

# journeys

Vol. 12 | No. 1 | 2017

## Focusing on EMPOWERMENT

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# Introducing MyCI

Visit CI's new online portal for a streamlined sponsorship experience.

Photos of your previously sponsored kids

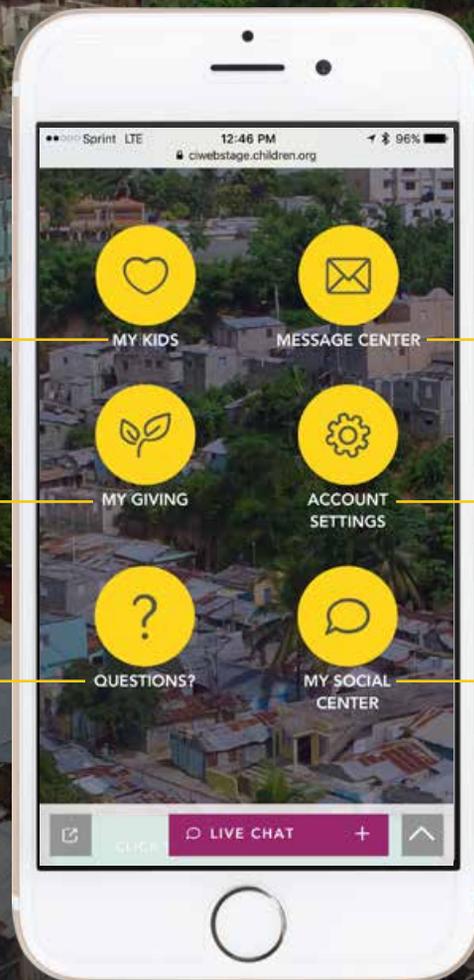
Quickly make your regular contribution

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Connect with other world-changers



With so many great features, we can't possibly list them all!

Visit [children.org/account](https://www.children.org/account) to explore MyCI.



# along your journey:

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# 12

Empowering teens to change their world



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A friendly place for learning



## Did you know?

Among our many programs, CI teaches kids about spending and saving money and creating micro businesses (such as selling candles, artisanal soaps, perfumes, food and piñatas). Programs also emphasize social issues, such as respecting the elderly, recycling and using natural resources wisely.

ON THE COVER:



# Focusing on **EMPOWERMENT**

By Audrey Hamayanda, CI storyteller

Kids in poverty often believe they have no control of their lives. Programs that teach empowerment skills, though, change those perspectives.

Children in Lusaka, Zambia, crowded in for a look at the camera 7-year-old Ruth got to use.

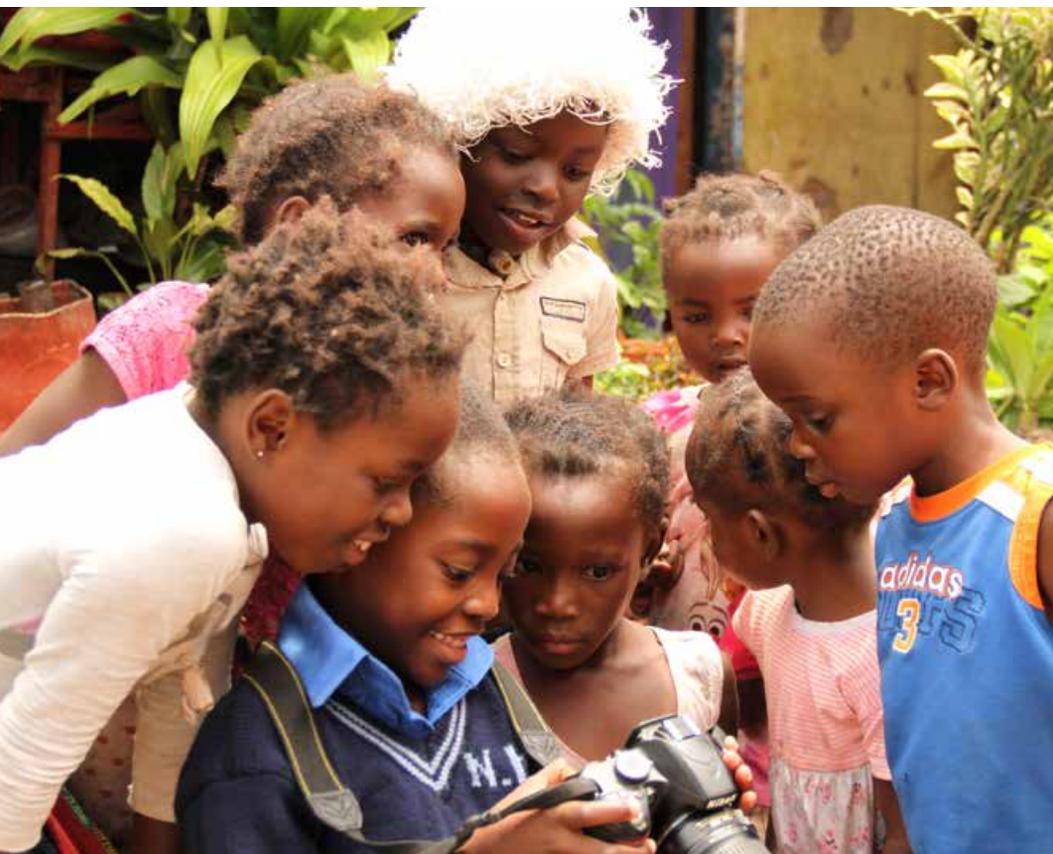
It was a beautiful Friday — a play day for CI’s early childhood development classes in Lusaka, Zambia. I was visiting a community center in the city as part of my job as a CI field reporter, and I decided to ignite my weekend mood by joining in the kids’ fun.

