



THE ABCs OF CHILD SPONSORSHIP

**STORIES OF THE LIVING
STONES CHILDREN OF
NORTHEAST BRAZIL**





WORLD RENEWAL
child sponsorships



WHY SPONSOR CHILDREN FROM LIVING STONES?

Living Stones started in 1998 when Pastor Assuerio was visiting families around his church and saw the great needs of the children--as well as his empty church during the week. He felt compelled to invite the kids in for tutoring, food, and love during the week, and invited their whole family for church on the weekend, **making a difference in their community.**

In 2010, Pastor Flavio used this idea to actually start a new church: going into a community, getting to know the kids through starting a Living Stones program, and then inviting the whole family on the weekend: **starting a church.** What makes Living Stones different? Living Stones is a child sponsorship program that is church planting THROUGH child sponsorship.

Because Living Stones is a part of World Renewal Brazil, which has a church planting focus, it is never JUST about child sponsorship. We know many children will come for the food, fun, education, or support and care, but there will be those that find a home and family and decide to become the next generation of leaders that reaches out to their communities: and to the world. We are now watching kids who used to be a part of the Living Stones program serve as missionaries, pastors, and leaders!

We hope you enjoy these stories from Living Stones, and choose to sponsor children like these that are highlighted in this book. Some names and pictures have been changed to protect sensitive information. Some of these stories may not be appropriate for younger children.

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS BOOK GO TO LIVING STONES



IS FOR ALEXANDRA

Alexandra lives in an abandoned house. Her father drinks too much and doesn't take care of anyone, and her mother left.





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STREET CHILDREN



"Street children" is a term often used to describe both **market children** (who work in the streets and markets of cities selling or begging—but mostly live with their families) and **homeless street children** (who work, live, and sleep in the streets, often lacking contact with their families)." *Casa Alianza, Worldwide statistics, September 2000*

Both spend their time on the street. Most of the children Living Stones works with are market children, who have been labeled "at risk" by the government, and apply for help and welfare assistance. Some are homeless street children, whether they are temporarily or permanently homeless, like Alexandra.

Each child is individual, as well as their story and needs. Often, their needs change at different times. The longer that a child is on the streets and not at home, the more risk they have of being taken advantage of, and abused.

Learn More:

Streetchildren.org



IS FOR BIRTHDAY

Josefa didn't know when her birthday was because her mother couldn't read her birth certificate. She had never celebrated her birthday before.





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BIRTHDAYS



"When you're so hyperfocused on doing what's necessary just to have enough for your next meal, there isn't much room for anything else." *Compassion blog "Children's birthdays are a big deal" April 2021*

Over half of the children with Living Stones do not know, or do not celebrate their birthdays. Most of the time, surviving takes up most of the parent's energy, and they do not have the time or resources to celebrate. Many parents have forgotten the exact date of their child's birthday, and just celebrate around a holiday that is near the time they were born. Some parents, like Josefa's, can't read, and feel embarrassed about not being able to figure out the birthday from the child's birth certificate. Some have lost birth certificates and other important papers due to homelessness or being forced from their home.

In Brazil, Children's Day (October 12) is a special time to celebrate kids, with many communities coming together to make sure poorer children are included in a day to celebrate them, even if they don't get a birthday party.

Learn More:

[Blog.compassion.com](https://blog.compassion.com)



IS FOR CAID

Caid is a Missionary. That is someone who goes somewhere different from where they are used to so they can share about Jesus.





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MISSIONARIES



Being a missionary isn't something scary or super holy, it is simply following whatever adventure God has for you, and going wherever He wants you to go. Sometimes it seems more like a "mission" than other times, but all the times are about obeying Jesus.

In some ways, we are all missionaries, because when we give our lives to Jesus, it is not our life anymore, it belongs to Jesus, and we go and do whatever He says. God's mission is for everyone to be part of His family, and so our mission is to grow and love and invite others into His family!

In our culture, we consider "Missionaries" to be people who are specifically sent to somewhere different. It means going somewhere new to do that mission. Sometimes missionaries are "tent-makers," meaning they have a job at their new place to support them. Many missionaries raise money from those they know, allowing them more time to serve and to share about Jesus at the new place.

