

childvoice

2017 SPRING/SUMMER

Small Voices, **BIG DREAMS**

.....

6 WAYS
you're knocking
down barriers
to learning

+ A photo essay of
**SPECIAL
MOMENTS**

Christian
**Children's
Fund**
of Canada

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Why school matters



Some things you read you never forget. For me, it's the story of Kofi, a 12-year-old Ghanaian boy (see p. 10) featured in this issue of *ChildVoice*. When he was nine, his teacher beat him for arriving late to school. Scared, but determined, he returned to class the next day. Nothing would stop him from learning.

“

My body hurt so bad.

— Kofi, 12

Sadly, Kofi is not alone in the fears he once had in going to school. The results of our seventh annual *Small Voices, Big Dreams* survey are in, and only 60 percent of more than 6,000 children from around the world

said their school is always safe. In Burkina Faso, a shocking 20 percent said their school is never safe. The statistics are deeply worrying.

School is a place where all children should feel secure; it's a prerequisite for learning. For children like Kofi, going to school is the one way they can create a better future for themselves and their families. We know education increases income, reduces poverty and promotes gender equality. It also lowers the risk of child marriage and maternal deaths, and improves the chances of living a healthy life. Yet, millions of children never enter a classroom or complete primary school.

Every day, you're knocking down barriers that keep children out of the classroom.

In this issue, we give you a glimpse of some of the ways your kindness and generosity is creating safe, supportive places for children to learn and changing their lives in ways that are truly incredible. Thank you for giving children a chance to better themselves, their families and their communities!

Dr. Douglas Ellenor
Chair of the Board & child sponsor
Christian Children's Fund of Canada



ON THE COVER

In this photo taken by Philip Maher, two girls study at their desk at a school in Godino, Ethiopia. Thanks to your generosity, we've been working in the community since 1994.

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DID YOU KNOW?

CCFC earned a four-star rating from Charity Intelligence Canada, and was assigned an overall grade of A- on *MoneySense's* "2017 Charity 100" list.

ACCESSIBILITY

We seek to recognize and remove the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities. All communications are available in alternative formats upon request.



SPRING/SUMMER 2017
EDUCATION ISSUE

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“When I knelt, all of the children gathered around me with huge grins on their faces and contagious giggles.”

— sponsor Dean Campbell on his trip to Ghana

What's happening

By Bonar Bell | CCFC communications manager, Canada



CCFC welcomes a new chief executive officer

Spring signals growth and rebirth. In early April the arrival of Patrick Canagasingham as Christian Children's Fund of Canada's (CCFC) new chief executive officer sparked a renewed sense of enthusiasm across the organization. Patrick's significant leadership experience in the international development sector will help guide our vision and mission as we continue to forge ahead as one of Canada's most trusted and respected child-focused international development organizations.

MEET PATRICK FOR YOURSELF!



Tune in to *Rise and Shine*, our Facebook livestream show, on **Tuesday, June 20 at 10:30 a.m. ET** and get to know our new CEO.



Reaching new audiences

Starting on April 18 at 10:30 a.m. ET, you can watch *Rise and Shine*, our new monthly Facebook livestream. This 30-minute show offers viewers a personal look at CCFC, with heartwarming stories about child sponsorship and our newest monthly giving program, Community Rise.

Be sure to connect with us on Facebook to join in the conversation!

"ICE is nice" for children in India

Will you be travelling through Toronto's Pearson International Airport this year? If so, be sure to stop by one of International Currency Exchange's (ICE) foreign-exchange booths. Thanks to our new partnership, foreign coins and bills donated at ICE locations in 2017 will support our community development projects in India.



Did you know we engage tens of thousands of people on social media every month? We are sharing new and informative stories about how your donations are helping children around the world. Don't miss out. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram today!





We asked sponsor
Trina Dingman ...

Why is helping children important to you?

Trina Dingman and her family sponsor **Solange**, a sweet nine-year-old girl living in Burkina Faso. Trina is a passionate mom-preneur who loves health, fitness and encouraging women to love and value themselves.

“ Helping children is important to me for so many reasons. For one, because I am a mother with two small children of my own that I love so much.

I can't imagine any precious child being without the basic necessities!

