life. As a result, Compassion children are up to 40 per cent more likely than their peers to attend secondary school.



**GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY**  
*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*

Many of our initiatives across the globe are specifically designed to empower women in contexts where women and girls are more likely to be marginalized. For example, Compassion centres run workshops for girls, teenagers and young moms that equip them with relevant income-generating skills in their particular context. Training is offered in a wide variety of disciplines, including computers, mechanics, agriculture, baking, music, manual printing, cooking, graphic design, video editing and more. ✨



# Humans of Brazil

*Inspired by the popular Humans of New York blog, we wanted to share some inspiring human stories from Compassion's work in Brazil.*

BY LAURA PHILLIPS

**"WHEN I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD, THE DOCTORS** said that I had cysts in my ovaries and spine. My treatment lasted about a year, but in my head, it took centuries. When I was 11, the doctors said I had new tumours in my lungs and my breasts. I really didn't understand why God allowed me to get sick again. But I knew He was good, and I believed that He would help me live a good life, regardless of how many decades I was going to live. At the Compassion centre, my teachers reminded me of how good God is and how He cares for us, even though sometimes things happen to us. My limitations gave me a new kind of freedom. It's the freedom that only a great friendship can provide. It's the freedom to be loved despite our differences. From time to time, I had some relapses and needed to go to the hospital, but it was good to know that there are a lot of people cheering for me. When I heard that I was completely healed in 2018, I was trembling with joy. I cried, then laughed, then cried again. I'm very happy to know that it's all over."

—KAUANY

**“THERE WAS AN UNCLE OF A CLOSE FRIEND** who had a lot of money. Our curiosity about him and what he did in order to have access to such things increased every day. He had money. He had guns. I wanted to have that, so I followed that path. [From an early age] I hid myself in the slums waiting for the buyers to show up. I was on alert all the time, touching my gun on my waist. The local Compassion centre was a great influence in my life during the years I was involved with drug trafficking. They knew what I was doing and they never gave up on me. They insisted on showing me the true path. They gave me Bibles and books and tried in every way to show me that the path I was choosing was wrong. After this and seeing many friends killed or arrested I decided that it was time to leave that kind of life behind. I told the drug dealer that I was stopping his activities. The centre opened my eyes, so I will never, ever leave God’s presence and never return to be the person I was before.”



—LUCAS

**“BEING A GIRL IN BRAZIL IS VERY HARD.** We must be doubly careful when we go out on the street. We receive hundreds of charges of how we should be and what we should do while boys are free to do whatever they want. Many companies, for example, still have a gender target and prefer to hire men. I didn’t have much joy or expectations about my life [because of this]. There wasn’t much I could rejoice about, so being part of the Compassion centre has had such an impact in my life story. This place is my second home. [Now] working with Compassion has been a great gift for me. I want to help people and fight to give my mother a better future. I dream about the day that we’ll have our own house and I’ll be able to repay to the world everything I have received these years. I know that God is with me in all my struggles, so whenever I fail at something, I will rise and try again.”



—VITORIA



**“ONE OF MY GREATEST SORROWS IN BEING** blind is not being free to go where I want and go out on the street like everybody else. I’m afraid to walk on the street and step on the dogs and cats that lie on the ground. This has happened several times. I get scared and I know a lot of people laugh at me, but I got used to living like this. I’d like to be free. But there’s nothing I can do other than continue living. I’ve never felt much love from my family. They never told me good things. I feel terrible just remembering. All that hurt me a lot. Even nowadays, they say that I will never be able to fulfil my dreams, like playing the guitar. But today, my family is my daughter and the Compassion centre volunteers. There, they protect me and teach me everything I know. In the centre, in the meetings with the other mothers and in the visits here at home, I always feel the affection and love that they feel for me. It’s unlike anything I’ve ever had in my life. They encourage me to dream and to fight for what I want.”

—RITA



**“WHEN I WORE THE BACK BRACE FOR THE FIRST** time [because of my scoliosis] I cried a lot. It was stifling and people thought it was weird. I have to use it 24 hours a day, every day of the week, until I am 18 years old. Now I’m used to it and I can see some changes in my body. Although I need to wear this vest, I feel grateful to God because I know that many people can’t even walk. I know that maybe if I didn’t have the limitations I have, I’d be a completely different person. I know that God is the One who guides my ways and that He can make all things possible. One day, I want to become a pediatrician. It may seem like a big dream with my limitations, but I know God is the One who can make all things possible. Jesus is all I have in the world. I’m free even if my body is limited.” ✨

—JOSIELE



# One faithful step toward the noble goal of ending poverty

BY ALLISON ALLEY

**IF** you walk into our office in London, Ontario, you may be stopped in your tracks by the bright colours and bold letters as you enter our doors. Words that serve as a call to staff members and visitors alike, signaling where we've set our aims for the future:

**Every child.  
Every Jesus-follower.  
Every life changed.**

Over the last six months, I've regularly been asked about my vision for Compassion Canada in my new role as President and CEO.

It is as aspirational as it is practical. All-encompassing and yet precise.

We have our eyes set on *every* and our hearts focused on the *one*.

Even in the midst of the global pandemic and the uncertainty that the current times bring, this remains our focus as an organization. As I write this article, our entire staff team is working from home in a time of social distancing and cannot walk through our office doors to see those letters. Even so, we continue to work tirelessly every day to see that vision realized.

As an organization, we celebrate the progress the world has made since the United Nations' ambitious

Millennium Development Goals were set 20 years ago. We celebrate the progress we are making together towards the new Sustainable Development Goals. We also celebrate the part our generous supporters have played to help release more than two million children from poverty in Jesus' name. At the same time, we are sobered by the fact that 385 million children still live in extreme poverty and that they are particularly vulnerable in times of global crisis. These unprecedented times compel us even more to work towards a world where **every child** can live a life free from poverty in all its forms.

To reach every child, we are calling on **every Jesus-follower** to join God in advancing his mission of justice and compassion while prioritizing children and the poor. We want to be part of the invitation from Isaiah 58, "to loosen the chains of injustice, to set the oppressed free, to share your food with the hungry, to provide the poor wanderer with shelter, and to clothe the naked."

And lastly, we believe that participation in God's work sparks transformation in **every life** involved. It is not simply a transaction from giver to receiver, but a way of reorienting life towards a Kingdom vision and Jesus-like living. We want to see all children and all Jesus-followers freed from the grip of poverty—be it the poverty of 'too much' or the poverty of 'too little'—leading to lives changed both around the world and here at home.

*So how will we get there?* This is a question that people from all walks of life tend to ask, sometimes with genuine curiosity, sometimes with expectation and sometimes with doubt. For certain, making a measurable impact in the fight against extreme poverty can seem overwhelming, and the goal of releasing every child from extreme poverty may seem idealistic at best.

And the answer, for me, is simple and earnest: **We will get there by taking one faithful next step.** And after taking that faithful step, we will then take one more.

While 800 million people still live in extreme poverty today, that number was more than double just 20 years ago. Progress that once seemed impossible was achieved by setting a bold vision.

We're amazed by the way more than 8,000 church partners around the world show love and care to over two million children in our program, allowing them to leave the realities of extreme poverty behind. Children who prove that the love and investment of a community of people who know their needs helps them stay

emotionally and physically healthy, excel at school, find good jobs and become church and community leaders. As we see more and more children sponsored at even earlier ages, all the evidence shows that these children experience greater impact and are themselves shaping their communities for the better.

I was in Bolivia in March before the impact of COVID-19 was shutting down borders and before the World Health Organization named it a pandemic. While there, I had the opportunity to hear story after story of lives, families and communities being changed. Rosario was just a young girl when she witnessed the tragic death of her baby brother after he became ill and was not able to receive the care he needed. Many years later, those wounds were reopened when she lost her oldest brother just weeks away from his high school graduation when he came down with a fever.