My camera immediately attracted their attention. In no time, I was swallowed in a sea of kids. Outside the commotion, I noticed a girl mimicking my moves. Framing the “focus” with her little fingers, she

took imaginary pictures of me and the other children. I returned the gesture by stealing a quick shot of her. Her face lit up!

Back at my desk, I wondered what else I could do for the 7-year-old — who I’d learned was named Ruth. It was at that moment that CI’s mantra, “unleashing the power of (every)ONE®,” echoed through my mind. It was an instant “Bingo!” for me — how life is not a “one-man show.” It’s about recognizing who has the capacity to help others and calling on them to get involved.

My next step, then: asking a sponsored teen in CI’s Community Youth Reporter program to give Ruth some hands-on experience with



a camera. By pairing a teen with Ruth, I reinforced the concept of helping others.

## TEACHING KIDS TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES

Our key focus areas — health, education, empowerment and employment — are crucial to helping kids break the cycle of poverty. But that third one — empowerment — is especially important. It's where we really begin to make a difference in their view of themselves — and their futures.

Basically, we must reinforce kids' self-confidence, leadership abilities, relationship skills and even their personal interests. Each is important in giving them an extra push toward their goals even after they graduate from sponsorship.

As CI continues to enhance its programs supporting empowerment, the ripple effects of the power of (every)ONE will become even more pronounced. To me, this is an amazing swell of awesomeness!

## CELEBRATING OUR GROUP EFFORT

Kudos to you, CI's supporters. Greatness lies in choices, and your choice to join this amazing movement to eradicate poverty is the origination of a better world for all. Your generosity is celebrated! Together, we are transforming lives and making kids' dreams a reality.

A common African adage says, "It takes the whole village to raise a child." We echo that at CI. After all, we live in a global "village."

Thank you for believing in our kids with us! ■



Children International  
2000 East Red Bridge Road  
Kansas City, MO 64131

Children International's vision is that every child graduates from our program healthy, educated, employed and empowered to break the cycle of poverty.

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Have questions, comments, suggestions or a change of address?

Contact us at 800-888-3089 or [editor@children.org](mailto:editor@children.org).

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“A good leader must set an example first.”  
— ANGELICA, CI TEEN

## Leadership boot camp: No boots **REQUIRED**

By Gina Kellogg and Patricia Huerta, CI storytellers

Fun and games camouflaged the day’s real purpose: teaching CI teens how to be great leaders.

### **F**irst things first: “No cell phones.”

Now there’s a rule that’s sure to elicit a loud, negative response from nearly any teenager. (At the very least, a dramatic eye roll.) But not from CI teens like Angelica (at left) in Guayaquil, Ecuador. They mean business. And the business is leadership.

Leadership can be defined many ways. John Maxwell, for example, a recognized expert on the topic, says, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way.”

However you define it, though, leadership is not simply one innate trait (despite some people’s claims they were “born leaders”). Instead, leadership comprises many traits — and all of them must be learned.

CI developed its Youth Leadership Training program for this reason. In it, teens learn valuable life skills, such as teamwork, conflict resolution and effective communication, as well as how to solve problems and make smart decisions. Last spring, teen leaders of CI programs in social and financial education, health, sports and tutoring teamed up to hone their skills with an all-day leadership boot camp.

