In Guatemala’s highlands, villages are isolated, and children and families often suffer extreme poverty, malnutrition and crushing unemployment.

But for the youngest children in 100 communities, things are now changing for the better.

Since November 2014, with support from the Japan Social Development Fund through the World Bank and caring donors like you, ChildFund has been implementing a responsive parenting project in this region.

The objective of the project, which is called “Our Children, Healthy and Strong,” is to strengthen parents’ and communities’ ability to improve and monitor their children’s development (physical, cognitive, social-emotional and linguistic), reaching 8,000 girls and boys under age 2.

“We are seeing babies sitting up at the time where they need to sit,” says Gabriela Garcia, ChildFund Guatemala’s partnership and portfolio manager, “babies crawling at the time where they are expected to be crawling, or standing and doing their first steps.

“Before, you might have had a baby or an infant 18 months old not walking, not crawling, just sitting,” she adds. “And it’s because they haven’t had the opportunity to use their muscles. Very basic parenting skills that may come natural to other parents need to be taught, or shown, to these moms.”

Since the project began, 419 mothers from the community have received training and are now working to share their knowledge with their peers!

Garcia notes, “When we get together in the sessions, you see the results in the actions of the moms who have been with us from the beginning — you see the way they care for their babies, the way they talk to them, they smile to the babies, they hug them and they tell them ‘I love you.’”

The mothers who participate are learning the skills they need as they raise their children, including how to attend to developmental hurdles like fine motor skills and emotional well-being.

“They work with massage, for example,” says Garcia, “and as they do the massage, they tell the baby they love them, because it is something that is not mentioned here. ‘I love you’ is not said enough.”

Your generosity makes all of this possible.
Your gift today can help even more children grow healthy and strong!
In October, ChildFund’s Board of Directors and Executive Team met in Uganda for a four-day marathon of meetings, organizational planning and field visits — and even a little playtime with the children, of course.

Among the trip’s highlights was a visit to ChildFund’s Massode Early Childhood Development Center, which serves about 80 children between the ages of 3 and 5.

Uganda’s government recently recognized the Massode center as the model for a new national policy to promote young children’s development — not only for the center’s curriculum, but also for its unique approach to integrating social, emotional and physical health into traditional learning.

Another memorable moment for participants was getting to see ChildFund’s ripple effect on the parents and families of sponsored children. “In the Jinja area, we met a woman entrepreneur who was raising her children all by herself,” says Adam Hicks, ChildFund’s Chief Development and Marketing Officer. “She had started her own convenience store. She showed us how she had been able to rebuild their home to provide better living conditions for the kids.”

Adam’s biggest takeaway from the trip? An appreciation for sponsorship and all it makes possible. “The sponsorship model allows us to be involved in communities for 7, 8, 10, 12 years, sometimes more,” Hicks says. “That is enough to have a real impact on ending poverty.”

Thank you for helping to change the world — for good!

Around the world, millions of girls and boys face the threat of gender-based violence in the form of abuse, early marriage, domestic violence and other dangers.

Last November and December, ChildFund participated in the 26th annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign to raise awareness on these issues via social media, workshops and presentations. We wore lots of purple, the color of the campaign.

Staff at our office in Richmond, Virginia, also wrote postcards asking our senators to support the Protecting Girls’ Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act (S. 1580). This bipartisan bill, which recently passed the House of Representatives, would protect girls in conflict situations and address issues that threaten their ability to attend school.

We also partnered with students at a local girls’ empowerment organization and a local all-girls school to engage them in the same postcard-writing activity.

These girls aren’t yet old enough to vote, but getting the chance to raise their voices on issues that affect children showed them the power of civic participation.
Anne Humes first signed up to sponsor a child through ChildFund in 1957. Sixty years, hundreds of letters and two international trips later, Mrs. Humes has sponsored a total of 33 children in 10 countries.

Her decision to become a sponsor was “not at all surprising,” she says, given her background as a social worker in foster care.

Through her daily interactions with little ones facing challenging life circumstances, she developed a deep concern for children’s welfare not just in the U.S., but throughout the world.

Mrs. Humes’ first sponsored child, Bernard, lived in Austria, where ChildFund (then Christian Children’s Fund) helped operate innovative orphanages called “children’s villages” after World War II. In 1960, Mrs. Humes had the opportunity to travel there to visit him.