Things began to change for Rosario when she was invited to join the Compassion child development program at a local church. A sponsor chose her, invested in her, encouraged her and prayed for her. As the Compassion staff and her tutors began to remove the lies that poverty had told her and replace them with God's truth, she began to have hope and dreams for her future.

Over time, she grew into a healthy and confident young lady. She had the opportunity to be mentored, to get involved in community outreach and to receive a post-secondary education. Rosario studied economics, and then received a second degree in teaching so she could invest in the next generation of leaders in her country. She is now working full-time, no longer trapped in poverty or believing the lies poverty tells, but helping young people develop healthy minds while discovering God's love for them.

Stories like Rosario's demonstrate how the perils of poverty are overcome in the lives of real children who face unimaginable

hardships. They fuel us to believe that the fight against poverty can be won, and more importantly, that it must be won.

My recent experience in Bolivia reaffirmed my desire to help children like Rosario survive and thrive. As we adjust to the unfolding reality of the coronavirus and the ripple effect the pandemic has had in every country, in every sector and at every level of society, I'm even more convinced that the global poor need the love and the help of the Global Church. Every Jesus-follower is called and uniquely equipped by God with gifts and talents to reach out in compassion to the world. And we can have confidence that God can do immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine as we set our eyes on the *every* and focus our hearts on the *one*.

We know that every act lived out, every story shared, every letter written and every prayer prayed in the name of Jesus helps to remove barriers that stand in the way of children so that they can live a life free from poverty and flourish in Christ.

The noble goal of ending poverty in the life of children around the world is bold but it begins with one simple step. Your one act of compassion, **your one faithful next step**, is the way the lives of children living in poverty will be transformed, no matter what circumstances we face in the days and years ahead. And I am praying that your one act of compassion will transform your own life in the process, too.

Perhaps the stakes are higher than ever for the children and families who live in extreme poverty. Perhaps the challenges to fight poverty seem greater than any of us have witnessed in our lifetime. May our confidence be in a God who ignites our hearts and multiplies our small acts as we join Him to see every child released from poverty in His name.

The question, then, is *What* is your next step? ✨

BY LAURA PHILLIPS

## THE SAFE HAVEN

***A Thai church moves into the neighbourhood of children at risk of sex trafficking and violence***

*We serve a God who became flesh and made his dwelling among us, or as The Message paraphrases it, a God who moved into the neighbourhood to live life with the vulnerable, the sick and the hurting (John 1:14). A God who calls us to follow suit in our neighbourhoods, being salt and light (Matt 5:13-16). Here's an up-close look at how Compassion's church partners in Thailand have moved into the neighbourhood to preserve dignity and protect children from exploitation.*



**IF** you look on a map of the world, place your finger on Thailand and slide it as far west as you can go, you'll find, on the country's edge, the province of Tak. If you look up Tak on Google Images, you'll find a stream of gorgeous photos: waterfalls, lush foliage, ornate temples.

On the most westerly edge of the province sits the tropical border city of Mae Sot. It's the main gateway to the neighbouring country of Myanmar. It is a beautiful corner of the world, holding a gruesome secret.

### THE UNSPOKEN REALITIES OF POVERTY

Through the thick humidity rising from the ground, you'll see casinos, large and small, along the Moei

River that separates Thailand and Myanmar. Their neon lights pierce the dark night. Eager tourists bustle around them, looking to make a quick dollar—betting small fortunes, collecting large debts, drinking alcohol and buying sex.

If you keep walking down the crowded streets by the casinos, your nostrils fill with the smell of curry and fried meats. Vendors sell trinkets, postcards and printed fabrics. The energetic sound of laughter comes from a group of tourists who are lining up to enter what looks like a dive bar. One of the men in the group moves toward a young girl, who couldn't be much older than 17, who is leaning against the doorway—painted red lips and a short black dress.

You look a bit closer through the

doorway and you see at least five other young girls dressed the same, strutting lifelessly throughout the room, ogled like products. You look frantically around you to make sure you're not mistaken—that you're not in a nightmare.

To your left and to your right, storefront signs flash red, green and yellow and your heart races. You turn your head and lock eyes with another young girl, painted up and sparsely clothed. Her glare feels hollow, but she smiles mechanically. After a long night, she will go home to her mom and her little sister and lay her earnings on the table. She will lay her tired body on a bamboo mat on the wooden floor feeling empty, dirty and used. The rhythmic sound of the wind through the cracks in her walls will drown out

the voices in her head that whisper shame and fear, lulling her into an anxious slumber. She will pull herself together tomorrow morning, painting a thick layer over her tear-stained cheeks, and do it all over again.

She is a fragile spirit trapped in a \$12 billion-dollar industry. She's just one out of **600,000** modern-day slaves caught in one of the world's most popular sex tourism destinations. Many girls, just like her, live in villages like Mae Sot, where poverty cripples families.

For too many girls like her, dignified work is not available because of a lack of education and social standing. In the past, families like hers have been frequently displaced through forced migration, or have had no choice but to leave home to follow seasonal

work. They are vulnerable to conflict and violence. They experience the unspoken and unseen parts of poverty that too few of us think of or know about.

### THERE IS A PLACE OF PROTECTION

If, however, you walk a bit deeper into the city of Mae Sot, beyond the noise and bustle, you'll discover a modest church of grey cement walls and a tin roof with a little sign that reads "First Church of Mae Sot."

It's no accident that this humble church is planted in the middle of the hurting city. In fact, it's very intentional. The staff at First Church have a deep heart of compassion for vulnerable children, like the girl with the hollow glare.

They moved into the city to be a beacon of hope. A place of healing and opportunity. A steady and safe presence for this vulnerable population of the exploited, the displaced and the hurting. They work to protect children whose life circumstances make them the perfect prey for exploitation.

Children like 12-year-old Muadepaw.

cousins. She has moved around too many times in her life to count because of threats of violence. Her aunt struggles to provide for her large family; she is full of worry for the future of these children.

The church staff at First Church recognize just how vulnerable children like Muadepaw are, living within the tension of loss and desperation. For them, protection is key.

"When vulnerable displaced people groups live next to a prospering casino industry, children will face unique risks," says Pastor Oong Mae of First Church.

"[Businesses like casinos] do not profit children; they only profit themselves. No one can exactly see the consequences of this into the future, but we have to start protecting them now. It's important for me that we work with children here."

In areas where instances of human trafficking are high, like the province of Tak, the sex trade industry targets young girls, around age 14. Casino owners remain ready to pay recruiters or pimps nearly \$700 CAD for a girl that age.

And when children this age

## ***They work to protect children whose life circumstances make them the perfect prey for exploitation.***

Young Muadepaw sits quietly on a straw mat under the shade near her wood-paneled home, slowly turning the pages of a children's book. Her life couldn't be more different than the girl with the hollow glare.

Muadepaw stares intently at the pages, cautious and solemn, processing each word on the page. In her short life, Muadepaw has seen much loss. Abandoned by her mom as a little one, she now lives with her aunt and her nine

can't afford to continue in their education, or their caregivers have no job, they are more at risk. The sex trade agencies that exist within booming businesses like casinos deceive vulnerable young women with the promise of an income. And though many are aware the job will be in the sex trade, many still take the opportunity because the extreme poverty and desperation of their families give them no other option. Once in that world, it's very

difficult to leave it, or escape.

“One of my visions is to protect these children. This is an at-risk environment. I want all children to be safe,” says Pastor Oong Mae.

“My dream for children here is for them to have a high-quality education and for them to know God. Because of the casinos here, people go work in the industry and receive more money. Then money becomes their master.”