I believe it's my duty as a human being to love other human beings and to do what I can where I see aid needed. I am SO very passionate about my precious girls seeing the importance of sharing our blessings with others. We love being able to sponsor a child and send pictures and letters back and forth. It is such a gift to have our sponsored child in our lives!

Trina asked her daughters, Noelle, 7, and Soleil, 4, a few questions about Solange.

What do you like most about Solange?

That she's our sister.

What do you like to tell Solange about?

That we love her.

Can you tell me a little about Solange?

She lives in Burkina Faso and her parents are farmers.

Why do you like getting letters from Solange?

Because she colours sometimes.

Do you think it's good to sponsor children like Solange?

Yes, because if we didn't then she wouldn't have the food and stuff that they need.

SMALL VOICES, BIG DREAMS

Small Voices, Big Dreams is one of the largest polls of children's views in the world. In 2016, we surveyed 6,226 children from 41 countries to ask them how they feel about the importance of education and safety at school.

It all starts with school + education

98% of children surveyed say

 **EDUCATION AND SCHOOL** are important to them

45% of children feel school + education will help them

GET A GOOD JOB 

Safety in school is integral to a child's success

31% of children surveyed say their school is

 **SOMETIMES SAFE**


48% say a safe school is where **SECURITY MEASURES** are in place to keep them

SAFE FROM HARM 

Children need good infrastructure to feel safe + succeed in school

47% of children surveyed would improve facilities + create **HIGH QUALITY**

 **LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS** if they were leaders of their countries

24% said they would modernize **CLASS CURRICULUMS**

sports ★ creative arts ★ participation



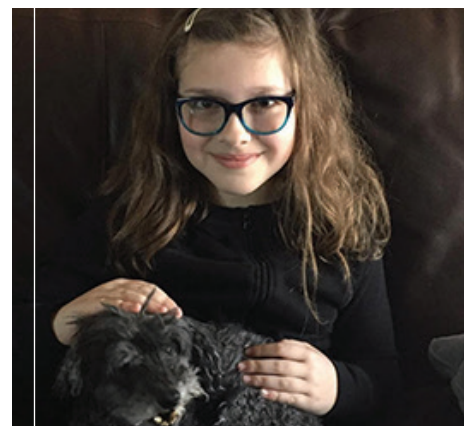
“If I was president of Ghana], I would make sure the children in my country go to school.”

— Comfort, 11, Ghana



“The teachers make learning fun. We go to museums, go on nature walks, take part in musicals and activities that are fun — but also help us learn. It feels like a safe school.”

— Dylan, 12, Ireland



“I really enjoy learning new things, and I’m very lucky this year that I’m in a classroom with my best friend and have a great teacher.”

— Isabella, 10, Canada

How you're protecting young minds

By Philip A. Tanner, Ph.D. | CCFC director, programs & strategic initiatives

Children learn more quickly during their early years than at any other time in life. The chronic stress of poverty can physically change the brain and reduce a child's ability to learn, read and problem solve. However, a child's earliest years provide a window of opportunity where we can make a real and meaningful difference.

That's where you come in.

You are helping children grow up in safe, supportive communities where their

early needs in nutrition, education and parental care are met and their rights protected.

You're bringing play-based learning to early learning centres and helping children and parents learn to play and interact with one another — two incredibly powerful ways of changing a young person's life. This simple, cost-effective approach to early education has made us a leader in the field.

You're also an essential part of our

work with local leaders, parents and children in education and health initiatives which are eliminating harmful practices, like child marriage, and changing ideas and understanding about the needs of children at every stage of growth.

In my work, I'm often in the field. Every visit, I witness how you are transforming not only the health of children, but what they believe they can achieve. It's truly extraordinary and so are you.

“

My school is always safe, because no one has broken into the school to steal since I can remember. The main gate is always closed and locked.

— Camila, 10, Paraguay



Small Voices, Big Dreams is a global initiative by ChildFund Alliance members — including Christian Children's Fund of Canada — across the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia.



Building places of joyful learning

By Semereta Sewasew | CCFC communications manager, Ethiopia

“I like learning to count,” five-year-old Mebrate tells me. When I ask her to pick a number, she holds up a large purple eight and grins.

The number shapes are one of Mebrate’s favourite activities at the early childhood development centre where she and 40 other children share two classrooms filled with colourful toys and learning materials.

