

PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**

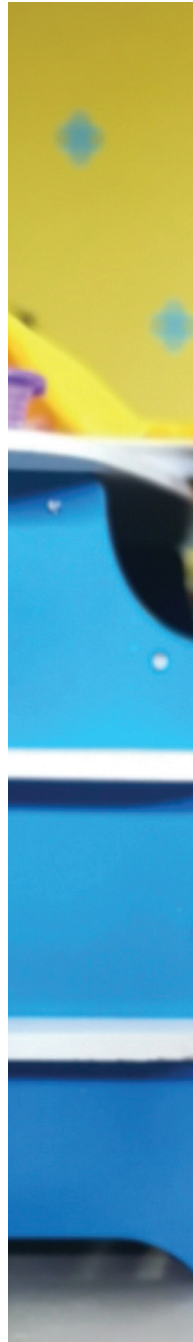


A Miracle for Ayama

by Ellery Sadler
Staff Writer

Ayama lives with her mom, Portia, in a one-room makeshift structure that they share with extended family members. Her name, Ayama, means “amazing gift” or “miracle from God,” and this is the story of how she received the miraculous gift of hope for the future with the help of friends like you. Join us on a journey across the globe to a small community in South Africa, where a little girl was waiting for the chance to become who God made her to be.

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








DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS

Ayama just turned 3 years old. She's bubbly and smiley, and she loves to play with her cousins and any other children she's around. She and her mom, Portia, live with Portia's sister and her two children. In exchange for groceries, Portia would watch the children during her sister's night shift. Portia wanted to work somewhere full time so that she could have a reliable, steady income to provide for Ayama and send her to school, but it was very difficult for her to apply for jobs and go through the interview process with her little one in tow.

Life in South Africa is not easy. The World Bank reports high levels of income polarization manifested through very high levels of chronic poverty and a relatively small middle class.¹ Portia and her family fall below the poverty line, living in a one-room structure, with Portia struggling to provide for Ayama. In South Africa, a country with approximately 57 million people, six out of 10 children face

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multidimensional poverty.² This means that in addition to lacking access to a stable income or adequate finances, multidimensionally impoverished children also face deprivation in other basic areas like education opportunities, sufficient medical care, clean water, housing, nutrition, and development. UNICEF reports that the poverty rates for young children aged 0–4 “are driven by inappropriate waste disposal services in their communities, long distances to the nearest health centers, poor and variable access to early childhood education, and living in shelters with roofs, walls and floors made out of rudimentary and non-permanent materials.” Looking at poverty from a holistic point of view is helpful when working to assist at-risk children whose growth, development and future are affected by much more than just income poverty. For Ayama and her mom, facing these kinds of deprivations of basic necessities was a daily struggle.

1. https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/data/download/poverty/33EF03BB-9722-4AE2-ABC7-AA2972D68AFE/Global_POVEQ_ZAF.pdf

2. <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/media/4241/file/ZAF-multidimensional-child-poverty-analysis-policy-brief-07July-2020.pdf>

AN AMAZING GIFT

When a neighbor realized how desperate the situation was for this young mother and her daughter, she told Portia about an Orphan's Promise partner called Life Child, where Ayama could go to preschool with a sponsorship. Portia wouldn't have to pay anything! Portia was overjoyed because this provided a safe, stable environment for Ayama to learn and grow, while also giving herself the freedom to search for a full-time job.

AYAMA'S PERSONALITY REALLY SHINES DURING MUSIC TIME AT SCHOOL, AND SHE LOVES TO DANCE AND SING ALONG TO WORSHIP SONGS.

At first, Ayama struggled with some separation anxiety when she started going to school, but slowly she has grown to love her teachers and learn with the other kids. She has become best friends with a little girl named Princess, and they love to play house together by sweeping the steps outside. Ayama's personality really shines during music time at school, and she loves to dance and sing along to worship songs. She is also able to get consistent nutritious meals and snacks at school, which are essential for her health and development. Being able to access a place where Ayama can thrive is laying a good foundation in these critical early years of her childhood development.

Having Ayama in preschool has been a huge relief for her mom. Portia immediately started sending out her resume and job searching. She was excited when it didn't take long for her to receive an offer to work as a baker at a local shop where she helps bake and sell doughnuts. She also joined a small group for moms, which was a life-changing experience for her. In this safe, welcoming atmosphere, Portia was able to share her struggles and meet supportive new friends. After the women in the group prayed over her, Portia



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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:

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977 Centerville Turnpike
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

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



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described the experience: “A weight was lifted off my shoulders, and I felt relieved and at peace.” Through their time at the preschool and small group, both Ayama and Portia have started a relationship with Jesus! Ayama loves worship, and Portia is finding peace and strength to continue on as a young single mother.





EVERYDAY MIRACLES

Miracles don't always make headlines. Sometimes, they can simply be a kind neighbor who notices someone struggling and offers a lifeline, a teacher who invests in the life of a little one like Ayama, or a helping hand for a mother doing her best to take care of her daughter.

Ayama is a gift from God. And it is our privilege to mirror that gift back to her by showing her through consistent love, meals and teaching that she is precious in His sight. Thank you for making it possible for moms like Portia and little ones like Ayama to build a better future.







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

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education



nutrition



discipleship



community
transformation



strong families



anti-trafficking