As a caregiver of young girls like Muadepaw, Demuemueda, her aunt, has the same fears. She worries about the risk of exploitation her girls face.

But since Compassion’s ministry has joined forces with First Church and planted itself in the middle of the community, offering programs and opportunities for children and youth, her fear has melted away. She knows Muadepaw, even at her vulnerable age, is safe and protected. She sees a new lightness in her niece—a

lightness that comes with knowing that she is safe and she is loved.

“We trust the staff [at the Compassion centre],” says Demuemueda.

“We rely on them. I know in my own heart if I’m no longer on earth, there will be people that take care of my children in the future. They will be safe.”

**Through sponsorship alone, children are less vulnerable to being trafficked.** When a child is sponsored, they are enrolled in school. Their caregivers gain access to income-generation skills, workshops and tools. They’re encouraged and equipped to start planning for their future. They are connected with loving staff who are committed to knowing what is happening in their life and to protecting their best interests. Every Compassion staff member in Thailand and around the world is trained in

rigorous child protection standards.

Under the leadership of Pastor Oong Mae, the church has become the safe haven this community desperately needs, striving to give children a typical childhood despite the pain of their past and fear of the future. It is a place where parents can confidently leave their children when they go to work. Where parents can undergo child-protection training to make them aware of the dangers their children face, to ask questions and implement specific practices to protect them.

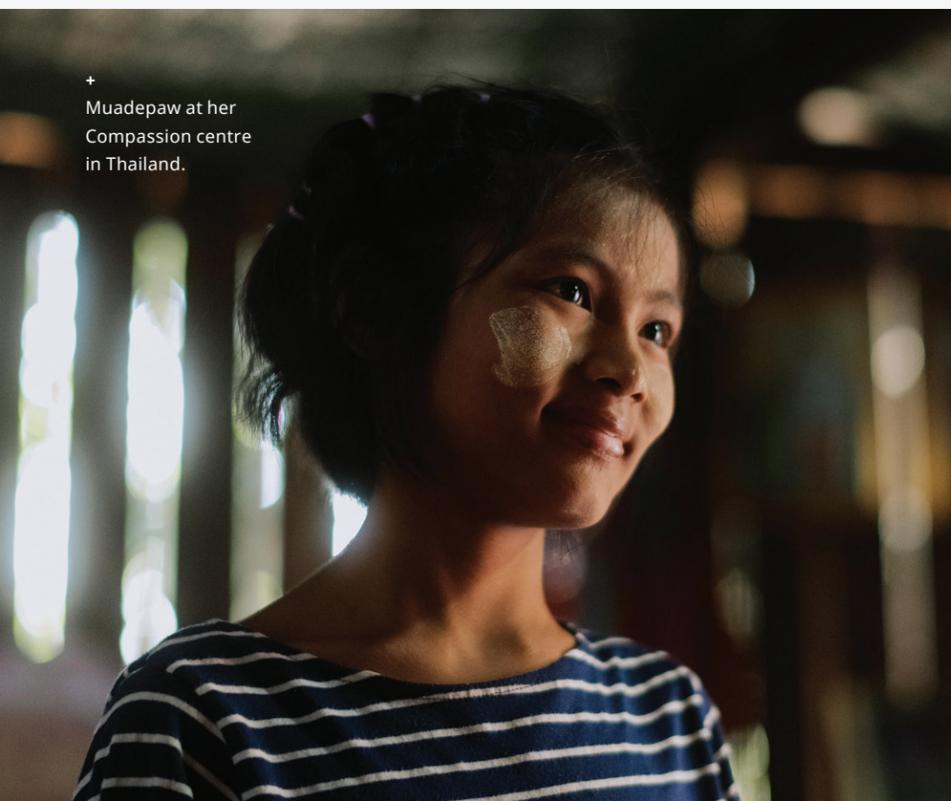
Today, Muadepaw smiles when she attends her Compassion centre. She spends time with her friends on the playground at the church, just being a kid. Her smile radiates a new lightness in her soul. Here, she has an unending hope about her future, full of dignity and possibility. She prays. She learns. She grows in confidence.

*First Church of Mae Sot is just one of the 100 incredible churches that Compassion partners with in Thailand to see children living lives full of promise.*

*Each church partner is purposefully present in their own neighbourhood where their Gospel-salt and their Kingdom-light can permeate the darkness. Where they can daily be the hands and the feet of Jesus. And where every day, they are the voice each child hears saying, “You are known. You are loved. You are protected.”*

*“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.” -John 1:14 ✝*

+ Muadepaw at her Compassion centre in Thailand.



# Children and families in poverty have no safety net in times of crisis.

Your generous gift will bring much-needed food, medical care and support to children and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



READ THE FULL STORY AT [CMPSN.CA/THESAHEAVEN](https://cmpsn.ca/thesehaven)

# PERSPECTIVES: COMPASSION ALUMNI ON THE IMPACT OF SPONSORSHIP

**T**HERE ARE A LOT OF OPINIONS ABOUT sponsorship—from your pastor encouraging you to sponsor a child, to your co-worker who thinks it’s a scam, to our invitations to sponsor in this magazine and everything in between!

**But what do those who were sponsored as children think of child sponsorship?** We caught up with some alumni of Compassion’s program to get their reflections on their experiences in the Compassion program and its impact on their lives. Meet them below, then flip the page to hear their perspectives and read about their experience in Compassion’s program.



Kiwi Cook,  
Compassion Alumni  
(Philippines)



**KIWI COOK**

*Part of the Compassion program in Bacolod City and Bulacan, Philippines from 1986 to 2001.*

Kiwi lives in Dallas, Texas, and works as a physical therapist. She also speaks regularly on behalf of Compassion at churches and conferences.



**RIA KALAW**

*Part of the Compassion program in Baguio City, Philippines from 1999 to 2013.*

Ria works as an accountant in Toronto, Ontario, and she and her husband are also expecting their first child together. She is now a Compassion volunteer and recently sponsored a child from the Compassion centre that she grew up in.



**SILAS IRUNGU**

*Part of the Compassion program in Nairobi, Kenya from 1992 to 2007.*

Silas lives in Nairobi, Kenya, and is Compassion International’s Manager of Media Content for the Africa region.



**LUCIANO LATOUCHE**

*Part of the Compassion program in Leogane, Haiti from 1993 to 2010.*

After graduating from Kingswood University in Sussex, New Brunswick, Luciano returned to Haiti, where he works with his church denomination as a youth worker and language teacher.



**RECHELLE ENOPLE**

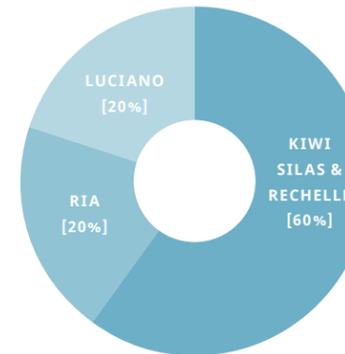
*Part of the Compassion program in Cebu City, Philippines from 2000 to 2015.*

Rechelle lives in the Philippines where she works as a public school teacher. She also tutors students after school and is involved with her local church as a Sunday School teacher and volunteer in the church’s feeding ministry.

**WANT TO HEAR MORE FROM OUR ALUMNI?  
READ SOME OF THEIR INCREDIBLE STORIES  
AT [CMPSN.CA/ALUMNI](https://cmprn.ca/alumni)**

## WE ASKED FIVE ALUMNI OF COMPASSION'S PROGRAM TO AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. HERE ARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES...

**“I CAME TO CHRIST BECAUSE I WAS PART OF THE COMPASSION PROGRAM.”**



60% STRONGLY AGREE  
20% AGREE  
20% SOMEWHAT AGREE

“My mother is a strong believer, so I was introduced to the church at a very young age. However, Compassion played a great role in nurturing my faith and providing me with an awesome community to teach me, care for me and encourage me whenever I needed it.”