Thank you for giving more than 45,000 four- to six-year-olds in Ethiopia the very best in early childhood learning. The small yellow building where Mebrate attends class is one of more than 70 early childhood development centres you helped our local partners build or renovate in the past five years. Because of you, all centres are linked to health facilities to ensure children receive health checkups, including screenings for eyesight and malnutrition. And each centre has clean water, latrines and wonderful learning materials.

In addition, all the centres emphasize Learning Through Play (based on the incredible work of the Hincks-Dellcrest

Centre in Toronto). I only have to listen to their happy chatter a few minutes to see the impact. Their joy is heartwarming.

“

It is fun to come to the centre and play.

— Mebrate, 5 (pictured left)

“The children can freely touch shapes and puzzles and have fun with child-friendly rhymes or games,” shares Fikre, Mebrate’s teacher (pictured right). “It gives them the chance to explore, be active, test physical limits and develop literacy skills.”

To make sure early learning teachers in Ethiopia can learn and apply best practices, Christian Children’s Fund of Canada created a set of teaching materials in consultation with Canadian and Ethiopian universities and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. The new centres and training sessions support the



VISIT A CLASS
bit.ly/CCFCJoy


Ethiopian government’s work to expand access to early learning prior to Grade 1.

Your donations are helping to give vulnerable children the best possible start in life. We in Ethiopia are so grateful!

SMALL VOICES, BIG DREAMS

55% of children surveyed in Ethiopia said if they were president they would

BUILD or **RENOVATE**

 schools to create high quality learning environments

In Canada, **54%** of children said they would

MODERNIZE their class curriculums,



including sports and creative arts



Spreading early learning nationwide

By Patrice Zongo | CCFC communications manager, Burkina Faso

When I step up to the gate of a small, two-room early childhood development centre, a little face peers up at me, and a sweet voice utters a few words of welcome.



At two, she is already able to speak and make herself heard.

— Nassi’s mom (Nassi pictured)

The voice belongs to Nassiratou (or Nassi as her mom calls her). At two and half, she’s the youngest child registered at the early childhood development centre which uses play activities to promote healthy child development. Neimatou credits her daughter’s curiosity and confidence to Learning Through Play, the play-based method of learning your generosity is spreading across Burkina Faso.

In Canada, early childhood education may be common. In Burkina Faso, barely

four percent of children are registered in early childhood development centres. In rural areas, the percentage is often zero.* For years, the country has been struggling to improve the numbers. That’s why, with your help, we’ve worked with the government to bring early learning to three state teachers and early childhood development trainers’ institutes (including the national institute of primary school teachers) and 16 schools. We want this amazing approach to learning (developed by Toronto’s Hincks-Dellcrest Centre for children ages birth to six), to extend far beyond the areas where we work.

Your support has also made it possible for us to adapt the original Learning Through Play approach to help women during pregnancy as well as older children.

We call it Learning Through Play+. So far, you’ve helped create more than 115 Learning Through Play community groups that bring together 3,458 parents of 6,907 children up to age eight.

As I wave goodbye to Nassi I’m so thankful to you for giving her, and so many

other children here, a better chance to succeed in school and life. Your gift will truly benefit each child for a lifetime. Thank you.

*National Program of Economic and Social Development 2016 – 2020

SMALL VOICES, BIG DREAMS

48% of children surveyed in Burkina Faso say what they **LOVE MOST** about school is working with their teachers 

.....
In Canada,

48% of children said **BEING WITH FRIENDS** 

is what they love about school



Protecting children from abuse

By William Anim-Dankwa | CCFC communications manager, Ghana

I'm standing in the middle of a large, dusty schoolyard talking to a slim boy named Kofi. He looks up at me shyly and says: "I was once beaten severely by my teacher. He was angry because I came to school late."

Kofi doesn't talk much about how he was beaten, but I've been told it left large, painful bruises on both of his hands that took more than a week to heal. During that time, school authorities did nothing. The teacher, who has since left the school, wasn't disciplined and Kofi returned to class the next day. That was three years ago.

A bell rings for the morning assembly, and Kofi turns away to join his friends. The warm, friendly laughter among classmates reflects a positive change that can be seen in dozens of schools in Ghana because of caring donors like you.

Since 2011, CCFC and UNICEF have been working together to create school and community child protection committees in 60 communities, and to raise awareness about the right of children to be safe from violence. Without your support, many

children in Ghana would still fear being hurt.