### **START WITH STRUCTURE**

After giving up their coveted cell phones and other nonessential belongings for the day — a sacrifice to help teens learn to “let go” and be unburdened leaders — the young adults divided into “tribes” led by peer *caciques*, or chiefs. The *caciques*’ job was to foster



team spirit and represent their team with the camp facilitators.

Angélica was a natural to be chosen as the cacique of her tribe. “A good leader must set an example first,” she explains.

Once the teams were established, the teens learned the rules:

- Speak to your cacique with respect, never casually.
- Stay with your tribe at all times.
- Travel together, repeating the phrase, “Without values or commitment, there is no growth.”
- Remember: Everything has a price.

The penalty for breaking the rules: forking over play money or “paying” by performing basic training drills like running or sit-ups.

*(continued next page)*



#### **ABOVE**

Teens balanced on one another in an activity designed to teach them the importance of working together.

#### **LEFT**

To build self-esteem, participants walked a narrow beam as teens on one side tossed water balloons to distract them while teens on the other side shouted encouragement.



Daniela (12) and her sister, Dayana (14), arrived at camp with positive attitudes.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER TO BECOME A LEADER

With the rules in place, it was time for action. In the culminating steps of their journey to world domination becoming outstanding leaders, teens tackled obstacle stations focused on instilling five traits every great leader needs. Each trait was tied to a related motto:

1. **Self-esteem:** "I can move forward, and I'll never give up."
2. **Bravery:** "Two are better than one, because the reward will be greater."
3. **Trust:** "Everything is possible, because I am never alone."
4. **Humility:** "I overcome my pride to help others."
5. **Perseverance:** "My eyes are on the goal, and I work hard every day."

Throughout the camp, the teens repeated the mottos to remind them of the lesson behind each challenge.

"My favorite motto was 'Everything is possible, because I'm never alone,'" Angélica says. "My family is my support, and I'm never alone with my family. I really identify with that phrase."



## THE WRAP-UP

The teens ended the day reflecting on the camp's purpose and how to apply their new skills in real life.

"I've learned many things here at the camp — to be a better leader, for example," Angelica explains. "It's been very satisfying to spend time with other sponsored youths ... and I think I guided them well."

Headed home, the teens were physically exhausted but emotionally energized — ready to lead the next generation of CI kids on the path out of poverty. (*And, yes, they got their cell phones back.*) ■

## Feeling motivated?

Visit [children.org/boot-camp](https://www.children.org/boot-camp) to see more photos of the teens in action.



**FAR LEFT:** CI staff stood ready to lend a hand as teens balanced between two ropes to travel between goals.

**LEFT:** Crawling in the dirt was a test of teens' humility and pride.

**ABOVE:** Teens built trust by walking blindfolded through various obstacles and relying on guides to lead them safely.



It's okay to  
**'feel good**  
about yourself'

# A CI sponsor reflects on the far-reaching impact of his support.

By Jeannie Irons, CI storyteller

**S**ponsor and donor Kent Mader describes how being a sponsor for more than 10 years has given him a new perspective on his life.

**Q:** How did you get involved with CI?

**A:** I don't remember exactly. But I wanted to get more meaning out of work trips and vacations. When you visit other countries, you realize how fortunate we are in the U.S. You get a sense of grounding you don't get through the news.

**Q:** What do you write to your kids about?

**A:** I tell them about where I live. I also give them inspiration — family is important, school is important. When they hear it from someone other than their teacher or parent, it gives them one more person to look up to.

**Q:** Has being a sponsor changed your life?

**A:** I've met three kids in person. When you actually meet the kid and family, you learn more than you can in a letter. Being inside

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Kent helped fund one of our newest facilities — the Cook Family Center in Villa Canales, Guatemala — after seeing the life-changing impact of community centers on kids' lives.



their home is an extraordinary experience. You see how resilient they are. They're still smiling; they deal with whatever comes their way. You realize people and children are people and children no matter where they are.

**Q:** What surprised you on your visits?

**A:** I'm blown away by what it takes to coordinate the community centers. All the time people put in providing services is a huge endeavor. It's remarkable what the organization does in terms of connecting sponsors and kids to build relationships that make a lasting impact on a kid and their family. I'm just a piece of it. It's much, much bigger than just me.

**Q:** What's your latest involvement?

**A:** I'm helping build community centers. Tierra Nueva, in Guatemala, was just built. And there's another new center, Villa Canales, also in Guatemala. When you look at something like these centers, they will have a lasting impact on the families.