–LUCIANO

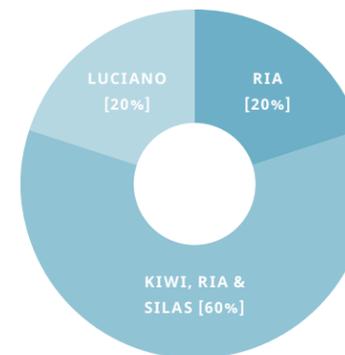
“Compassion introduced me to Christianity. I barely knew about Christ and His life or the Bible before joining the program. In Compassion, you become a witness to how God transforms lives and how He communicates with us.”

–RIA

“God spoke to me through our [Compassion] Kids’ Camp in June 2004. The theme was ‘Stand Up for Jesus!’ My teacher talked to me privately about Jesus and I had a personal encounter with God, which led me to decide to really ‘Stand Up for Jesus’ starting that day.”

–RECHELLE

**“AS A CHILD, I CONSIDERED MY FAMILY TO BE ‘POOR’.”**



20% STRONGLY AGREE  
60% AGREE  
20% SOMEWHAT AGREE

“As a family, we were not able to buy more than what we needed. We lived a simple life and without help, we couldn’t afford proper education. Aside from physical poverty, we were poor in spirit. Everything changed when I entered Compassion and accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.”

–RIA

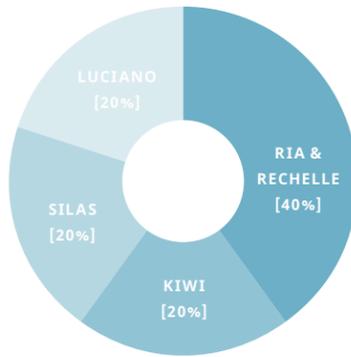
“I didn’t feel the degree of how poor we were until I entered school and I saw kids who had nicer clothes and shoes, better packed lunches and nicer school supplies and school bags. I don’t know if I fully understood poverty as a child, but I remember that I felt I was less because I was poor.”

–KIWI

“As a young child, I couldn’t tell the difference between my family and other families and therefore didn’t consider my parents poor. It was when I had grown older and could understand the struggles they faced each day that I considered my parents to be financially poor.”

–SILAS

**“MY SPONSOR IS STILL PART OF MY LIFE TODAY.”**



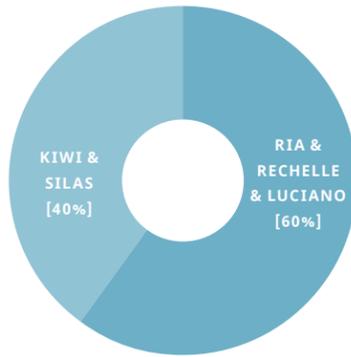
- 40% STRONGLY AGREE
- 20% SOMEWHAT AGREE
- 20% SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- 20% STRONGLY DISAGREE

“I wish I could meet him someday. But I only received one letter from him and all I have is his age and his name. Hopefully, our paths get to cross in the future.” -LUCIANO

“God blessed me by making me a part of my sponsor’s family, and they treat me exactly like family—encouraging, comforting and advising me. We have communication since I graduated from the Compassion program up to now. Every time I have a major decision to make, I update them. They inspired me to be a blessing to others, as well.” -RECHELLE

“I have not been in touch with my sponsor. However, my sponsor played a significant role in my life by sponsoring me throughout my time in the program. I consider him to be part of my family for the incredible contribution he made in my life!” -SILAS

**“COMPASSION’S PROGRAM EQUIPPED ME FOR THE FUTURE.”**



- 60% STRONGLY AGREE
- 40% AGREE

“The Compassion program is holistic. In the program, I developed leadership skills that I’m able to use to this date. Also, I acquired a passion for serving and caring for the lost, the least and the last.” -LUCIANO

“This program really equipped me to be ready to face the world after college, not just as a professional, but as a mature Christian woman with a strong spiritual foundation. During our leadership camps, our training sessions were really geared to help us to grasp God’s plan and purpose for our lives and see how important it is to seek Him all the days of our lives.” -KIWI

“Compassion changed my attitude towards the value of education and learning as many skills as possible. I was exposed to music, carpentry, drama and public speaking. These skills were important in building my confidence and cognitive abilities.” -SILAS

WANT TO HEAR MORE FROM OUR ALUMNI? READ SOME OF THEIR INCREDIBLE STORIES AT [CMPSN.CA/ALUMNI](http://CMPSN.CA/ALUMNI)

# Measuring your impact

**D** ID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR GENEROUS giving provides individualized care through each stage of a child’s development?

Our local church partners are experts committed to every child’s wellbeing. They truly know and love the kids! Your giving empowers them to invest in each child.

**HERE’S HOW WE TRACK THE JOURNEY OF A CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT:**

- We look at multiple measures **at each centre in every country** to assess the journey of the child’s development
- In each stage of development, we look for **age-appropriate goals** for each child to ensure they grow in four areas:
  - Physically
  - Cognitively
  - Relationally
  - Spiritually



**WHAT DO WE TRACK?**

HERE’S AN EXAMPLE OF SOME OF THE MEASURES WE USE IN EACH AREA FOR A 4-YEAR-OLD CHILD IN OUR PROGRAM WHO IS BENEFITTING FROM YOUR ONE-TO-ONE SPONSORSHIP:

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	RELATIONAL	SPIRITUAL
Physically healthy (normal weight and height, reduced incidence of common health issues)	Can identify some numbers, letters, coins and colours	Demonstrates respect for others	Recognizes that God loves them
Practises good basic hygiene habits like washing hands	Can verbally communicate simple desires, stories or activities	Expresses their feelings, needs and wishes in an appropriate manner	Can retell or answer questions about Bible stories
Can differentiate between good and bad touch	Can place things in sequence (short to tall) or identify opposites and follow simple instructions	Makes friends and demonstrates traits of a good friend (shares, collaborates and helps)	Is able to say a prayer or sing a worship song

# Why a faith-focused magazine matters now more than ever

*An interview with the Senior Editors of Faith Today*



**K**AREN STILLER OF OTTAWA AND BILL FLEDDERUS OF HAMILTON are both Senior Editors at Faith Today: Canada's Christian Magazine, one of the country's longest-running multi-denominational magazines. They recently spoke with Compassion Canada's Managing Editor, Andrew Kooman, about the importance of religious journalism in Canada and how Faith Today connects and champions the Canadian church.

**COMPASSION CANADA: WHAT'S YOUR "ELEVATOR PITCH" EXPLANATION OF WHAT FAITH TODAY IS ALL ABOUT TO OUR READERS WHO MAY NOT BE FAMILIAR WITH YOUR MAGAZINE YET?**

**KAREN STILLER:** Sometimes I actually describe it as "Canada's version of Christianity Today," which can be helpful but is probably not an entirely accurate reflection of either publication. I describe it as news, features, interviews and inspiration for Canadian Christians trying to live faithfully in a changing and complicated Canada. I think our magazine draws a large country and a huge, sprawling Church together in a way that few other things can. I think it is reassuring, encouraging and challenging all at the same time.

**BILL FLEDDERUS:** That's right. I think the cross-denominational aspect is so important—the average Christian is involved in a congregation and often denomination, but our personal individual ministry could be so much stronger drawing on the wisdom and experience and different perspectives and insights of brothers and sisters in the faith that we might not otherwise hear about. I'd also like to say Faith Today is so much more than a printed magazine, it's like a hyperlink to the wider Christian community. Some readers don't go beyond the print, but there's social media, blogs, podcasts, webinars and more for those who want to connect more deeply. We love to hear from readers in all kinds of ways, and we depend on their ideas and feedback.

