

update

2020

*A Year of
Celebrations and
Challenges*



For the whole world, 2020 has been an unusual and unpredictable year. For Kerus, it has also been a celebration of 20 years of making a difference in the lives of countless children and communities around the world. The year began with great hope and anticipation — trainings and programs were in full swing — amazing things were happening — lives were being changed . . .

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS



JENNIE CERULLO



MARCIA BALL

As we departed the airport in South Africa in March after our visas were revoked due to COVID, we desparately clung to the hope we knew God could bring in the midst of such heartbreak and hardship. Now, eight months later, that hope has been rewarded beyond measure! Grounded like the rest of the world, we were able to focus on things like finishing the new website we had been trying to get to for ages. We also had the opportunity to begin the Sex Trafficking Prevention Initiative.

Most importantly though, we were able to give time to our 16 precious staff members in South Africa. Virtual meetings have allowed us to reconnect with them on a new level and to see that the spiritual development and leadership training we have poured into them for years is being put into practice.

They have absorbed so much and are now even more respected in the community and looked up to as true leaders and the hands and feet of Jesus to Soshanguve. We couldn't be more proud! We are also more grateful than we could ever say for the team God has given us in you! You have been SO faithful throughout this time of difficulty and challenge. Thank you for standing with us and our extended Kerus family. You are in our hearts and in our prayers.

Jennie Marcia

JANUARY – FEBRUARY

The ITC! Conference in January delivered beyond all expectations! Hundreds of new church leaders came together for training and left with an action plan to saturate their communities with the *ITC! Curriculum* and for the new Sex Trafficking Prevention initiative in 2021. Several pastors held *ITC! Youth* rallies afterwards. The momentum and excitement were contagious! Everyone knew something profound was happening!

PINK KICK! was introduced to our Kerus family. PINK KICK helps young girls protect themselves from being pulled into the Sex Trafficking world by arming them with self-defense skills and strategies. Using an encouraging and entertaining approach, PK is teaching our precious young ladies to recognize and respond to dangerous circumstances that could ruin their lives.

The Grannie Spiritual Development Program began with great enthusiasm with our grannies coming together to sing and dance, have Bible studies, exercise, have wellness care and be refreshed. They also received training in practical skills such as cooking and sewing that gave them a way to provide for their families. What a privilege to give back to these ladies who have given so much already!





and then came COVID . . .

In March the world changed. . . So did Kerus! Jennie and Marcia had three days to leave South Africa, and our precious Kerus family in Soshanguve went into military lockdown with the rest of the country. Although our priorities didn't change, the outworking of them changed drastically.

COVID RESPONSE

With the country in military lockdown, food deliveries became our highest priority. Since most of our families live hand to mouth, food supplies evaporated quickly and desperation set in. Our South African Kerus board members, Johan and Charlene Mostert and our orphan care center staff went into action, and after much red tape, a lifeline was established. Miraculously, every two weeks each of our families has received a food parcel with enough to sustain them until the next delivery. Since March, over 36 tons of food have been supplied!

Along with regular food parcels, our dedicated staff is keeping up with each of the families, helping meet their needs, offering encouragement and letting them know they are not alone. COVID may have closed our buildings, but it has not closed our hearts!

The South African government is slowly lifting the restrictions, and our staff is able to come to work at the center each day, but interaction with the children continues to be through home visits only. Please continue to pray that our orphan care center doors can open again soon.

We are grateful beyond measure for all of you who have faithfully given to help us provide food all these months. And the need will continue until the government lifts further restrictions and families are able to fend for themselves. A family of six can be fed for two weeks for \$40. We welcome all who would join us in this very practical life-saving venture. Our orphans and grannies are depending on us!

SEX TRAFFICKING PREVENTION INITIATIVE

For the last few years, our focus has expanded to deepen our response to the all too prevalent sex trafficking trade that haunts the daily existence of so many of our young people, particularly the young girls, and threatens their safety. The opening of our Kerus Safe House was a significant and practical first step. Now we are developing a Sex Trafficking Prevention training program, a project that has been difficult to complete in the midst of a busy schedule.

The solitude of COVID has given us the time we have sought to get the training started and on its way to implementation in 2021. We are excited at the doors that are already opening to make it the powerful deterrent it is meant to be.

The reality of sex trafficking became very personal for the Kerus family . . .

S came to us when she was 8 years old. When she was 13, her grannie died, and she was taken away to live with a family member who sold her into the sex trade. Abused and trafficked for the next few years, she was able to escape, only to be caught and put under the control of a sugar daddy. After much more abuse and a pregnancy, S managed to run away and escape to safety with her baby. Now 21, recently she returned to the Orphan Care Center with her baby. Our reunion with S was filled with tears of both sadness and joy. She is now and always will be a part of the Kerus family! Our hearts break for what she was forced to live through. If Kerus had the Safe House then, S would have been spared.

**Full name not given for protection*



\$40 feeds a family of 6 for two weeks

You can join our team of generous partners helping us provide food for our Kerus families every two weeks by going to:

kerusglobal.org/donate

A NEW WEBSITE was another task that became a reality during these past several months. Thanks to the generous gift of time and expertise by dear friends of Kerus, Jon and Carrie Christopher, we have been able to design and launch a new website that will better serve both present and future Kerus partners.