Learn More:

Onemissionkids.org/what-s-a-missionary



IS FOR DANIEL

Daniel has Down's Syndrome. It is hard for him and his family to get any help with his special needs.





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KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



"It is estimated that 90 percent of children with special needs in developing countries do not attend school." *Unicef.org reports, UNICEF fact sheet, Children with Disabilities, October 2022*

Some of the children with Living Stones have special needs. These can be physical, mental, or emotional challenges that make it harder for them to do day-to-day things. In Brazil, there often isn't the infrastructure to support these children and their families. Many learning disabilities are undiagnosed because the classroom has lots of children, and only one teacher who doesn't have the time or training to help.

It is a really beautiful thing to see how the kids at Living Stones embrace and help those with special needs. Starting with the example of the leaders, Living Stones becomes a family where everyone is loved and accepted, with all of their differences.

Learn More:

[Unicef.org/reports \(children with disabilities\)](https://unicef.org/reports/children-with-disabilities)



IS FOR EDUARDO

Eduardo learned to write his name at Living Stones. He was 9 years old.





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EDUCATION



Of those in poverty in Brazil, which Living Stones works with, a little over half graduate from high school. If the child's parents (specifically the father) didn't graduate high school, that statistic drops down to a 25% graduation rate (see [link below](#)).

Living Stones works in conjunction with the school system. Some Living Stones have two groups per day, some have one, depending on when their students go to school:

1. Students attend school in the morning
 2. Living Stones program in the afternoon, with tutoring, nutrition, and fun
-
1. Living Stones program in the morning, with tutoring, nutrition, and fun
 2. Students attend school in the afternoon

imdsbrasil.org/doc/IMDS-NT001-2022-SchoolAbandonmentAndDropoutInBrazil.pdf



IS FOR FLAVIO

Flavio remembers not having food to eat, and stealing mangos for dinner. When he grew up, he wanted to help kids like him.





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LOCAL LEADERS



Living Stones is provided through World Renewal Brazil (WRB). Their mission is to fulfill the Great Commission hand in hand with local Bible believing churches. They do this through passionate local leaders who diligently serve in their local churches.

Like Flavio, who became a pastor as well as a Living Stones leader, there are many local leaders making a difference. We know many children will come just for the food, fun, education, or support and care, but there will be those that find a home and family and decide to become the next generation of leaders who reach out to their communities: and to the world.

Living Stones offers opportunities, not just evangelism and discipleship, but also to be educated and equipped, so they can become the ones to generate and reinvest in their own communities.

Learn More:

worldrenewal.org/brazil



IS FOR GUSTAVO

Gustavo lives in a house made of mud and sticks. It leaks when it rains, and it is hard to keep anything clean with a dirt floor.





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RURAL POVERTY



Brazil is a country full of extremes, including wealth. Brazil is full of natural resources, and an up and coming economy, but for Northeast Brazil (sometimes referred to as the "Appalachia of Brazil") inequalities and poverty abound. The more rural (and harder to access) in Brazil, the worse the poverty.

"There is **monetary poverty** (defined by the World Bank, for upper middle-income countries such as Brazil, as living on less than USD 5.50/day) and **extreme monetary poverty** (living on less than USD 1.90/day). In the North and Northeast regions, child monetary poverty reaches 60%, extreme monetary poverty at 23% (in 2021)."
(see link below)

At our Living Stones programs in rural areas, there are many families, like Gustavo, that live in homes made from dirt and/or trash.

<https://www.unicef.org/brazil/media/18866/file/children-in-monetary-poverty-in-brazil.pdf>



H

IS FOR HENRIQUE

Henrique lives at the local trash dump. For years, his family worked, digging through the trash to sell things that could be recycled to get money for food.





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TRASH DUMPS



"Despite approval in 2010, Brazil's National Solid Waste Plan, which required the closure of dumps, only began to be implemented this year. When it was approved, the National Solid Waste Plan forecasted the eradication of irregular landfills by 2014, a deadline that has since been extended to 2024, with around 3,000 dumps still active across the country today." *Meet The Brazilian Waste Pickers Working In Dumps That "Don't Exist", Worldcrunch.com, April 2023*

The dump, where Henrique's family lived and worked their whole lives, has been officially shut down, but the community outside of town built around the dump is still there. Most of the people there are without jobs.

