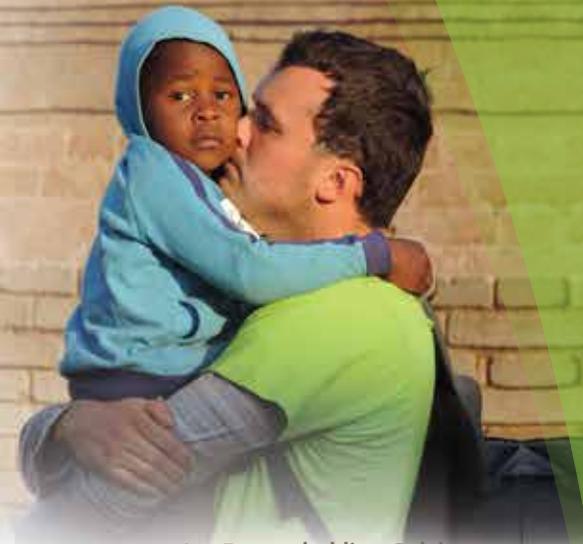


update

When Hearts Connect



Joe Barnes holding Galaletsang

TEAM REPORT AUGUST 2014

Teams that come to South Africa bring such a sense of excitement and encouragement to the children, teachers, grannies and staff we serve. They add value and are never, ever forgotten! We hope you are inspired and encouraged by the thoughts and impressions of this amazing team from Virginia.

>> Jennie Cerullo & Marcia Ball, Kerus Directors

Upon our team's arrival in South Africa, we saw a standard of living that rivaled the United States. It was not until we reached Soshanguve that we began to see glimpses of the racial, social, and financial disparity that readily defines South Africa. Larger houses turned into aluminum-walled shacks with leaky roofs. Cars and businesses dramatically decreased in value and frequency. It was as if the community of Soshanguve was designed for isolation.

Fortunately, God is not bound in isolation. Whether it was the smiling joy on the face of a seven year old orphan that was hugging you for the first or fiftieth time, or the tearful gratitude of a granny receiving a prayer quilt, it was obvious that the Lord loved and cared for the people in this community. It was said by one of the principals at the local grade school that our team was "God's hand extended through hugs." While certainly true, the Lord demonstrated to us the importance of emulating the heart and passion of a child when responding to His grace and love. With every hug, we were given a glimpse of how God desires us to want to be near Him. With every conversation, we were offered a chance to reflect on the way that we converse with Him. And with every song and dance, we saw how much God wants us to enjoy life and presence.

The ministry Kerus is doing in that community is the very definition of kingdom minded living. While preparing to share the Gospel with some students and staff, I was reminded of Martin Luther's words: "Your responsibility is to get God's Word from your mouth to their ears. Only God can take it from their ears to their heart." The Kerus ministry provided limitless opportunities for this to take place. No matter what we were doing at any given moment, the Gospel could be preached. God's Word was constantly at our fingertips, ready to be lived and used for the sake of His kingdom.

However, God has established Kerus in such a way that allows its kingdom work to far exceed Soshanguve. As Jennie and Marcia continue to connect and make partnerships, new leaders are being discovered and existing leaders are being nurtured and developed for the purpose of changing the world in the name of Jesus. Kerus is an exceptionally unique and powerful ministry tool, employing a well-balanced blend of both locally and globally minded kingdom expansion. Whether it be an orphan, a granny, or a leadership team, Kerus is showing the compassion and love of Jesus in radically transformative ways. >> Joe Barnes, Team Leader

"Kerus is showing the compassion and love of Jesus in radically transformative ways."



Special Buddies

in uncommon places

When I found out I was going to South Africa (which has been a dream of mine for at least 7-8 years), God placed on my heart the desire to meet a child with some form of disability. The reason why is that I have a bi-lateral hearing disability and I always try to find some way to encourage others with disabilities. So, I was like, "Okay God, out of the all the people I will meet, what is the likelihood that I will meet even just one?"

But God loves proving that He can make things happen. I heard that a little girl named Mpumi just found out that she had a hearing disability. I was so excited to meet her. She is a precious girl with such an infectious smile. I could write about the moment she discovered I also had hearing aids (she didn't know I was planning to meet her). I could write about how she was my special buddy and stuck by my side. But there is a moment far more powerful and meaningful to me that I would like to share.