**CC: WHAT'S ONE OF THE MOST IMPACTFUL NEWS STORIES YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED IN YOUR JOURNALISTIC CAREER AND HOW DID IT INFLUENCE YOU?**

**KS:** I visited South Sudan and Uganda to write about the refugee crisis resulting from the conflict in South Sudan. It was deeply moving to me to see life in refugee camps firsthand and try to understand a deeply complex crisis and how it impacts the lives of people just like me and my own family. Those stories stretched me as a writer and in the end, the most honouring way I could come up with to write about those situations was to share with readers my own questions and observations and be very transparent with how much I did not know for sure. I told the stories of a few people I met and interviewed and tried to tell them really well. It was humbling, challenging and a privilege that I will never forget.

**BF:** I keep seeing examples of Christian communities, whether that's a congregation or a ministry organization or a denomination, struggling with painful divisions and challenges. What impacts me is when Christians are able to be kind and gracious and loving even with those they disagree with. Maybe the best example of that is among many Indigenous Christians—so many times instead of letting the bitterness and anger win out, instead of turning their backs on us, they have extended a hand of dialogue and friendship. That's only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.

**CC: THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE HAS DRAMATICALLY CHANGED THE MEDIA WORLD AND WHILE MANY PUBLICATIONS HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM IT, YOU REMAIN IN PRINT. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO STILL REACH AUDIENCES IN PRINT?**

**KS:** Print is still very much alive and well. Some people do prefer to consume their media digitally, but many, many Canadians—including a younger generation of readers—like to hold a

magazine or a book in their hands, put it down and pick it up again later to finish reading it. Print and digital are both important and are still needed.

**BF:** There are different kinds of print. News journalism has switched to digital for most people, and I don't see that going back because news is all about speed. But an attractively designed, printed magazine that offers insightful analysis, that helps you make sense of your world, a magazine that offers specialized news for a niche audience of Canadian Christians, that is a relief to relax with for many people. Faith Today's print magazines are part of an entire communication package that includes, like I said earlier, blogs and podcasts and social media and all that. People's attentions are pulled in all kinds of directions, so offering them a variety of delivery options to take in our important messages seems to be what's needed for successful communication in our world today.

**CC: YOUR WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS THAT RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM IS "AN ESSENTIAL PIECE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN CANADA." WHY IS THIS SO?**

**KS:** In Faith Today we have a feature or department called Church in Community. In every issue we highlight a simple, effective way a Canadian church (of all sizes, denominations and locations) acts out compassion, love and service in their community. Those kinds of stories encourage other Christians to do the same kind of thing, to think creatively about how their church exists and loves their neighbourhoods. The value churches bring to their communities—their public good—is part of the story we need to tell to help preserve the 'place' churches hold in communities. We remind people that churches matter, and faith can make a positive difference in the life of our country. That's one example. Religious journalism helps do that. It reminds people that the Church is actually alive and well, and a force of good and love and compassion (at least,

when the Church is at its best). Religious journalism also brings a much-needed nuance to stories about issues like medical assistance in dying, laws around prostitution, poverty, homelessness, international development issues and much more. Faith-based journalism tells stories that others don't, in a way that others can't, and we believe that plays a role in protecting religious freedom in our country.

**BF:** I'll just say amen to that.

**CC: IN A RECENT ISSUE, YOUR COVER ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTED A POST-CHRISTIAN CANADA, NOTING THAT HALF OF ALL CANADIANS NOW IDENTIFY AS EITHER AGNOSTIC, ATHEIST OR UNRELIGIOUS WITH ONLY A TENTH ATTENDING RELIGIOUS SERVICES EACH WEEK. HOW DO YOU GRAPPLE WITH SUCH STATISTICS AND WHERE DO YOU IDENTIFY KEY AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADIAN CHRISTIANS TO MAKE IMPACT IN OUR CULTURE?**

**KS:** I think we grapple with statistics like that, first of all, like anyone else. We were surprised, but not shocked, disappointed but not dismayed. We have the opportunity with our magazine to dig into stories like that, to solicit a variety of opinion and thinking around it, including some solutions or positive responses to that new reality in Canada. We have the opportunity with every issue to present hopeful stories of churches and individuals who are doing really creative, loving things in this new context. Those stories give others hope and energy and really good ideas.

**BF:** There are a ton of really wise and experienced ministry experts in Canada, both practitioners and thinkers, but the average Canadian doesn't have access to them or sometimes doesn't even know who they are. That's where Faith Today plays an absolutely vital role for Canadian believers, enabling those wise voices to be heard and understood.

**CC: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT GOD IS DOING IN CANADA THAT YOU'RE MOST EXCITED ABOUT?**

**KS:** For me, it's a focus on the neighbourhood. I'm encouraged by the many, many churches who are loving their communities so well, and looking for ways to partner together or with other like-hearted organizations or groups to make a difference in the lives of people. The Church is doing what the Church should be doing in so many cases, and I find that deeply hopeful.

**BF:** God is enabling partnerships and cooperation across all kinds of church sectors for the advancement of His Kingdom. Sometimes it takes a disastrous situation to force us to cooperate for survival, other times we have visionary leaders working proactively to multiply the influence of the Body of Christ, but whatever the cause, it's exciting to be part of it.

READ THE FULL, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW AT [COMPASSION.CA/BLOG](https://www.compassion.ca/blog) ✂

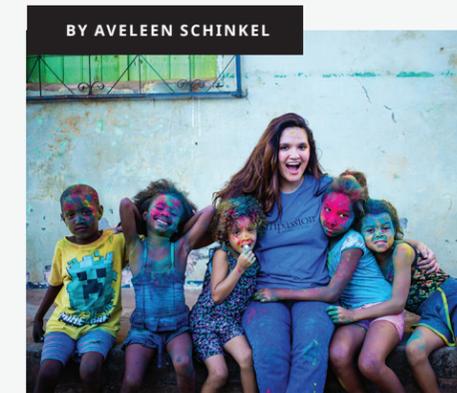


FAITH TODAY HAS CREATED A SPECIAL OFFER FOR SUPPORTERS OF COMPASSION. SIGN UP FOR A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO THEIR PRINT MAGAZINE AT [WWW.FAITHTODAY.CA/COMPASSION](https://www.faithtoday.ca/compassion)

# The other side of the photo

## Compassion's storytellers share their point-of-view

*Ever wonder who captured the story or the image that captured your heart? Meet some of our incredible photojournalists who share Compassion's work through story.*



BY AVELEEN SCHINKEL

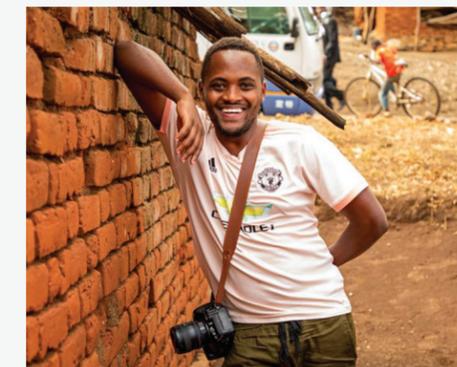
**NAME:** SARA NAVARRO  
**COUNTRY:** BRAZIL  
**WITH COMPASSION:** 2.5 YEARS  
**PREVIOUSLY:** COLLEGE STUDENT + FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

What I love most about my job is that I can give a voice to people who never thought they could be heard or seen. Every person has an entire world inside their heart and a history that should be told. I feel so privileged when people that I have never met before open their heart for me, a stranger. Even if just a single person reads a story that I wrote about a child, it's good enough.