It is so important to have local leaders who continue to work through huge transitions and the day-in-and-day-out events in the lives of these children, and be a consistent light for Jesus.

worldcrunch.com/green/brazil-waste-pickers-gramacho



IS FOR IAN

Sometimes Ian's dad hits his mom. He knows he is not supposed to tell anyone about it, but he wants it to stop.





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DOMESTIC ABUSE



"Brazil is a dangerous place for women. In 2018, every two hours, a woman was murdered. Every two minutes, a woman was beaten, and every day, an average of 180 women became victims of rape." (link below)

"In Northeast Brazil, about 30% of women have experienced domestic violence (i.e., emotional, physical or sexual violence) over their life course." *Ceara Federal University study, New Data, Prevalence and Correlates of Domestic Violence in Brazil, October 2018*

Living Stones isn't just about education and nutrition. It is about changing communities and inviting families into God's family. It is about local leaders being there when a child knocks on their door late at night, asking for help for their mother.

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/january-web-only/brazil-domestic-violence-church-women-pastors-men.html>



IS FOR JOAO

Joao raised his hand to ask Jesus into his heart. He prayed and gave his life to Jesus, and now wants to know what to do next.





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EVANGELISM & DISCIPLESHIP



Living Stones has a lot of evangelistic outreaches for the whole community. Normally, each year around Easter, Mother's Day, Vacation Bible School, Children's Day, and Christmas they have special celebrations, making sure to always share the gospel, and ask if anyone would like to give their lives to Jesus.

Many of the kids raise their hands for salvation, and that is always something to celebrate! But that is just the beginning of joining God's family.

Discipleship is working with, and teaching them what it means to live out the Christian life. It is learning to be a disciple of Jesus, just like we see in the Bible. At Living Stones, there is a strong character and Bible program. Often, a soccer or dodgeball game will be paused as the leader reminds the crew, "Now what was that character quality we just learned about? Are we showing that well right now?"

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/sponsor-a-child-brazil



K

IS FOR KAYLANE

Kaylane lives in a city that has three large gangs. They make it dangerous to go many places. She just wants a safe place to go.





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GANG VIOLENCE



"Even though the northeast has enjoyed Brazil's strongest economic growth, the previously calm region is now home to eight of the country's 10 most violent states. "We have discovered that crime is about much more than poverty," he said." *Against the Tide: Why It's So Hard to Stop the Violence in Brazil*, by Richard Lapper, July 2018

The Living Stones locations that are closer to the capital Recife also struggle with more drugs and violence from gangs. The gangs often move to smaller towns when pressured by police, and it is the children who suffer the most.

Many families are worried about letting their children walk to the local church for Living Stones, with an increase in violence towards girls, and the boys pressured into joining gangs. We have seen too many Living Stones children hurt through gang violence. Living Stones is working to provide a safe place and transform communities through the message and love of Jesus!

Learn more about what we can do:

Worldrenewal.org/sponsor-children-brazil



IS FOR LIVING STONES

Church Planting through Child Sponsorship:



As well as planting and growing a church!

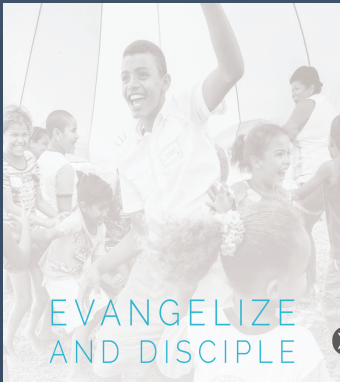




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MORE THAN CHILD SPONSORSHIP



EVANGELIZE AND DISCIPLE

World Renewal Brazil assists local churches planting new churches. Let's say a child embraces Jesus and becomes involved in the church which has Living Stones. They not only have the food, education, and support they need to succeed and break out of poverty, they can also be a part of IMPACT outreaches in new communities, and further their discipleship and growth.



