

PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**



A Light for Raphael

by Ellery Sadler
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In his few years here on earth, Raphael has already known enough suffering to last a lifetime. Like many at-risk kids growing up in the slums of Kenya, his reality is very unstable and his family situation volatile.

But where there is darkness, we get to bring light. Join us on a trip around the globe to a slum called Shimo la Tewa and see how your partnership is bringing light to little ones like Raphael.

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





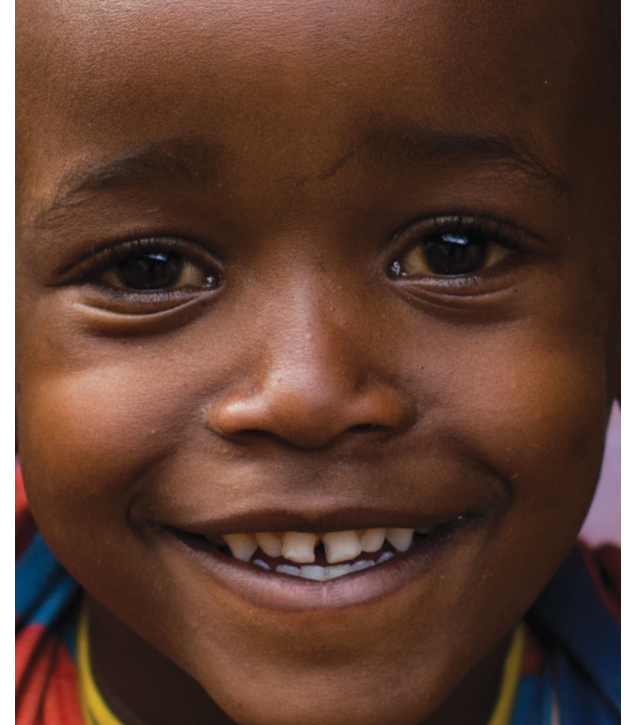
We know instinctively that every child is precious. It doesn't matter if they live across the street in our neighborhood or across the world in a little village in Kenya.

There is something deeply valuable in each person and one look in Raphael's eyes makes that all the more clear. Raphael is smart and shy and sweet. He has a light in his eyes and an inquisitive personality. He wants to be a pilot when he grows up, and his favorite color is blue. He loves githeri (a corn and bean stew). He loves playing catch with his friends and watching the older kids ride bikes. He wants to learn how to ride a bike too.

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Raphael just happened to be born in a slum in Kenya and that makes basic survival—much less getting a bike to learn how to ride or going to school and learning how to read so he can become a pilot one day—very difficult.

Raphael is the youngest in his family. He lives with his mom, while his older half-siblings live with his father. His mom rents a small one-room house in the slums. Her husband left her alone when she became pregnant with Raphael and since then, she's struggled to provide for herself and the young boy. Trying to survive, and the reality of life in Shimo la Tewa, weighs heavily on her shoulders. She also battles addiction and struggles with her mental health. This has led to some difficult situations and traumatic experiences for both of them. On top of that, the instability of their financial situation made it impossible for Raphael to go to school. Most of the time, Raphael didn't know when his next meal was coming so paying for a school uniform, supplies, and tuition was far out of reach.



Thankfully, the room where they live is nearby an Orphan's Promise partner, Heart of Help, and we heard about their situation and were able to provide support for Raphael's education. His teacher, Hellen, said that when he first started coming to class, Raphael would get very anxious. He had never been in school before and was worried he would be too far behind to catch up. He didn't know how to write, and the assignments had made him panick. Hellen encouraged him that all the kids were new and they would learn together. With gentle, consistent mentoring and guidance from his teacher, over the next several months Raphael was able to overcome his fears and



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Thanks for your generosity.

We look forward to making a difference together.



start to enjoy learning. He quickly caught on and now is the first in his class to finish any writing assignment! He loves learning and is motivated to keep growing.

Education is essential to helping families break the cycle of poverty. Being able to go to school is about more than just education. It's also given Raphael a safe, stable environment to learn, grow and interact with other kids in healthy ways, not on the streets. He also gets two nutritious meals a day and loving, consistent investment in his life from adults who deeply care about his future. Raphael's mom is very grateful that her son is getting an education and has a safe place to

be during the day. When asked what their favorite part of school is, some kids answer their friends or recess or food. But when we asked Raphael, he said, "Thank you, Orphan's Promise! My favorite thing about school is learning."