**NAME:** JARVIS SANGMA  
**COUNTRY:** BANGLADESH  
**WITH COMPASSION:** 7 YEARS (2 AS A VOLUNTEER)  
**PREVIOUSLY:** QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER

Not many people can reach out to all the regions and speak to people in the most remote places of the country. But as a Photojournalist...I feel that it is my sacred responsibility to reach out to those who are desolate to spread the good word, and likewise let the world hear their unheard voices. I only hope that my stories portray the voices of the children and engage the readers to be passionate towards humankind.



**NAME:** ERIC LEMA  
**COUNTRY:** TANZANIA  
**WITH COMPASSION:** 2 YEARS  
**PREVIOUSLY:** COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT WITH WORLD VISION TANZANIA

I am passionate about being able to share the stories of thousands of kids from my country. The most challenging part of my job is when I interview a child and hear of the trauma they have lived through and feel like there is nothing I can do for them, despite wanting to. But I hope my stories show the resilience of all of the kids in the program, and I hope that the person reading the story can somehow relate and feel inspired.



VIEW THEIR WORK AT [COMPASSION.CA/BLOG/PHOTOJOURNALISTS](https://www.compassion.ca/blog/photojournalists)



**NAME:** JUANA ORDOÑEZ  
**COUNTRY:** HONDURAS  
**WITH COMPASSION:** 12 YEARS (5 IN THIS ROLE)  
**PREVIOUSLY:** ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

I love being a Photojournalist. I enjoy so much not just to be in contact with the children but to listen to them and learn about their environments. The fact that I'm able to tell their stories represents a huge responsibility for me... I hope that my stories not only move people to act, but sensitize them and educate them on the hardships of poverty that children face.



**NAME:** ISAAC OGILA  
**COUNTRY:** KENYA  
**WITH COMPASSION:** 12 YEARS (IN VARIOUS ROLES)  
**PREVIOUSLY:** COMPLEMENTARY INTERVENTIONS ADMINISTRATOR FOR COMPASSION KENYA

I am so excited that I get to share about the strides that Compassion is taking in ending poverty among the children in Africa. It can be challenging, listening to some of the difficult stories and letting God use me as a mouthpiece for the children, families and churches. I hope that my stories can move the Global Church to act in response to what God is saying, to educate and to inspire.



**NAME:** EDWIN ESTIOKO  
**COUNTRY:** PHILIPPINES  
**WITH COMPASSION:** 16 YEARS  
**PREVIOUSLY:** WRITER + PRODUCTION MANAGER FOR A LOCAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

There's a lot to fall in love with doing this job! I love that the content I write and the images I produce chronicle the movement and growth of God's Kingdom and the Church in this part of the world. In a way, one can say I am writing excerpts for what could be a continuation of the New Testament! I hope my stories allow me to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves... Their lives and stories are inspiring, if only they were told and heard. ✨

# MAKING THE MOST OF SUMMER

Tips from the NHL's Reimer family

**J**AMES AND APRIL REIMER spend their time between British Columbia and North Carolina along with their two daughters Nevaeh and Hope. The family sponsors Compassion children in **Rwanda, Burkina Faso and Kenya**. We spoke with them about making the most of the summer after James, who plays goaltender for the Carolina Hurricanes, is done the busy NHL season.

## COMPASSION CANADA: WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOUR FAMILY CREATES MEANINGFUL TIME TOGETHER AFTER THE BUSY NHL SEASON?

**Reimers:** The way we create time together is to go back to our home in Kelowna, BC, Canada. We like to be home as soon as the season is done so we have some time to just be back into the regular swing of life. During the season, James is consistently gone or is not able to be as present at home, so when he finally does get home, April has a long list of things on her to-do list, so James will help out with the girls while she runs around doing things. When we get around to summer it's a nice blessing to just do life all together. We can all go to the park, or to the beach or to the store instead of just one or the other. We also set aside time for quality family time. As excited as we are to be home, we try our best to

make sure our schedules are left open to spend time with our girls or if we are busy doing things, it's together as a family.

## WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU DO AS A FAMILY FOR FUN AND RELAXATION IN THE SUMMER?

We live on the water, so we enjoy multiple water sports. From boating, wakesurfing and Sea-Doos to swimming and paddleboarding—that's generally what we have fun with.

## WHAT THINGS DO YOU DO IN BOTH THE BUSYNESS OF LIFE AND DURING TIMES OF REST TO BUILD YOUR FAITH AS A FAMILY?

Pray. Life gets hectic and as our kids get older and get more of an understanding, we try and teach them the truths of the Bible and the love of Christ. But our emphasis has been on prayer and simply talking to Jesus. Our three-year-old is adamant about praying. It's very cute. She will get upset if we prayed without her. We also make attending church and being a

part of a church community a high priority. When you are living in different cities from one hockey season to the next, only April and the girls get to attend regularly (because James is either travelling or playing on Sunday) but in the off-season we get to go together. We have a great amount of support from our church in Kelowna and it's a place where we get to just be ourselves with fellow believers.

## CC: HOW IS SPONSORING KIDS WITH COMPASSION MEANINGFUL TO YOU AS A FAMILY?

It really comes down to just serving Christ. It's pretty simple that we all need to help when we can and where we can, and so we try and share what we can. Helping less fortunate kids with basic needs is the least we can do. So many kids around the world are needing the necessities of life and if we can make a difference in the lives of our sponsored kids, it's all worth it. Now having girls of our own, it really brings this issue close to our hearts and we love that we can help kids around the world. ✨

+  
James and April Reimer  
with their daughters,  
Nevaeh and Hope.



# Summer eats

Make new summer memories with an easy-to-make recipe from Indonesia.

We've selected a light and delicious dish that's perfect for the summer.



## PINEAPPLE BALLS

**YIELDS** 12 Servings  
**PREP TIME** 20 mins  
**COOK TIME** 50 mins  
**TOTAL TIME** 1 hr 10 mins

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup softened unsalted butter
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 ¾ cups flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup pineapple jam
- 1 egg beaten, for a wash

### DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 325°F. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper.
- 2 With a stand mixer on medium speed, cream the butter and powdered sugar until fluffy. Add the egg yolks, one at a time. Add the vanilla and mix until combined.
- 3 Sift the flour and salt into a separate bowl. Pour it into the egg mixture and mix thoroughly.
- 4 Cover the dough and refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes.
- 5 Roll the dough into 1-inch balls and put them on cookie sheets about 2 inches apart. Make a dent in the middle of each ball and fill each with about ½ tsp of the pineapple jam. Pinch together the dough edges until the filling is covered. Turn the seam sides down. Brush each ball with egg wash.
- 6 Bake until golden and shiny, about 15 to 18 minutes, turning cookie sheets halfway through. Remove to wire racks to cool.



## SOCIAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS

"Summer seems to go by so quickly that we try to commit to at least one plan...like [making] accommodations for camping or at least one road trip." —**R WILL (ON INSTAGRAM)**

"I like to spend at least an hour each day on my apartment balcony, reading a good book. I leave my cell phone and laptop indoors!" —**STEVE B (ON FACEBOOK)**

FOR MORE GREAT RECIPES FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD VISIT [EXPLORER.COMPASSION.COM](https://explorer.compassion.com)

# Jesus people in a culture of distraction

Is it possible to be people of compassion, mercy and love in a world of distraction, noise and hurry?

BY LAURA PHILLIPS

**IF** I were to ask you what one thing was butting heads with our spiritual lives as Christians today, what would you say? Would you say secularism? Politics? Lack of discipline? If you asked theologian Dallas Willard, his answer would be simple. “Hurry,” he’d say. “Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”\*

Wait, what? Let that sink in for a moment. We are a culture of people with fast-paced lives, there’s no doubt about it. But what’s that got to do with anything? Is that really the thing we have to worry about? Let’s take some inventory.