**Q:** Parting words?

**A:** CI is a great organization to be a part of. You selfishly feel good about yourself doing these things. You have to feel good when you're actually helping someone who is on the extreme of what they have versus you. It takes less than five Starbucks® coffees to help a whole family in another country. ■

*Make your own lasting impact. Help build a community center, learn about employer gift-matching or include CI in your will. Chat with a member of our Legacy Team at **800-888-4089** or visit **children.org/legacy**.*

# Empowering **TEENS** to change their **WORLD**

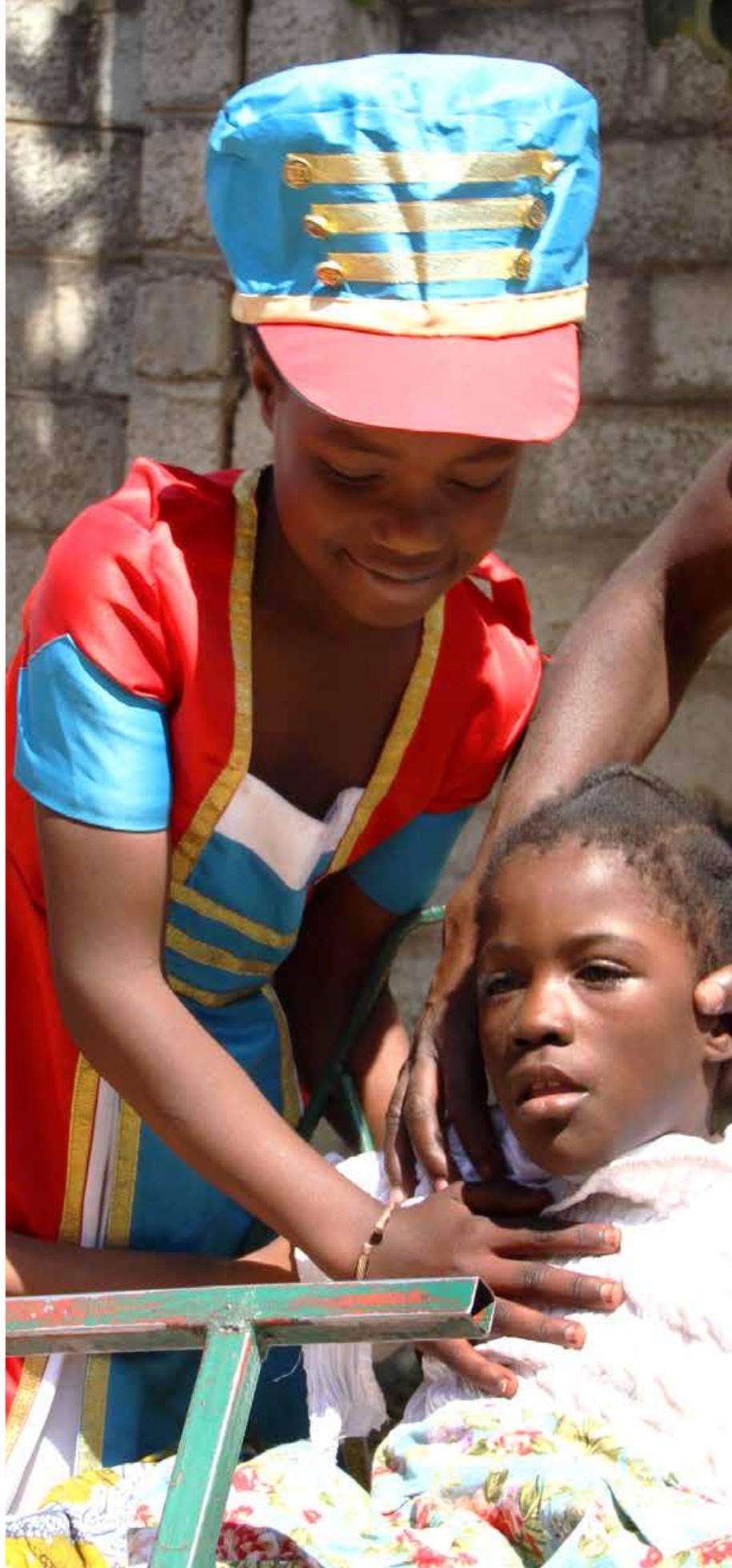
By *Gretchen Dellett and  
Audrey Hamayanda, CI storytellers*

