



# An Abundant Life



Earlier this summer, my family and I travelled to Kenya with members of the youth group of the University Church to work with a ministry called *Made in the Streets* (MITS). There, our lives were transformed by the work and the hearts of incredible men and women who dedicate themselves to rescuing children from the garbage heaps of the slums of Nairobi, and providing them with a new life filled with hope and a brighter future. Before coming to MITS, these street children were abandoned and/or abused, living on the streets without any hope. Our 13-year old son, Jaime, writes of his experience after spending a day in the streets of Eastleigh (the “skid row” of Nairobi):

*“There was garbage everywhere. It was not just a bag of garbage spilled on the street; there were mounds of garbage all over. The smell of rotting garbage was almost suffocating. It was so bad that I could not even smell the asphalt that was being laid down on the streets. The terrible sight and the horrible smells of the garbage were nothing when I realized that those garbage piles were the homes to street children as well as their source of food and supplies. It broke my heart. The kids sleep on garbage because rotting trash produces methane, which provides heat. The children dig through garbage to find food to eat. They search for metal scraps and empty bottles to sell for money to buy glue that they can sniff. The glue makes them high so that they cannot feel the terrible pains of hunger. But in the midst of all that darkness and poverty, we saw the brightest smiles. The children were so grateful to see us and to know that we were there to see them. I will always remember the sights and smells of that day. But most of all, I will remember the children.”*

In the midst of such darkness, the men and women of MITS, many of whom are former street children themselves, bring light and hope as they walk through the garbage-filled streets daily, searching for and ministering to the neediest of society, providing for the outcast. They provide opportunities for the children to receive the Gospel of Christ, to come off the street, to receive an education, to be cared for in a loving and safe environment, to learn a trade that will ensure a brighter future, and to know that they are loved.

Jesus said, “I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10b). Many of our students and alumni have shared in this mission of Jesus, of providing a more abundant life, by engaging in the work of MITS. We have been privileged to work alongside and support these amazing people who work tirelessly with meager resources to bring hope to children born into poverty, to bring light into a dark world, and to make life more abundant for *the least of these*.

As we contemplate the privilege of our work and the blessings of our community, we give thanks for the many ways in which we may participate in work that contributes to a better world, work that makes us more diligent stewards of the gifts with which we have been entrusted, and that enhances and makes life more abundant. We pray for eyes to see the needs around us, hearts to feel the calling to serve, and hands that are willing and able to carry out the work that needs to be done.

*Hung V. Le*

*Associate Vice President and University Registrar*