WORLD RENEWAL

EDUCATE AND EQUIP

As this child grows, they are equipped for future educational opportunities and scholarships at the International school, Seminary, technical or business training, and eventually towards a college degree.



GENERATE AND REINVEST

Now this fully trained adult is prepared for a lifetime of ministry such as being a church planter, teacher, or working with one of our many business as mission (BAM) projects that is all connected to planting churches. These leaders become strategic World Renewal Brazil workers to fulfill the Great Commission in Brazil and to the ends of the earth.



IS FOR MOLLY

Molly began "Bibles from Pennies" when she was 8 years old, so kids in Brazil could have a Bible.





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FUND RAISING



When Molly was sitting in church one Sunday, she heard a missionary named Tele Moraes speak about Brazil. She decided she wanted to do something. She began to collect pennies, from everywhere and everyone. She collected pennies until they were too heavy and had to be changed into bills. And then larger bills.

In the end, Molly had a check for \$800, which she gave to Tele Moraes. She said it was for Bibles for children who did not have any. So that Christmas, each one of the Living Stone's children got their very own Bible.

There are many creative ways to raise funds, and the needs are great. We would love to brainstorm with you, for ways you can get involved!

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/volunteer



N

IS FOR NUTRITION

What do you do when you are hungry? What if you don't have a refrigerator? Many children don't know where they will get their next meal.





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HUNGER



"In the North (of Brazil), only 28.4%—approximately three out of every ten residents—live with food security. About a quarter (25.7%) of people in the North are affected by hunger." *Over Half of Brazilians Are Living With Food Insecurity, Rio on Watch, August 2022*

There are a lot of nutritional needs for the Living Stones kids. Each of our locations carefully evaluates the needs and meets them the best way possible.

Often times the hardest part about hunger is that it comes and goes. Sometimes the family has food, and things are fine: but often it is not fine. The instability of food security is what actually affects the growing bodies and minds of children, as their brain goes into survival mode, rather than learning mode.

Learn More:

compassion.com/poverty/child-hunger.htm



IS FOR ONE DOLLAR

One dollar can provide a full, hot meal for a child who might not otherwise get one.





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BREAKDOWN OF COSTS

In the past, child sponsorships were basically a dollar a day. With inflation, most sponsorships, as well as Living Stones, are asking for \$40 a month.

The money that you give does not go to one individual child, for their specific needs: it goes to one specific location, along with other donations, to make up enough to cover the costs of food, teachers, transportation, supplies, and other needs to run Living Stones, and the local church. In 2023, it costs around \$1200-\$2400 monthly to run a program for 30-60 children.

A typical full, hot meal in Brazil is rice and beans, sometimes with noodles, and often with some kind of meat. When local fruit is available, it is made into fresh juice.

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/sponsor-children-brazil



IS FOR ONE PATRICIA

Patricia, one of the local leaders, says it is important that we ask God, "What would you have me do?" And then listen and do that.





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TAKING ACTION



Patricia continues:

"It is not just the kids that are here, needy and needing, it is the whole family. And even if you can't help us, do something. Anything. God is always showing us (at Living Stones) something we can do for someone else. Take the step in front of you, and see where it takes you. Maybe to big places, maybe not. But don't stand still.

We are working with what is considered and treated as the trash of the world. The unwanted. The child that is dirty and sticks his hand in your face and asks for money, making you feel uncomfortable. It is not about money, it is about action. Doing what you can where you are.

It is about taking responsibility. If you see a need, go and do it. You see it because God has put it on your heart to do something about it."

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/sponsor-children-brazil



IS FOR "QUE ISSO?"

"Que isso" means "What is it" in Portuguese. The language they speak in Brazil is Portuguese.





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PORTUGUESE



"The Portuguese language is the 7th most spoken language in the world today with roughly 223 million native speakers everywhere and the official language of 7 countries: Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe." *The Best Way to Study Portuguese – 6 Tips That Will Work Wonders, Mondly.com, by Diana Lăpușneanu, July 2019*

Learning another language isn't easy, but is a great skill to have! There are a lot of language apps available to help, as well as YouTube channels, movies, books, and music. Flashcards can help build your vocabulary, but nothing beats going to Brazil! Find out when the next trip to Brazil is planned, and come with us to meet the Living Stones kids for yourself.