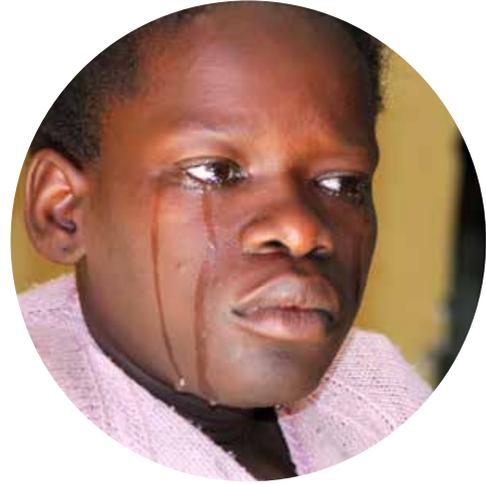
Equipped with skills learned from CI, Zambian teens research and create a plan to help local disabled kids.

**T**he small, concrete-block house was cramped and hot. Flies swarmed over two dirty, pocked mattresses on the hard floor. This place is called the Home of Happiness (HOH). But, at first glance, it appeared there was little joy here.

Don't judge this home in Lusaka, Zambia, by its appearance, however. For what the HOH lacks in material goods, it makes up for in kindness and love. Within these walls, a group of tireless volunteers provide care for 70 disabled children,

Helping a disabled girl play on a teeter-totter gave these CI teens insight on the impact they can make on others' lives.





A young HOH resident cried as she performed a skit about the indignities of being disabled – an issue CI teens are changing with their efforts.

25 of whom call the tiny space “home.”

UNICEF reports that “discrimination against disabled children often leads to reduced access to basic social services, especially education.”

The HOH faced those exact challenges. Though its founders were loving people, their hearts were

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CI teens researched, created a plan and led a project to aid the institution.

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bigger than their wallets. They struggled to provide necessities for the ailing children.

Luckily, nearby, CI teens were learning how

*(continued next page)*

**RIGHT:**

A group of CI majorettes performed for local disabled kids to lift their spirits.

**BELOW:**

A CI teen helped a young disabled boy ride down a playground slide.



to become leaders of change in their community. They heard about the HOH and — empowered through their training and some funds — they researched, created a plan and led a project to aid the institution.

**HELPING A HOME LIVE UP TO ITS NAME**

It's easy to find the HOH within Lusaka's George compound — you can't miss the wheelchairs in a tidy row outside.

"It was lacking in many things," says CI Youth Council member Estella (14). "This winter has been very cold, and children at the HOH had no bedding. So we decided to help them with blankets, groceries, mattresses and utensils."

The teens also planned fun activities for the children. That is how, on a sunny



June day last year, the sounds of a marching band filled the streets near the HOH. Out front, the young residents eagerly awaited their visitors, grinning as the band played and girls in bright majorette costumes performed a dance routine.

### **EMPOWERED THROUGH PURPOSE AND LIFE SKILLS**

Thanks to the efforts of CI's young leaders, the HOH is a much happier place. And the teens have continued their involvement by volunteering after school and on weekends, as well as using CI's contacts to connect caretakers with government services and training.

"We are all equal in the eyes of God," says 13-year-old Matildah. "So we should share the same love, because we are all human beings."

The young residents of HOH can attest to the impact of CI's teen volunteers — which reaches much farther than HOH's small structure. CI teens in poverty

are learning how to change their world — for themselves and those around them. ■

*Support projects that give teens the chance to change their world at [children.org/empower](https://www.children.org/empower).*



Michell got help from Daniel in a tree-planting project organized to improve their community.

# Cultivating agents of change

By Gina Kellogg and Patricia Calderón, CI storytellers

A tree-planting project in Colombia is growing teens in poverty into leaders of change.

The dust puffs up around the footsteps of Michell and other CI kids as they walk the dry, rocky road. They carry shovels, spades, bags of soil, colorfully painted poles, rolls of wire mesh and small trees, their delicate roots protected by black plastic.

While the path is brown and parched this day, during the wet season, torrents of rain turn the route into a dangerous *arroyo* (stream). Lack of drainage in Barranquilla, Colombia's urban core gives seasonal deluges no outlet. The result: Roaring floods wash away everything in their path — from local flora and fauna to hopes of a better future.

But Michell and her CI peers aim to change all that.

