

PORTRAITS OF **PROMISE**





Restoring Smiles in Sarapiquí



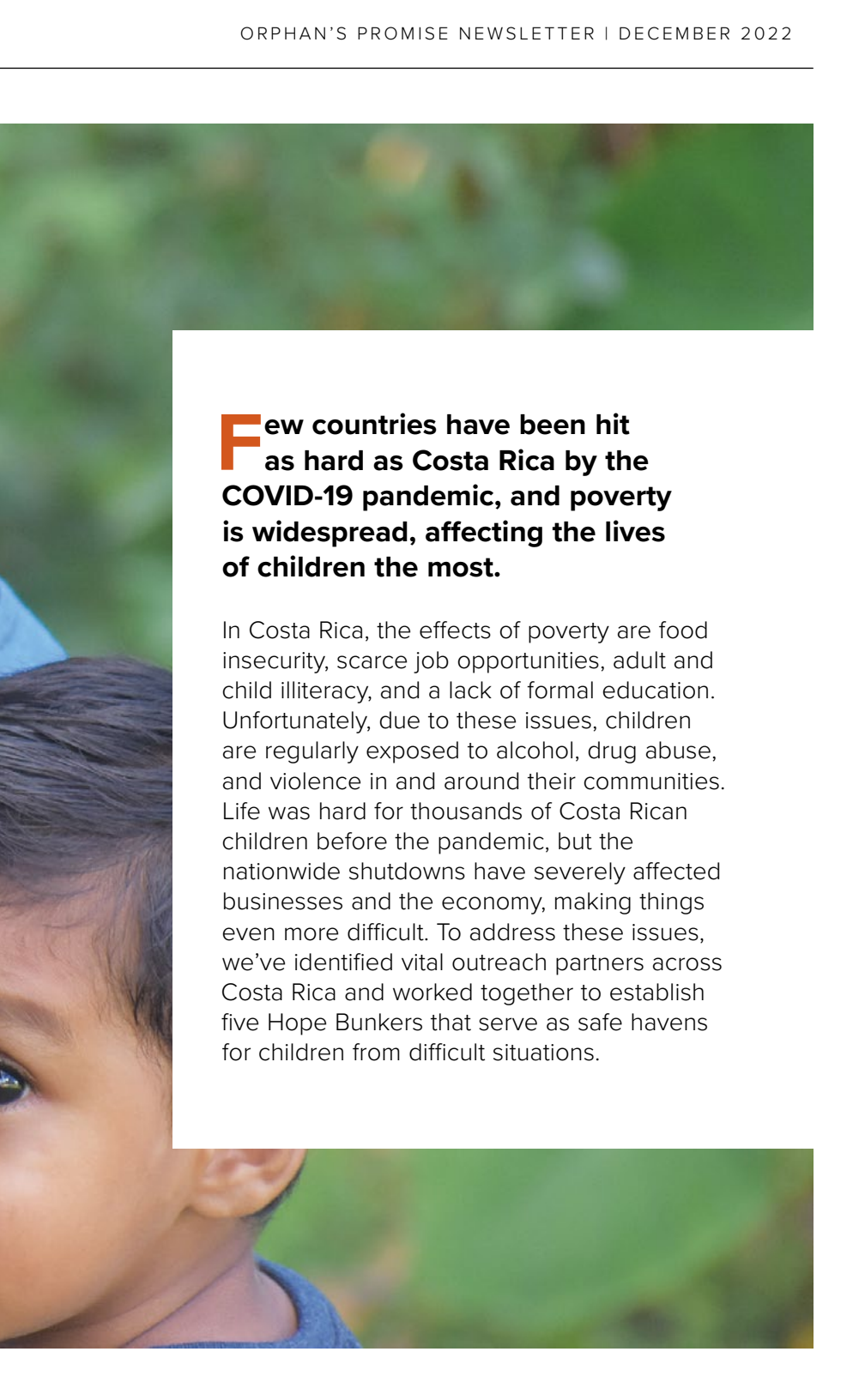
Costa Rica is perhaps best known for the “Pura Vida” that tourists find while visiting the Latin American oasis. The country offers an escape from the daily grind of home and work. It allows travelers to enjoy the nation’s limitless natural beauty, warm, welcoming tropical climate, and beautiful picturesque beaches. However, far beyond the postcards and beachside resorts, real life looks very different for Costa Rican children in impoverished communities.