The last national study on violence against women and children revealed 61 percent of Ghanaians believe beating children is acceptable (UNICEF, 2010). In the past six years, child protection committees, made up of students, teachers and parent committee members, have helped end the abuse of more than 100 children through community and school interventions. Now teachers are instructed on how to provide appropriate discipline, and abuse is reported to authorities when needed.

“

My body hurt so bad.

— Kofi, 12 (pictured)

The school assembly finishes and the voices of children singing "we are marching to our classes," can be heard faintly as a bright red, yellow and green Ghana flag flutters on a bamboo pole in the empty schoolyard.

SMALL VOICES, BIG DREAMS

35% of children surveyed in Ghana say being safe in school means

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

are well-behaved and obey school rules

In Canada, **47%** of children said being safe means students are not at risk of

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL ABUSE





Encouraging creative learning

By Lipi Jobson | CCFC communications manager, India

Children crouch on the floor in two groups searching scattered letters to try to make a sentence using as many words as possible. Swathi, an outgoing 10-year-old with a huge smile, cheers on her team. *“Sikiram! Kanupudi!”* (Fast! Find it!) she shouts.

The activity is not one you see often in schools in India where memorization and repetition fill most hours. Nor are the activities that follow: drawing, singing and sharing poems and proverbs. Even the teaching materials are different, with puzzles to learn languages and hip hop games to learn math.

The classroom is one of more than 85 creative learning centres in India you support for children aged six to 16. In addition to a regular curriculum focused on math, science and spelling, each after-school program offers sports, dance and the arts to encourage children to analyze, evaluate, question and, most importantly, create and innovate.

It’s a remarkable achievement you’ve made possible. It’s changing the way

children see the world — and themselves!

Many of the 3,200 children attending the creative learning centres are the first in their family to go to school, and parents, like Swathi’s mom, are seeing what a difference it can make.



I will teach my students the way I have been taught, through songs, games and riddles.

— Swathi, 10 (pictured left)

“She is allowed to follow her passion,” says her mom. Swathi is quick to chime in: “The centre helps me to think differently, focus on my goals and gain more knowledge. It helps to shape my career in teaching. The students who struggle in regular class learn the same subject



JOIN THE FUN
bit.ly/CCFCreative

easily here.”

A little spark of inspiration can turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. Who knows what little Swathi, and all of the 3,200 children who attend, might grow up to achieve because of you!

**SMALL VOICES,
BIG DREAMS**

35% of children surveyed in India say what they love most about school is

LEARNING NEW THINGS
VERSUS

26% of children in Canada



Preparing for emergencies

By Rosanna Menchaca | CCFC communications manager, Paraguay*

The school is hushed as dozens of children sit on the ground, small white boards on their knees, dipping their brushes in jars of yellow, red and black paint. Thirteen-year-old Adalia, long hair swept up in a ponytail, writes “Ruta de Evacuación” (evacuation route) in neat lettering under a drawing of an arrow.

In another part of the school, nine-year-old Marisol runs outside and shows a visitor a map she helped paint. It’s an evacuation plan.

You are the reason children like Adalia and Marisol feel safe.

With your support, Christian Children’s Fund of Canada launched Paraguay’s first *Safe Educational Community* guide in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the National Secretariat of Emergency, and a national network for emergencies. It’s part of a plan to manage and reduce risks in schools, including flooding in South America caused by the El Niño climate-warming cycle.

In the past few years, flooding has affected more than 17,000 students.

It’s hurt an education system already struggling to meet the needs of 1.5-million children with a deficit of 14,000 classrooms. With the help of our local partners, teachers and students at 149 schools have been trained in emergency preparation and response and created signage. More than 300 children and adults living in an area most affected by flooding were given emergency kits.

“

Now we feel safe.

— Marisol, 9 (pictured)

You’re also helping to keep kids safe in other ways. We’ve created an educational guide to help people identify, monitor and restore the rights of children and youth whose rights may be violated. The *Traffic Light for Protecting Children’s Rights*, developed with the National Secretariat of Children and Adolescents of the Republic



HEAR FROM CHILDREN
bit.ly/CCFCsafe

of Paraguay and local partner Global Infancia, is now a part of all of our programs in Paraguay and used by national organizations that work directly with children.