## TRANSFORMING TEENS' OUTLOOKS

Years ago, Michell's father abandoned the 17-year-old's family — a woefully

common occurrence for CI kids in Colombia. Her mother, Nelsy, earns about US\$200 a month as a laborer to support Michell and her two sisters, Camila and Natalia. They're actually luckier than some. Most families in their community earn only \$180 a month. Of course, an extra \$20 doesn't go very far when you break it down: 13 cents more per family member per day.

On this sunny autumn morning, though, Michell isn't thinking about poverty's limitations. She grasps her clipboard and chatters with friends as they walk toward the CI community center. Their matching CI shirts signal their coordinated effort this day: to create some positive change for others. At the same time, they'll also be learning some critical life skills that will enhance their future opportunities to break the cycle of poverty.

## IMPROVING COMMUNITIES — AND LIFE SKILLS

Your support is used to teach teens to take an active role in changing themselves and their communities.

Under the thoughtful guidance of a youth

*(continued page 18)*





# How to create problem solvers

CI teens in Colombia learned how to identify challenges and solve them.

**Problem:** Getting the community to care.

**Solution:** Organize workshops to teach social responsibility, environmental protection and proper tree planting.

**Problem:** Lack of expertise.

**Solution:** Find experts to be speakers.

**Problem:** How to inform the community about the project.

**Solution:** Create promotional posters.

**Problem:** Where to source the trees.

**Solution:** Convince local businesses to donate them.

**Problem:** Limited resources.

**Solution:** Determine maximum number of participants and devise a budget.

coordinator, they participate in leadership training, as well as project design and management.

Natalie Foxworthy, senior program officer for child and youth development at CI, says both aspects are critical for helping teens undergo one of their most significant efforts each year: fully managing projects to improve their communities. "CI provides the training and funding so teens can gain real-life experience in organizing these complicated enterprises," Natalie says.

The first step for the young leaders is to identify problems in their communities. During this stage, Michell and her peers in Barranquilla (as well as their counterparts in Cartagena and Santa Marta) determined that a major issue was the devastation that occurred when unstable ground — with no



vegetation to hold soil in place — turned into mudslides, ravaging homes and businesses. A lack of green spaces also causes flooded streets that result in enormous potholes, piles of debris and rocks, and the spread of disease from swamped latrines.

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Through CI programs, teens learn critical life skills, enhancing their potential to break out of poverty.

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Solving these problems and improving the quality of life in their community was a key issue for the teens. They believed their project would bring communities closer together by connecting all



ages — from parents to children — in a common cause. They wanted neighbors to develop a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the environment. And they hoped they could create a more positive and hopeful community.

### **PLANNING, PLANNING, PLANNING**

Once the teens had voted on their project, the next step was getting it planned — including putting it all on paper for approval by CI. They had to consider each of the many challenges ahead and how to solve for them.

The second phase of the teens' project was dirtier than the first but even more fulfilling: actually planting the trees.

At the community center, Michell helped organize the participants. She explained the basics of planting the trees, as well as giving a quick lesson on recycling. Other teens supervised younger kids, helping them decorate poles that would hold

*(continued next page)*

## Counting up the impact

In 2016, CI teens around the globe created meaningful change in their communities.

**71** youth projects completed

**19,751** youth who participated

**113,483** community members who also benefitted.

## 5 steps to change a community

- 1. Draft,**  
research and write proposals.
- 2. Review,**  
select and finalize proposal.
- 3. Enlist**  
volunteers and support from local partners (schools, health clinics, local NGOs, businesses and government agencies).
- 4. Plan**  
and budget the project.
- 5. Implement**  
and manage the project.

protective fencing around the vulnerable plants. Young men leaned in with shovels to dig holes for the saplings.

Later, Michell moved into a more hands-on role. Wrapping her coffee-colored tresses into a pouf on top of her head, she crouched next to a small cavity in the ground with Adriana (19), another teen leader. Five-year-old Daniel squatted nearby. He eagerly helped set their leafy seedling into the hole as the young women removed the plastic from around its roots.

Alvaro (8) helped tamp down the soil around a new sapling near his home.



Holding the trunk straight, they sprinkled enriched soil into the hole. Adriana grabbed a nearby rock to pound a colorful pole into the unyielding ground, while Michell smacked the top of another pole with her hand to secure it. Then they

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At the end of the project, 1,350 people had gained greater awareness of environmental issues: 900 sponsored teens, 150 kids and 300 community members.

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wrapped wire mesh around the stakes and tied it in place.

#### **TAKING A PLEDGE OF PRESERVATION**

The final activity of the day was reinforcing participants' commitment to the trees' futures. For this task, the teens officiated "adoption" ceremonies where the new "parents" promised to nurture the plants as they grew.