During a particularly traumatic season, Raphael's mom gave up hope. She came to the school to find her son, and the staff realized she was not doing well. Thankfully, the teachers are trained in how to help someone experiencing trauma and were able to listen to her, support her, and walk with her through that season. One of the biggest difficulties Raphael and his mom faced was paying for their rent, so



THE SHIMO-LA-TWEA SLUM IS LOCATED IN KITALE, KENYA. WITH THE INVOLVEMENT OF PROGRAMS LIKE ORPHAN'S PROMISE PARTNERS, CRIME AND ALCOHOLISM HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASED IN THE SLUM OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS AND MANY LIVES HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED.

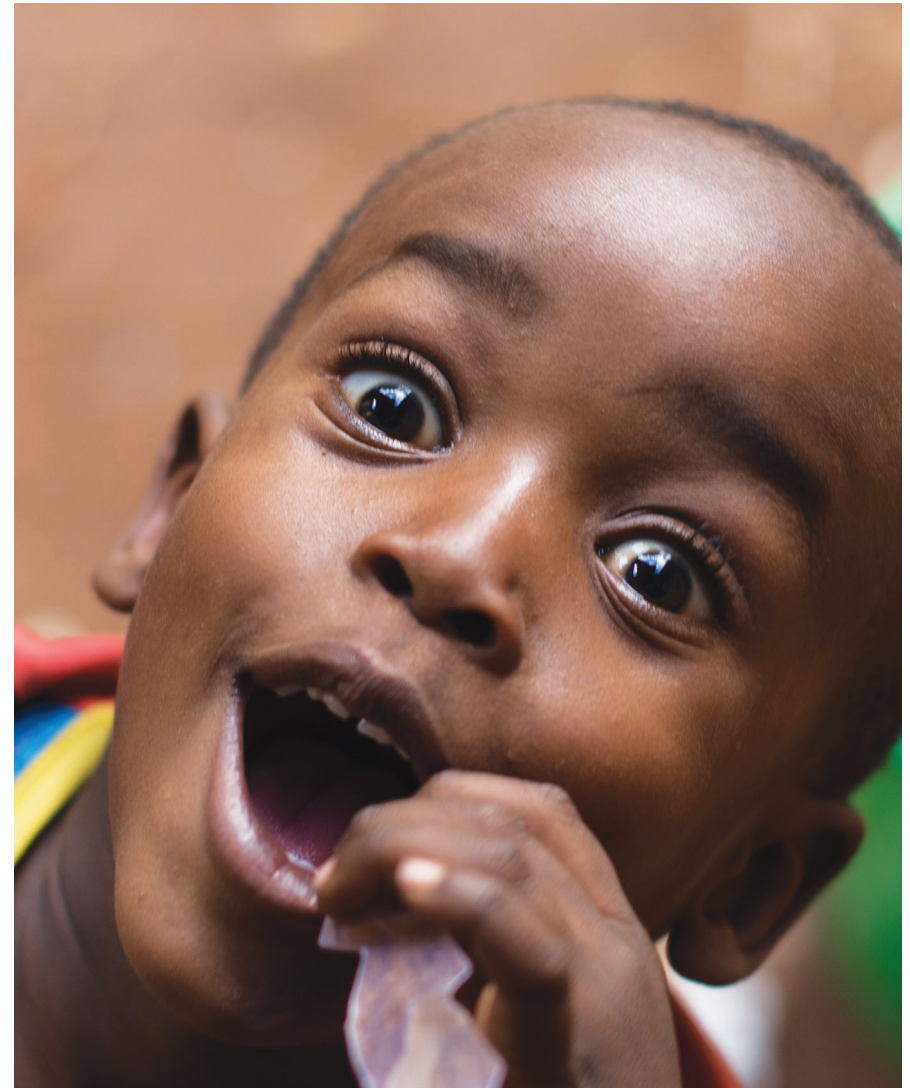
we offered a helping hand to assist with housing until they are able to get back on their feet. Systemic poverty often isolates at-risk kids like Raphael and moms like his. It is a privilege for us to get to walk alongside them and offer them somewhere to turn in the midst of very difficult circumstances.

This is why your partnership matters. This is how you are changing the world one little boy, one family, one community at a time. It isn't always glamorous, and it doesn't make headlines. But giving a little kid like Raphael a safe environment to grow and learn—while at the same time empowering his mom with the support she needs to take care of him—means that his future is completely different now.



→ **That is the power of love in action.**

The name Raphael means “God has healed.” As we watch the transformation taking place in Raphael and how he has grown from a shy little boy into a witty, funny, bright child with a desire to take on new challenges and learn as much as he can, we can't help but think on the poignant meaning of his name: God has healed. A promise of hope and a brighter future ahead for a child in need.





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

orphanspromise.org

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