

PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**



by Ellery Sadler,
staff writer

Dreams aren't a privilege, reserved for the few. They're essential—the lifeblood of hope.

How the Father's heart must ache to see his precious little ones' hopes crushed by the trauma of conflict and displacement, the devastation of entrenched poverty, and the pain of abandonment. It shouldn't be that way. Every child should be free to dream. We believe in that kingdom. We work to bring it here on earth.

Until then, we celebrate the little miracles—like Grigor's story.

These are the stories.
These are the souls.
These are the portraits of the lives we're changing.



TO DREAM WITHOUT FEAR





Ever since he was little, Grigor dreamed of owning a bike.

It didn't have to be fancy or new. It just had to be his. He would close his eyes and imagine the feeling of the wind rushing past his ears and taking his hands off the handlebars like he was flying. Total freedom.

Grigor's parents weren't well off, but they were young and filled with hope and dreams of their own for their family's future in Armenia. Like most couples, Armen and Manik wanted to provide the best life possible for Grigor and his big sister, Mariam. But one day they got news that turned their life into one filled with uncertainty and dread: Armen was diagnosed with a malignant tumor. The doctors warned that he didn't have long to live.

From then on, it felt like the light was being slowly extinguished from their home. The family was reeling. Manik worked to hold everything together, trying to care for her ill husband while managing their grieving children and grappling with financial problems when Armen became too weak to work. Each day became simply about survival. Grigor and Mariam prayed and hoped that their father would recover.

A short time later, Armen passed away.

Children should never have to deal with that kind of loss. And no woman should be left on her own to be both mother and father, caretaker, and breadwinner. At such a time, the strongest flame of faith can be reduced to a flicker as it battles the darkness. It was a difficult period for Grigor and his family. That's when Orphan's Promise partners were able to step in—and have the incredible privilege of being an answer to prayer.

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WHEN HOPE LOOKS LIKE A BICYCLE

Being the tangible expression of God's answer to one of His children's prayers looks a little different each time. For Grigor's family, it looked like Orphan's Promise providing them with food and clothing and basic necessities to meet their immediate needs. Small, simple things that can feel like a life raft when you're drowning in desperation and isolation.

Soon after we began offering help, Grigor and Mariam began attending programs and classes at an OP-supported training center. Our staff remembers how at first the children's eyes were filled with such sadness that when you looked at them,





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Call **1-800-818-4016** to give by phone

You can **mail a check** made out to Orphan's Promise to:

Orphan's Promise
977 Centerville Turnpike
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

**Thanks for your generosity.
We look forward to making a difference together.**



it felt like their lives must be over. They would barely meet our eyes. Aware of their situation, we immediately tried to help, but the reality is there's never a quick fix to losing your father. Instead, the healing process was slow and gradual—through a smile here, a hug there, a word of encouragement—gently reintroducing the children to their heavenly Father's love for them.

That is why we at Orphan's Promise love being able to partner with local churches.

Many children come from a Christian background, but few have experienced a personal relationship with Jesus prior to attending the center. Like Grigor and Mariam, many come from difficult circumstances that have done a number on their faith and hope. Because all of our educational programs are hosted



As a landlocked country at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Armenia is a nation that has known much suffering. In total, 1.5 million Armenians perished in a genocide that took place during World War I.



at the local churches, the church quickly becomes a place of safety, familiarity, and refuge. The majority of kids who attend our program go on to become regular church attendees. In fact, one of our centers reported that 80% of the children who have attended the training center are now regular members of the church, and most of these children bring along family members. They become lights of hope and joy in their families and communities. And, thanks to our partnerships across Armenia, we are also able to provide children with educational resources as well as a platform that connects them to the local church for life.

Grigor and Mariam are no different. It's been two years since they began attending our programs, and their family still faces hardship. Their mom, Manik, recently lost her job and is now

Tragedy came again in 1988, when a massive earthquake took the lives of more than 25,000 people and left hundreds of thousands homeless. Today, nearly 25% of the population lives below the national poverty line and unemployment remains high.

working temporarily as a field worker gathering potatoes. It's difficult work with low wages. Debts are piling up as their family is forced to buy food from the shop on credit. Whenever we can, Orphan's Promise steps in to help with food, firewood, and clothing. But today these struggles are no match for the children's renewed faith. Now ten years old, Grigor is known at our center as a prayer warrior. We are blown away by his testimonies of God's faithfulness.

Our favorite story happened recently. During one of our regular festivities, we were able to present Grigor with the bicycle he always dreamed of having. If only you could have seen his precious face in that moment! He was so surprised and his eyes were shining with tears of happiness. To Grigor, the bicycle was a powerful, bike-shaped sign of his heavenly Father's love for him. Our Father sees. He knows the dreams of our hearts, even the ones that are tucked away, hidden under heartache, disappointment, and pain. He hears our whispered prayers. Nothing is small to Him—not a single sparrow, not the hairs on our head, not a little boy's bike. He is a good, good Father.



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That's perhaps the most powerful miracle we get to witness in this world: lost faith being restored. Hope being fanned back to life. Now, Grigor has a new dream, a bigger dream: to become a programmer and provide for his family.

He says it best in his own words: "The center taught me to recognize our God and worship Him. Here I learned, and am learning, to dream without fear. I'm very grateful to our center which takes care of us.... I want this center to be [here] forever and let children, like me, come and begin to dream."

This is our prayer for each and every child whose heart we get to touch. That they would learn to recognize God. That they would know they are safe in His love. And that they would be free to look at the future and laugh. Free to dream without fear.

Because of your partnership, Orphan's Promise is able to serve over 50,000 kids like Grigor around the world every month! When you support Orphan's Promise, you give children in Armenia—and thousands like them around the world—an opportunity to experience brighter futures!





give us a call: 1-800-818-4016

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