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/trips



IS FOR RACHEL

Rachel went on a mission trip, and then kept coming back, and then became a full-time missionary.





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MISSION TRIPS



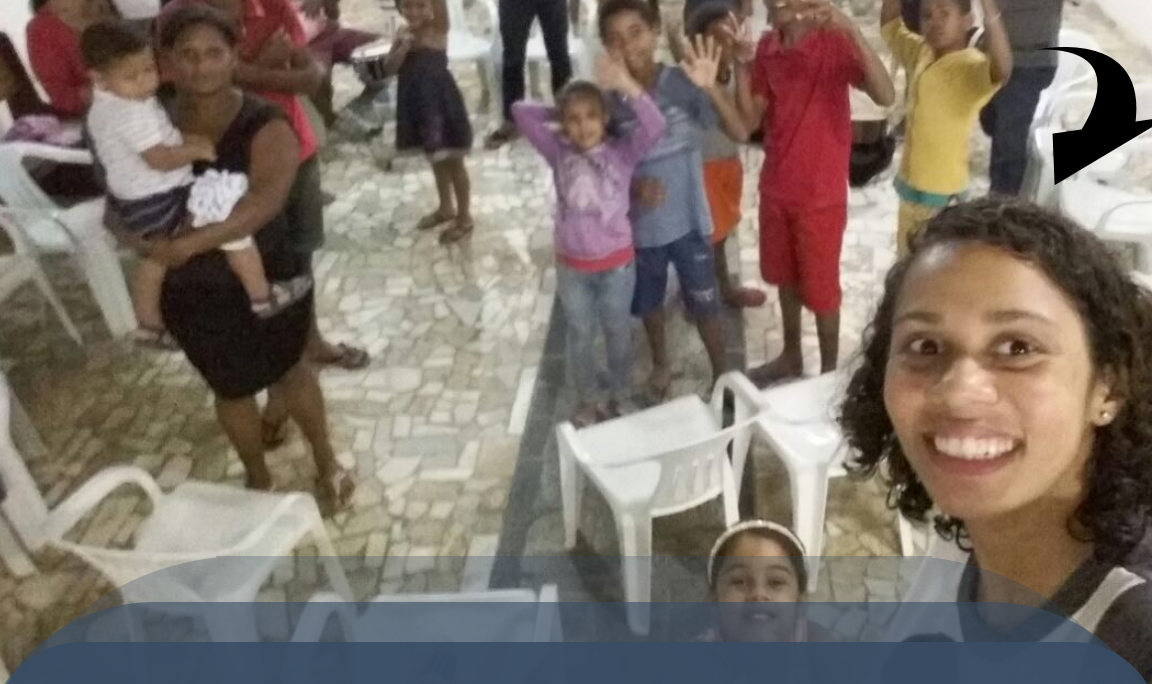
If you are thinking about going on a mission trip, or are interested in missions, check out the website Alifeoverseas.com.

Mission trips can be amazing opportunities to build relationships, learn a lot, and be a part of the world-wide family of God. When you go on a mission trip with World Renewal, we have a special training to get to know your team, and learn about yourself better. It includes five classes before you go, and two when you return (called "debriefing").

Being willing to invest not just the time when you are out of the country, but time in preparation and closure is important. This helps a short-term trip to have long-term effects in those that you serve—and in your own life.

Learn More:

WorldRenewal.org/trip-training



S

IS FOR SARA

Sara really wants her neighborhood to be a healthy, happy place. She wants everyone there to know Jesus loves them.





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NEIGHBORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Cajueiro Claro is a small, rural area in Northeast Brazil that is 4 kilometers off of the main road. The dirt road to get there, full of twists and turns and hills, often washes out in the rain. There are about 30 families in the area around the church, with more as you continue inland.

Cajueiro Claro is not an easy place to live. There is no running water in most of the area, so you have to gather/collect the water however you can. Most of the people who live there are in poverty, and struggling to make ends meet. It is a really hard life.