The moment that stuck out to me the most, that I still find myself tearing up over, was the moment I introduced Mpumi to the rest of my team. I was so proud of my team in that moment. Every single one of them got down to her level, giving her hugs, asking her to be "their special buddy" and more. I could care less that we may have been spoiling Mpumi with our attention. But for that moment, however brief it may have felt, for both of us, all of our pain, struggles and hurts that comes alongside the stigma/curse of being "disabled" were pushed aside; love and kindness shown far greater than anything else in that moment. Yet it is that kind of love that God desires to show to all of us. That kind of love shines further in the darkness and encourages me to do whatever God wants me to do. I pray the same for Mpumi, my little hero, to be a light in Soshanguve. >> Allison Stefancin

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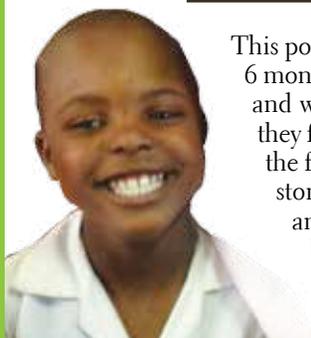


Kerus means "of the heart." There could not be a better word to refer to this incredibly heartfelt ministry. Anytime I came into contact with a person or group affiliated with Kerus, love and passion inevitably flowed from them. Lerato Makau, who works at the orphan care center, has recently gone through a trying year and upon joining the Kerus community, instantly felt such love and support that she came even when she was unable to work. Kerus is doing a tremendous job of changing lives and hearts. It is without a doubt that acts done through Kerus are done "of the heart." >> Emma Pence

Last year, I met a very sick child, Bongani, and we instantly became close friends. When I left, I thought I would never see him again, but this year, he was healthy, happy, and everything I prayed for him to be. I saw our prayers directly answered in Bongani's recovery. God is so good! Seeing how much Kerus is doing for the entire township of Soshanguve has been so encouraging. It has given them so much potential to be great, smart, and kind children of God regardless of where they came from. Being able to witness the joy and peace all these children have even after some of the hardest upbringings is a privilege I wish everyone could experience. >> Julie Clements

During home visits, one older woman caught my heart. As she stepped out of her scrap metal shack, she seemed nervous that a young girl was standing in her front yard. I explained that her church family in America stitched and prayed over the quilt in my hands with her in mind. As I wrapped the quilt around her shoulders and prayed for her, I had an overwhelming sense of God's love for this woman and how passionately and mercifully in the middle of her poverty and immense suffering, he cares for her. Many other women in Soshanguve just like her face unbelievable hardships and yet live with so much joy and hope. >> Corrie Ball

I loved the singing, dancing, laughter and joy of the children. We were always greeted with smiles, lots of hugs and often a hand (or several) to hold throughout the day. A special time for me was at the end of the week when we spent a day in a team building activity and were discussing fear. Esther, one of the staff workers, summed up our activity best. She learned that when we turn our fears over to Jesus we are set free. Our fears hold us captive and limit what we are capable of doing and/or enjoying. With Jesus in our life we have strength and courage to face daily obstacles. >> Stephanie Pence



This poem is about a little boy I met named Mosa. When he was 6 months old, his mother's boyfriend shot Mosa's mom as he sat and watched. When the police and ambulance finally came, they found the boyfriend had hung himself and Mosa crying on the floor. My heart was burdened with a desire to share Mosa's story with this poem. But his story does not end with pain and suffering. No matter how many horrifying images may be etched into a little boy's eyes, it all eventually circles around and points to Jesus' unconditional love for us.

>> Gavin Layman

MOSA

The nails in His hands were sharper
than the bullet in his gun,

And the crown of thorns on His head dug
deeper than the scars on the eyes of her
newborn son.

The effects of His sacrifice lasted longer
than the pain the little boy felt to live a
life without a mother.

The love He gave will touch more hearts
than any noose would dare to take
another father.

He needs his mother to make sure he
looks both ways and a father to listen to
the words he has to say.

He lost both but *he is not alone.*

Vision
Courage
Compassion



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