Then, after the plants were watered, tools gathered up and most people had dispersed, the teens added up the impact of their efforts.

And the youth leaders? Along with sore backs and blisters, they had gained real-life experience in creating positive change — and life skills for a future beyond poverty. Heading home, dusty and tired, Michell was now a leader with experience. At home that night, she could take pride describing her day's accomplishments and know she had taken a positive step toward creating a better future for her younger sisters and her community. ■



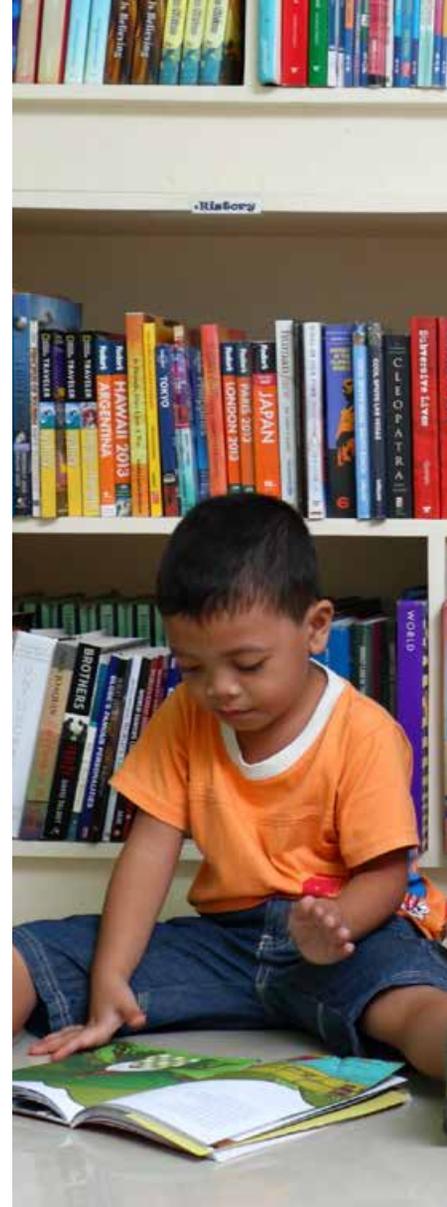
We can  
only help  
**YOUTH**  
with **YOU**

Youth-organized projects teach teens how to give back to their communities.

When you support these projects, you give them knowledge and resources to overcome poverty.

Empower change in youth at  
[children.org/empower](https://www.children.org/empower).





# A friendly place for learning

By Deron Denton, CI storyteller

Nearly every weekend, you'll find them: a group of five huddled in one of CI's community center libraries in Bicol, Philippines. Despite ranging in age from 6 to 14, these kids have found common ground: a love of learning.

When asked what made the library their favorite spot, friends Mico, Rica, Junbelle, Adrian and April explained they wanted learning to be fun and that CI's library was the best place to make that happen. (They really said that!)

CI's libraries provide safe havens for kids all over the world who live in underserved, often dangerous neighborhoods. But walking through the doors of a CI center isn't simply an escape from negative influences; it's also an opportunity to engage in unique programs and services, such as leadership training, tutoring and computer labs.

The libraries are cherished by CI kids who visit them to make friends, explore new worlds in the pages of books, spark their imagination and, very simply, be kids. ■

"The library helps me learn how to read and write. Even the toys here are helping me to read and write. It's fun being here."

— Mico (6)

Learn more about the impact of community centers at [children.org/community-centers](https://www.children.org/community-centers).



"I love being in the library with my sister and friends. We read books together and learn new stuff. Learning is fun when you do it with your friends."

— Rica (9)

"Here, there are toys that are like books and books that are like toys. They all seem like toy-books or book-toys. I love it!"

— Junbelle (9)

"I read and study here in the library. And when my mind gets tired, I go play in the educational game corner. And when my mind is ready again, I go back to reading. It's all here in the library."

— Adrian (13)

"My favorite subject at school is arts. Here in the library, I get to read books about arts. There are also toys that make me more creative."

— April (14)



# To the rescue!

By Gina Kellogg and Andrés Rosero, CI storytellers

Aided by a CI scholarship, Paul trained to be a paramedic. Now he's ready to help others.

**P**aul Rafael Intriago Yungan (21) trudges up the hill toward the tall, six-story Red Crescent Technological Institute in Quito, Ecuador. His backpack is heavy with books and supplies. Reflective tape around the knees of his pants — tucked tightly into black work boots — glows when the sunlight catches it. Keeping his pant legs secure ensures they won't get caught in the mechanics of his motorcycle, which he'll mount later to give him quick access to the medical victims he's training to help.