Close your eyes and imagine with me the typical day of a Canadian from start to finish. *Deep breath in.*

You wake up to your smart phone buzzing for your attention. You follow your trained thumbs from app to app like it’s second nature—*Instagram, Twitter, Email, Facebook, Instagram again.* You gobble down your breakfast bar and race to your 9 to 5 with the morning radio blasting in your ears, checking your phone when the traffic lights turn red. After work is through, you order Uber Eats because between traffic jams and your kid’s soccer practice, who in their right mind can make a home-cooked meal? When you finally get a moment to yourself

it’s around 9 PM, and you know you should probably get some quiet time in but Netflix is calling and a few episodes won’t do you any harm.

*Deep breath out.* Does this sound at all familiar?

The tension between busyness and faith is nothing new. Great Christian thought leaders have pinpointed this for years. Corrie ten Boom once said, “*If the devil can’t make you sin, he’ll make you busy.*”\* But the stakes are even higher now in our digital age, with even more vying for our attention.

As a culture, we tend to equate busyness with success, and success with wholeness. But the reality is, we were never created to be made

\*Reference from *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer  
Statistics from BankMyCell Report 2019-2020

whole by how much we do. We cannot be the whole, flourishing humans we were created to be if we don’t allow ourselves capacity to slow down and clear away all the digital and cultural clutter that has the capacity to drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Today and every day, I know that I, as a Jesus-follower, need to slow down enough to fix my eyes more on the things above (Col. 3:2) than the things on my screen. I need to let my heart break for what breaks my Father’s, to the point where I pour out compassion beyond just pausing and sighing at another headline of sad news.

By no means should we allow guilt to be our guidepost for how we live. We don’t have the capacity as humans to take on everyone’s struggles and heartache. We wouldn’t be able to function that way. But sometimes, we need a wakeup call to the things we have grown numb to, because perhaps we have swung too far the opposite way. We need to allow our hearts and our minds the breathing room they need to process the world’s brokenness, bring it to Jesus—the One who holds all things together—and breathe out the mercy, peace and compassion we can only get from Him.

Practically speaking, there are things we simply can’t give up. There will always be chores and work and places to take the kids. But as followers of Jesus, are there things we ought to prioritize that we are filling with our busyness and hustle because, well, it’s just easier?

Let’s look at what God invites us into as his holy people, today in our culture:

*Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Col. 3:12).*

*Carry each other’s burdens (Gal. 6:2). Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other (Eph. 4:32). Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn (Rom. 12:15). Use whatever gift you have received to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10). Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor (Zech. 7:9-10).*

What incredible Kingdom-culture! I don’t want to miss out on it because of hurry, busyness or distraction. When our brains are constantly filled with information because of our devices or because we’re rushing from commitment to commitment, we don’t leave space for our mind and our hearts to catch up with the calling we’ve been given in Christ. To breathe in empathy and breathe out compassion. To walk in the ways of mercy and kindness. To work towards the good of our brothers and sisters.

So, how do we change this? Is it truly impossible to live into these callings in what some refer to as our “hurry culture”? Yes. And yes. It won’t be easy. But Jesus never said it would be (Matt. 16:24-26).

Take a look at some of these practical disciplines to help guide you deeper into your calling as a Jesus-follower full of compassion, mercy and love:

**1. TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO CONSIDER YOUR WEEKLY SCHEDULE, AND ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:**

- Am I becoming a more compassionate, kind, humble and gentle person by checking my phone multiple times a day or watching this show?
- Am I paying attention

to the people around me and their needs?

- Does the pace of my life allow me the time to administer justice to those oppressed around me and those across the world?
- Am I giving myself the time and the mind space that’s required to mourn with those who mourn?

**2. USE TOOLS TO HELP YOU BE LESS DISTRACTED.**

Download apps for your phone like Moment, AppDetox or Flipd, each designed to regulate the amount of time you spend on your phone. Implementing these will help you stay focused on the people in front of you and use your downtime for spiritual practices like prayer, worship, silence and solitude that allow you to connect with the heart of God.

**3. PROTECT YOUR QUIET TIME.**

We know how easy it is to let our quiet time with God slip lower on our daily priority lists. Starting small, carve out a time once or twice a week to be alone with God—whether it’s taking a walk in nature, sitting on your bed with your Bible and journal or sitting on your couch with a cup of tea as your toddler naps. Don’t be legalistic about it. Give yourself grace, and work up to spending a chunk of time a day in the quiet place with God out of a posture of expectation, not obligation. The more we are able to centre ourselves on God’s truth and God’s voice in a world of voices shouting at us, the more we will grow into people of compassion. We will remember our priorities, and feel less scattered. ✨

# What do you think?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS VYING FOR YOUR ATTENTION THESE DAYS? HOW MANY ARE NECESSARY, AND HOW MANY COULD YOU CUT OUT?

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WHAT PRACTICES COULD YOU IMPLEMENT INTO YOUR LIFE TO HELP YOU GROW MORE INTO A JESUS PERSON OF COMPASSION, MERCY AND LOVE RATHER THAN DISTRACTION, HURRY AND HUSTLE?

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WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC THINGS YOU NEED PRAYER FOR IN THIS JOURNEY? WHO COULD YOU CALL UPON IN YOUR LIFE TO PARTNER WITH YOU IN THIS JOURNEY?

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86%

of Smartphone users will check their device while speaking to family and friends.



4.5 hrs per day

is the average amount of time spent on smartphones and tablets.



2,617

is the average amount of clicks, swipes and taps the average phone user engages in per day.



# Love of a letter

WRITTEN BY AVELEEN SCHINKEL, ALYSSA ESPARAZ AND NICO BENALCAZAR

**L**izbeth sits on a slope of the Ecuadorian Andes, her face lit with a smile and her hands clutching a treasured piece of paper. It's her regular routine each time she receives a letter from her sponsor. "Every time I receive a letter from my sponsor, I go to the mountain to read my letters," she says.

If you are ever tempted to think your letters don't matter, think about this: Lizbeth memorizes her sponsor's letters.

"I read them many times to memorize everything my sponsor tells me."

Lizbeth also invites her friends to join in the fun, passing the photos around and reading her letters aloud so they can all bask in the love penned by Lizbeth's sponsor.

"The girls feel that the words of Lizbeth's sponsor are for everyone," says Armando, the director of Lizbeth's Compassion centre. "[Letters] motivate them, encourage them and make them feel special and unique. But the most important thing is that letters make children feel loved."

Read more stories about the impact of letters at [cmpsn.ca/yourletter](https://cmpsn.ca/yourletter)



### "CAN YOU TELL MY SPONSOR TO WRITE TO ME?"

If you ever get the chance to visit a Compassion centre and meet some of the children in Compassion's program, one of the questions you'll be asked most frequently is, "Can you tell my sponsor to write to me?"

Letters might seem trivial in the face of extreme poverty. But the reality is that to the child you sponsor, your letters aren't just words on a page—they are a connection to you, one of the most impactful people in their life, and they can't wait to hear from you.

Your words of encouragement can help build self-esteem and confidence, speak truth to counter the lies of poverty and motivate your sponsored child to stay in school or continue pursuing their dreams.

But the most important thing to remember is that writing letters isn't about saying the exact right words, but expressing love to the child you sponsor. As the old saying goes, "They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel." ✨

### READY TO WRITE A LETTER?

Visit [compassion.ca/my](https://compassion.ca/my) today to write a letter using our new and improved online experience.