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









Few countries have been hit as hard as Costa Rica by the COVID-19 pandemic, and poverty is widespread, affecting the lives of children the most.

In Costa Rica, the effects of poverty are food insecurity, scarce job opportunities, adult and child illiteracy, and a lack of formal education. Unfortunately, due to these issues, children are regularly exposed to alcohol, drug abuse, and violence in and around their communities. Life was hard for thousands of Costa Rican children before the pandemic, but the nationwide shutdowns have severely affected businesses and the economy, making things even more difficult. To address these issues, we've identified vital outreach partners across Costa Rica and worked together to establish five Hope Bunkers that serve as safe havens for children from difficult situations.



WHY NAME THEM BUNKERS?

As we set out to address the needs of vulnerable children in Costa Rica, it became apparent that safety was an immediate and critical need. When children grow up in environments where they feel scared or insecure, it robs them of their childhoods. They begin to lose their joy, innocence, and optimism and accept that life is hopeless. They start to believe they have no reason to dream of brighter futures. Yet, we refuse to allow this despair on our watch because we know God's plan for these children is much greater!

HOPE DEFINED

As we began our work operating children's centers in Costa Rica and spoke with the children who attended the programs, the thing that kept coming up in our conversations was the fact that the children felt safe when they were at the centers. They were like shelters from the outside world. And with that, the name Hope Bunkers was born!



The Hope Bunkers are where children come to find peace, safety, care, and warm, nutritious meals. When they walk through the doors of a Hope Bunker, they know they are loved, that they matter, and are welcome.

A bunker is a strong, reinforced building that keeps everyone inside safe from attack.

SAFE IN SARAPIQUÍ

Sarapiquí is a remote river village in Costa Rica known for its agricultural beauty and ecotourism. But sadly for many of the indigenous families, Sarapiquí is an area of tremendous poverty. Illiteracy and joblessness are simply a way of life. Yet, no matter their difficult beginnings, we believe the children in Sarapiquí deserve a chance at a brighter future too. So we've partnered with a local church to operate a Hope Bunker for the children in this community.

Like Yuran—a bright young boy with a 10,000-watt smile—who attends the Sarapiquí Hope Bunker with his brother.



YURAN FINDS HIS SMILE

Yuran and his brother, Sander, have been attending the HOPE Bunker in Sarapiquí for over a year now. Yuran's mom, Mayra, has been deaf since birth, and this challenge has significantly affected the boys' development. Already dealing with the pain of an absent father, Yuran grew frustrated with the inability to communicate with his mother. Unfortunately, Yuran retreated into himself and became shy, struggling to interact with other children.

Yuran's grandmother, whom he also lives with, heard about the Hope Bunker and asked if her grandchildren could attend because life at home was tough, and they needed a place where they would be safe.

Though our work never stops, we pray
that you find refreshment and rest
this Christmas season.

Thank you for your tireless partnership,
and your commitment to serving children
and families around the world.

★
have
YOURSELF
a
MERRY
LITTLE
CHRISTMAS

She'd heard the Hope Bunkers were "different," and her grandsons needed something different!

Though quiet at first, Yuran began to open up as he experienced the tangible love of Jesus during his time at the Hope Bunker. The staff was determined to break through Yuran's pain and minister to his heart, and that's precisely what happened! Slowly, Yuran began to open up, make new friends, laugh, and participate in class.

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Each time we see a smile on Yuran's face we know God is also smiling, and it reminds us how important the initiatives through the Hope Bunker program are to show warmth, hope, and Jesus' love to these kids.

*—Karina Nuñez, OP
LATAM Regional Manager*

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Pastor Angie, who helps to lead the project, said, "To see a change in Yuran, it was necessary to involve him so that he felt part of us. Yuran is now a happier child. Before, when I wanted to take his picture, it was very difficult for him to smile. He always had a serious face. Now he shows his beautiful smile for pictures!"

We are so encouraged to see how Yuran has grown and how much he has changed in just a short time. It has also reinforced our desire at Orphan's Promise to continue to look at holistic care for the children in our projects. Although our Hope Bunker project meets the community's immediate needs through feeding and education, we are also committed to discipleship and the development of the whole person. We genuinely believe that children like Yuran will begin to thrive as we do this.





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

orphanspromise.org

Orphan's Promise, a children's ministry of The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc., serves orphans and other vulnerable children around the world, taking them from at-risk to thriving through the transforming power of God's love. CBN is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization and your contributions to our ministry are tax-deductible.

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