## **A NATURAL INCLINATION TO HELP OTHERS**

Several years back, Paul didn't know whether his aspirations to be a paramedic were possible. He was a new alumnus of Children International's sponsorship program, which he'd entered at age 3. Its support and that of his sponsor had helped him graduate from high school. CI's programs also had given him the insight to recognize his natural inclination toward helping others.

But Paul knew he needed additional education if he was going to break free from the dangerous La Colmena neighborhood in which he'd grown up — a neighborhood so rife with gang activity and crime that police won't enter it. His parents, Robin and María, had encouraged his pursuit of a career in emergency medicine. But his father's income as a street vendor couldn't pay for post-secondary school.

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**“The most satisfying experience is when people look me in the eyes and thank me for giving them another chance to live.”**

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“A high-school degree can only guarantee low-paying jobs,” Paul explains. “Education has become a necessity for everyone. Knowledge gives us the chance to be better, fulfill our dreams and reach our goals.”

### **SAVING LIVES FOR A LIVING**

With few options, Paul filled out an application for a CI scholarship. The scholarships pay for vocational training and post-secondary school (including tuition, books and transportation). A few months later, Paul was relieved to hear he'd been awarded the funds.

In the two years since, among many other classes, Paul has learned risk management, first-aid, bioethics, protection techniques in hostile environments, fire-fighting, anatomy, electrocardiography, toxicology, advanced CPR and even defensive driving — an important skill for maneuvering that motorcycle.

Now, Paul is graduating with a degree in emergency medical care. He plans to apply for a job as a paramedic in the fire department or the health ministry.

“Thanks to the CI scholarship, I could find my professional vocation, because it would have been impossible for me to pay the costs without that help,” he says.

With his new expertise, Paul says he'll be able to assist his parents. But, best of all, he says, “I can save lives.” ■



At age 5, Paul was like a lot of little boys: he dreamed of being a paramedic. Now 21, his dream is becoming a reality.



## **HELP GIVE HOPE**

Paul applied for the maximum amount of CI scholarships — two years of support. But, when he hit the limit, it was tough. “I had problems covering the costs of my classes sometimes,” he says.

But things are changing, thanks to generous supporters like you! In the months ahead, CI will offer four-year scholarships (and more career-readiness programs) — the critical next steps to getting successful jobs and truly breaking the cycle of poverty.

You can help!  
Make a donation at [children.org/hope](https://www.children.org/hope).



## A TASTE OF GUATEMALA

# CHIRMOL

By Gina Kellogg and David Nebel, CI storytellers

You'll find *chirmol* (salsa) on many CI kids' tables in Latin America.

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 Roma tomatoes
- 10 tomatillos
- 1 bunch peppermint
- 1 bunch cilantro
- ½ onion (medium-sized)
- 4 chiltepe chiles or other type of hot pepper (vary amount based on preference)
- Pinch of salt

Watch a CI kid's mom in Guatemala prepare this recipe at [children.org/salsa](https://www.children.org/salsa).

### DIRECTIONS

1. Peel tomatillos and rinse in a bowl of water.
2. Roast the tomatillos and tomatoes on a hot griddle, turning as needed. Remove tomatillos when soft and skins are partially blackened. Continue to let tomatoes cook while preparing other ingredients, checking on them regularly until they are soft and skins are partially blackened. When roasted, remove from griddle and set aside.
3. Strip peppermint leaves from stems and place in bowl of water.
4. Pull cilantro from stems and also add to the water. Swish in water to rinse thoroughly. (Discard stems.)
5. Remove the outer skin and finely chop half of an onion.
6. Finely chop the peppermint and cilantro leaves.
7. Add onion, peppermint and cilantro to one side of a large bowl with wide, flat bottom.
8. Add chiltepes to bowl alongside other ingredients. Mash the chiltepes using a large pestle.
9. Add roasted tomatillos on top of chiltepes and mash thoroughly.
10. Remove skins from roasted tomatoes while they are still hot. Add to bowl on top of the chiltepes and tomatillos mixture and mash with pestle. Use knife to cut larger pieces and continue mashing.
11. Add salt as desired and stir thoroughly.
12. Transfer into smaller bowl for serving.

# Matching gifts *double* your power!

CI supporters know all about the transformative power of one person. But what if you could double that power? Many companies match their employees' charitable donations.

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