# Busting some myths on Compassion and community development

BY ALYSSA ESPARAZ

**B**ECAUSE WE ARE SO committed to and focused on individual child development, a common myth about Compassion's program is that we don't do wider community development projects. But the fact is, we invest a lot in community development through what we call our Complementary Interventions. You've probably even given to some before—things like water and sanitation projects, vocational skills workshops or livestock for families in poverty. These projects are funded by donations that are outside of regular child sponsorship. Take a look at some of the common myths about Compassion's programs around the world!

## 1 MYTH: DIGGING WELLS IS UNSUSTAINABLE.

**FACT: WE NEVER DIG A WELL UNLESS A LOCAL CHURCH TAKES OWNERSHIP OVER ITS SUSTAINABILITY.**

Because all of our community development interventions—including digging wells—are both initiated and implemented by one of Compassion's

local church partners, water projects are locally owned and never abandoned. Local churches identify the need for clean water in their community and approach Compassion with a proposal. Once approved, the local church leads the entire project—working with local contractors and members of the community to educate on how to maintain the project and to ensure the unique needs of their community are met.

## 2 MYTH: GIVING LIVESTOCK TO FAMILIES IS IRRESPONSIBLE.

**FACT: WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY TRAINING AND SUPPORT, THE GIFT OF LOCALLY SOURCED LIVESTOCK CAN BE A POWERFUL WAY TO LIFT FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY.**



Like all of our community development initiatives, providing families with livestock is always initiated and implemented by Compassion's local church partners. They partner with local veterinary professionals and local livestock suppliers to purchase the livestock. They carefully consider which families in the community will benefit from livestock. Then, training is provided to the families to ensure they know how to raise healthy animals using sustainable and humane practices. Families are also provided with the supplies needed to raise livestock, such as materials to construct shelter for the animals.

**HAVE YOU HEARD A MYTH ABOUT COMPASSION'S WORK THAT YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE BUSTED? EMAIL US AT [MEDIA@COMPASSION.CA](mailto:MEDIA@COMPASSION.CA)!**

## 3 MYTH: COMPASSION CENTRES ARE SCHOOLS.

**FACT: MOST SPONSORED CHILDREN ATTEND THEIR LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL.**



While some of Compassion's local church partners do run private schools that are attended by some of the children sponsored by Compassion in their community, most sponsored children attend their local public school. Sponsorship provides for any necessary school supplies, uniforms and fees. Sponsorship also provides regular programming at the Compassion centre that strengthens children's educational experience through tutoring, extra complementary classes and other educational opportunities.

## 4 MYTH: YOUTH NEED TO ATTEND COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

**FACT: VOCATIONAL TRAINING CAN SET YOUTH UP TO FLOURISH.**



Some youth in Compassion's program aspire to attend college or university. But many opt to engage in vocational training, which can set them up for successful futures just as well as college or university! Many Compassion centres provide youth with the opportunity to learn skills like hairdressing, carpentry, baking, sewing and more. These vocational workshops enable youth to graduate from Compassion's program with the skills to provide for their families and flourish both personally and professionally. ✨

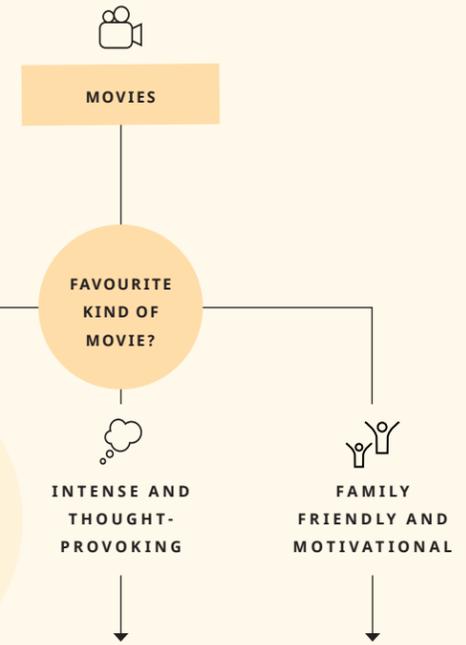
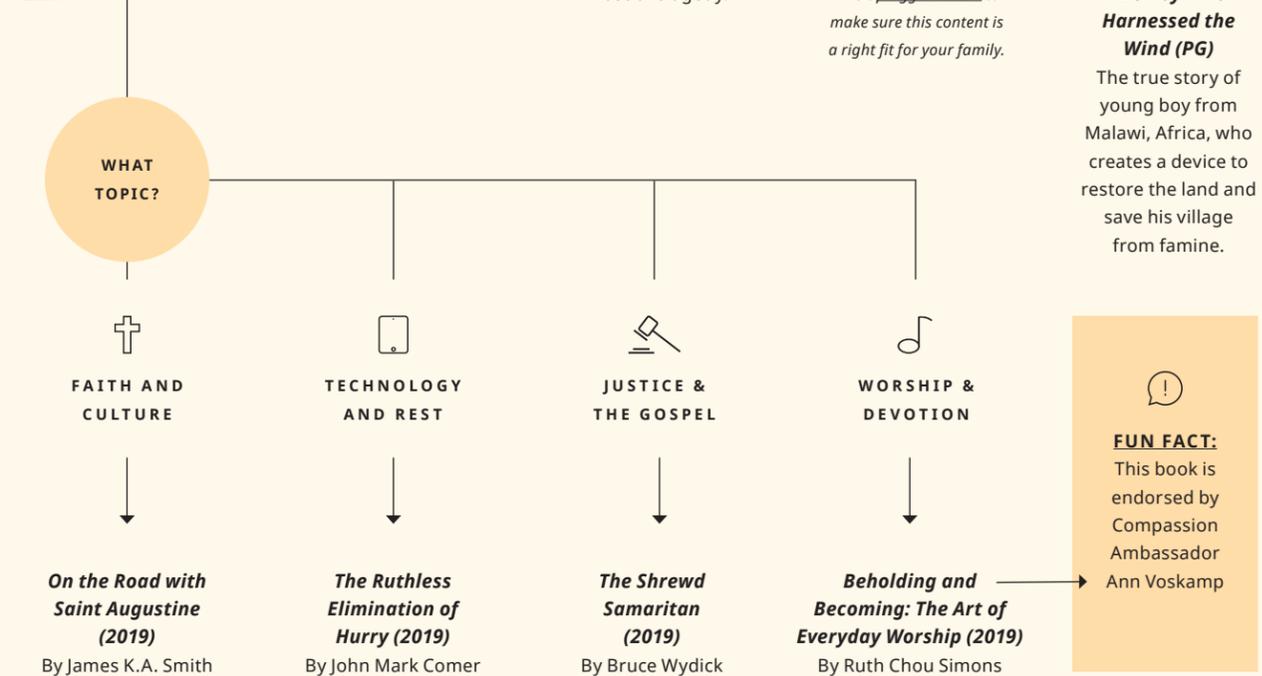
# MINDFUL SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT

BY LAURA PHILLIPS

**M**EDIA INFLUENCES THE WAY WE SEE the world around us. It can shed light on our current cultural moment in a meaningful way. It has the power to spur us on to be people who seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our Creator God. With summer around the corner, there's more time to watch movies and read. We put together a list of great content that will help you and your family meaningfully incorporate compassion and justice into your summer media list.

LOOKING FOR SOME GREAT TUNES? GET OUR SUMMER MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS AT [CMPSN.CA/SUMMERLIST](http://CMPSN.CA/SUMMERLIST)

## BOOKS



**The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind (PG)**  
The true story of young boy from Malawi, Africa, who creates a device to restore the land and save his village from famine.



### WHAT IS COMPASSION?

As one of the world's leading child development organizations, Compassion partners with the local church in 25 countries to end poverty in the lives of children and their families. Today, more than two million children and their families are discovering lives full of promise and purpose as they develop in all aspects of their lives—minds, bodies and relationships—while discovering God's love for them in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