“There were about seven or eight houses, and each had children of different ages and genders, with house parents in each. So it was a wonderful, almost natural kind of setting,” she recalls.

“We went out rowing on a lake nearby, and on Sunday, we went to the village church together. I sponsored Bernard until he finished his schooling and was apprenticed to a TV/radio station.

“Sponsorship changes the lives of children — and their sponsors! Please consider sponsoring another child today.

“That trip was eye-opening. I was so curious about the ways a different country reacted to the needs of children who had been through war or abuse.”

Mrs. Humes says that curiosity has been her most valuable tool in deepening her relationship with her sponsored children over the years. She engages with them on universal topics like their favorite school subjects, sports and animals, as well as their families and dreams for the future.

“The fact that somebody wants to know how their health is, asks about their family members, shows curiosity about the place in which they are living — in other words, a supportive relationship on a continuous basis — is so important to a child’s growth,” Mrs. Humes says.

When she’s not writing letters to the 17-year-old boy she currently sponsors in India, Mrs. Humes volunteers with a Head Start program for Hispanic children in her community whose families have recently immigrated to the U.S. “They’re learning English faster than I’m learning Spanish,” she laughs. “But we have a lot of fun.

“I’m glad to be able to help the little children. They’re a wonder. They keep me awake and very much alive.”
We would like to give a heartfelt thanks to all of our caring supporters who have donated to our ongoing Gift in Kind campaign. Your support really is going a long way!

“Gifts in kind” are items that are donated by our corporate and nonprofit partners, and they can make an enormous difference to children living in the world’s poorest places — especially when their lives have been impacted by disasters like those that recently hit Dominica and Sierra Leone.

Donations from individual donors like you help get these much-needed supplies into the hands of the children and families who need them. Just look at what you’re helping to make possible:

- In Dominica, 513 cases of personal hygiene kits and hygiene products have been delivered to hurricane victims.
- In Sierra Leone, 1,018 cartons of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies have been distributed to mudslide victims.
- Also in Sierra Leone, 2,500 insecticidal mosquito nets have been distributed to reduce the risk of dangerous diseases like malaria. And your gifts helped distribute tens of thousands of water purification tablets, making water safe to drink and reducing the risk of disease.

To learn more about Gifts in Kind and how you can help, please call 1-800-776-6767 today.
Hello!

I’m so excited for you to read this edition of *ChildWorld*. After all, you’re the reason we have such great news to share.

In our lead article, you’ll learn how the very youngest children in Guatemala are getting a great start in life, thanks to your support. And this month’s Sponsor Spotlight tells how the joy of sponsorship has touched Anne Humes, a sponsor since 1957!

Like Mrs. Humes, you have been there for children in their time of greatest need, and we can’t thank you enough.

You’ve provided safety and comfort after recent disasters in Dominica and Sierra Leone through Child-Centered Spaces, and in the form of much-needed items like mosquito nets and medical supplies. Your compassion will make a lasting impact on these children’s lives as their communities work to recover and rebuild.

We are very grateful that you choose to partner with ChildFund to accomplish so much good. We and the families we serve are forever in your debt.

Warmly,

Anne Lynam Goddard
President & CEO

P.S. Your gifts are changing lives! Thanks again for everything you do.
HIGHLIGHTS

A GIFT FROM THE HEART can be priceless.

Sending a monetary gift to your sponsored child is easy, and it’s a great way to show your child how special your friendship is.

The best amounts are between $20 and $50, but please don’t send monetary gifts directly to your child. Please use one of the three methods below. We’ll make sure your gift is delivered safely.

- Online at ChildFund.org through the Manage Account tool
- Through the Sponsorship Reply form in your statement
- By calling 1-800-776-6767. We will be happy to help!

SAYING GOODBYE doesn’t have to be sad.

When ChildFund begins work in a new community, our goal is always to bring about positive change that will last.

When our work is done, leaving these communities can be bittersweet. But we have joy in knowing that we leave behind stronger communities that are committed to children’s rights and well-being and are equipped to sustain programs that benefit children and families. Thank you for making this important work possible!

GIVE A GOAT and you’ll change a life!

Our new spring Real Gifts Catalog is now available and filled with great ways to make a real difference in children’s lives. If you haven’t received your copy, call us at 1-800-776-6767 to request one.