That is where Sara comes in. Many people get good jobs so they can move out to easier places to live. But not Sara, who has worked hard for her education and works to make life better for everyone there through Living Stones. Sara and the team of leaders at Living Stones work to consistently show Jesus to a community that would otherwise be forgotten.

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/cajueiro-claro



T

IS FOR TIAGO

Tiago is a Third Culture Kid (TCK). His parents are missionaries from Brazil to Mozambique, Africa.





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THIRD CULTURE KIDS



What is it like to be a missionary kid? What is a Third Culture kid? "Most people assume that the "Third" part of a "Third Culture Kid" comes from simple addition of $1 + 2 = 3$. That is, my first country (home) plus my second country (where I live) equals a mixed up third culture. While there's a little something to that, the reality is quite different...Instead, there are three types of cultural influence (Legal culture like citizenship, geographic culture where they've been located, and relational culture where your relationships are). TCKs do not grow up in any one culture, but in between them, influenced by multiple cultures." (*What is a third culture kid? Tonya Crossman.com*)

Tiago's dad is the one who started Living Stones in 1998. His parents now serve in Africa, while he lives in the USA. That is a lot of changes in one life!

Learn More:

Tanyacrossman.com



IS FOR UNDERSTAND

Understanding other cultures and things that are different from how you do things can be hard. Brazil is a different culture than America.





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CULTURE



Culture is the beliefs, values, and behavior (the things that make up life) of a group of people. Worldview is how you view the world. It is why you choose your beliefs, and how they shape your values and behavior.

Understanding your own culture and its strengths and weaknesses, will help you understand someone else's culture. As Christians, our worldview is to be set by God and His Word. You can study history and see healthy/unhealthy cultures by how they hold to or reject God's truth.

Culture shock is common when you come into contact with a different culture. It often has three phases: honeymoon, negotiation, and adjustment. Reverse culture shock is also real, with the same phases.

Learn More:

[Fiveminutesoffergie.com/mission-monday/culture-shock](https://www.fiveminutesoffergie.com/mission-monday/culture-shock)



IS FOR VICTORIA

Victoria heard about Jesus while playing basketball with her friends. Living Stones often uses sports to tell about Jesus.





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SPORTS MINISTRY



In 2014, Glory Sports ministries was started in Brazil. Combined with a partnership with missionaries from Athletes in Action, sports programs and outreaches began in churches, quickly spreading as more young people joined in.

Missionary David Taylor has done an awesome work with MMA (Missions Martial Arts), reaching out in schools, recovery homes, and wherever invited. All of these different areas of Glory Sports are actively used for IMPACT outreaches, going into communities with a church planter to create opportunities to share Jesus and gather follow-up information.

Guadalajara Living Stones began as a Glory Sports outreach, and then they added the other parts, like education. Two of the kids have received sports scholarships through the program!

Learn More:

WorldRenewal.org/guadalajara



IS FOR WATER

The water in Northeast Brazil is dirty and not safe to drink, but not all of the kids can afford to buy clean water.





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WATER



Clean water is a huge issue in Northeast Brazil: "30 million people (14% of the population) lack access to a reliable, safely managed source of water, and 109 million people (51%) lack access to safely managed household sanitation facilities." (Where we work: Brazil, Water.org)

"But I want a drink from yours." Seven year olds are not persuaded easily. Iasmine's silky hair bounced as she saw my water bottle and gestured. I pointed to the faucet, but she didn't budge. How do I explain that she can drink the dirty water, but I cannot? That my body will take a week to recover, and then begin medication for worms, whereas her body is already adjusted, and probably already has worms. I look through the blue plastic at the two sips left at the bottom of the bottle..." You can read the rest of the story at the link below.

Learn More:

[Fiveminutesoffergie.com/saturday-sponsorship/nalgene](https://fiveminutesoffergie.com/saturday-sponsorship/nalgene)



IS FOR EXTRA LONG

For kids who live farther from the main roads, they have to walk an extra long way to go to school, or the store, or anywhere.





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TRANSPORTATION



In the early 2000s and 2010s, Living Stones had a 4k "Trek for Transportation" each year to help raise funds for a vehicle, and for the gas and upkeep costs of that vehicle.

Funding transportation costs is a huge issue, especially in rural areas where there is no public transportation besides your own feet! Most of the Living Stones families do not own a vehicle. If the bus doesn't come (and you walk to the bus), you don't get to go school, or work, or to the store.

Many of our Living Stones, pastors, leaders, and missionaries are needing new vehicles. In Brazil there is 100% tax on vehicles, making it twice the cost of a similar vehicle in the USA! Consider asking a missionary you support if they have transportation needs.

Learn More:

Worldrenewal.org/brazil



Y

IS FOR YASMIM

Yasmim wants to be a doctor, but in her small town they only have grade school, and she doesn't know if she will be able to go to middle and high school.





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STAYING IN SCHOOL



There are many reasons why a child may not be able to finish school in Brazil. Schools may be overcrowded or hard to get to, like for Jasmim. Some kids become parents, or have to take care of siblings instead of going to school. If kids are hungry, they may work for food instead of going to school.

Since the pandemic, school drop-out has risen. "The country risks being set back over two decades in guaranteeing access to education for all girls and boys." (*Out-of-school Children in Brazil PDF, Unicef.org*)

Going to Living Stones helps children continue in school, as the leaders check up on them, and work with the parents to make sure the children are able to overcome the obstacles that may be in their way of staying in school.

[unicef.org/brazil/media/14881/file/out-of-school-children-in-brazil_a-warning-about-the-impacts-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-education.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/brazil/media/14881/file/out-of-school-children-in-brazil_a-warning-about-the-impacts-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-education.pdf)



Z

IS FOR ZOO

Before going to the zoo with Living Stones, many of the children had never been there.





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OPPORTUNITY



Have you ever been to the zoo? Have you ever eaten at McDonalds? Have you ever put on a band-aid? Have you ever had your clothes dried in a dryer? Are you able to use your own tablet, computer, or phone?

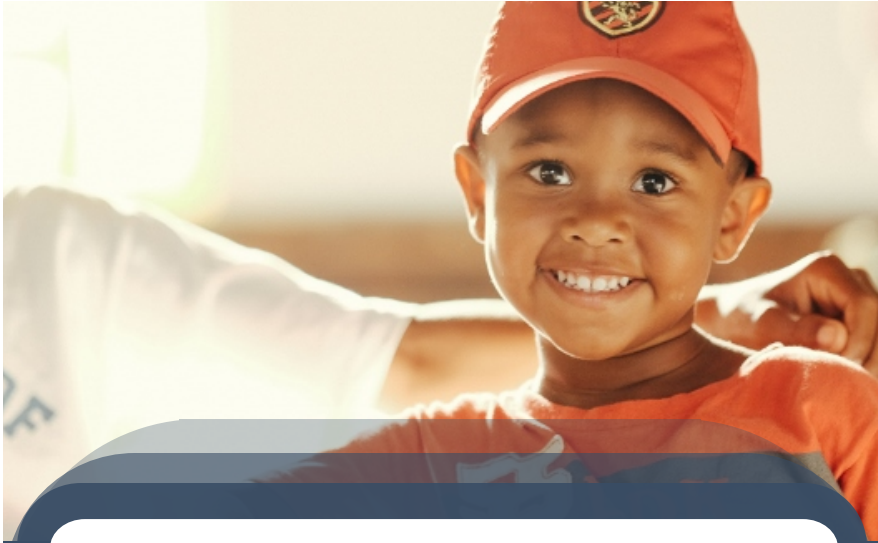
There are many things that seem simple and normal to us, that are not simple or normal to other people. For those of us who have grown up in America, we have had access and opportunities to have many things that many children in developing countries (like Brazil) do not have. It isn't something bad, but it is good to be aware of, and be grateful for.

If you make more than \$34,000 (per person), you are at the top 1% of global wealth (*We're all the 1 percent, foreignpolicy.com, February 27, 2012*) Put your information into the website below to learn more:

Learn More:

Wid.world/income-comparator/

Would you like to read more?
Order the book on Amazon
that includes part 2:



THE 1,2,3 OF CHILD SPONSORSHIP

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