Thank you for all you do to keep children in Paraguay safe!

*with notes from Martin Sanchez

SMALL VOICES, BIG DREAMS

57% of children surveyed in Paraguay say being safe in school means

SECURITY MEASURES 

are in place to keep students protected from harm **VERSUS**

42% of children in Canada



Inspiring students to stay in school

By Karla Ramírez | CCFC monitoring and evaluation officer, Nicaragua



MEET BETZY
bit.ly/CCFCBetzy

Axel (pictured right) sits down at a brightly lit university library in Managua. It's silent except for the occasional laugh. He turns to me with a friendly smile. “[Growing up, my family didn’t have much] but every time I saw a computer, I wanted to know everything,” he says.

The bright and outgoing 21-year-old is in the final year of a four-year university program in Systems and Technologies Engineering, and he has a degree in Leadership and Political Management. “JUPAC changed my life completely,” he shares. “Without it, I would not have realized the importance of study.”

Axel is referring to a youth leadership program you helped create in Nicaragua six years ago. It encourages youth to focus on their education and contribute to their community through local activities, workshops and events. JUPAC creates a safe place for children to socialize, support each other in their school studies and be positive leaders in the community.

In a country where there are few job opportunities — and only five out of 10

children complete primary school* — motivating youth to stay in school and give back to their community is incredibly important. Your support is inspiring kids to see beyond poverty and to dream big.

“I am currently studying international relations and foreign trade,” shares Irina, 22, a serious and soft-spoken youth. “I like this career, because I can help inside and outside my country.”

Rodrigo, 18, another member of JUPAC, is studying architecture at university. And, 16-year-old Héctor, in his fourth year of high school, plans to study accounting.

JUPAC changed 17-year-old Betzy’s life, too. “JUPAC has been my school, because in my family it’s thought that just men study or work. JUPAC gave me a space to feel valued, because my ideas are heard.”

Before I finish chatting with Axel, he says something which sums up the gift you give each day. “JUPAC is a community space in which the lives of many young people without opportunities are transformed.”

*Inter-American Development Bank, 2014



I've met many people who've inspired me to be a successful woman.

— Betzy, 17 (pictured above)



A PHOTO ESSAY OF *Special moments*

We asked six people to share a favourite photo from their time in the field ...

DEAN CAMPBELL

child sponsor

GHANA | Feb 19-28, 2016

“ The people in Ghana have changed my life in more ways than I can imagine. I was blown away by the simplicity of their everyday lives and their gratefulness for every little thing they have. Water was a major issue, especially clean water. I watched as mothers handed their children small bowls filled with brown water they had fetched from nearly dried up riverbeds — the same riverbeds shared by roaming cattle. This was a devastating sight. I was equally amazed by all of the small miracles I saw. CCFC has built water-filtration systems, wells, holding tanks, clinics and schools! I am truly lucky to be a part of it all, no matter how small my part is.



MARCOS

child sponsored by Sean Madsen

PARAGUAY | Sept 21, 2016

“ My name is Marcos. I chose this photo because the three of us are there: Sean, Sammy (Sean's guide dog) and me. It is special because we are all three together. When my sponsor visited, I was very happy and excited, and a little nervous, too. What I remember most of what he said to me when he was here is that I need to overcome barriers and pursue my dreams, and not let anyone tell me that I can't.



JOHNNY SARKER

CCFC disaster risk manager, Canada

BURKINA FASO | Nov 13-19, 2016

“ Last November I led a workshop in Burkina Faso on child protection in emergencies. We focused on ways we can best protect vulnerable children in emergency-relief situations such as floods and typhoons. The workshop brought together an amazing group of CCFC staff from our Burkina Faso and Ghana offices, as well as local partners and a few participants from other NGOs. When I look at this photo I'm inspired by everyone's enthusiasm, ideas and passion to work together to keep children and families safe.





To see daily photos of special moments like these, follow us at [instagram.com/ccfcanada](https://www.instagram.com/ccfcanada).

JAMES DUTHIE (*Hockey on TSN* host)
CCFC volunteer ambassador & child sponsor
NICARAGUA | Nov 30–Dec 7, 2016

“ I met so many amazing people on my visit in Nicaragua, but these two 17-year-olds really touched my heart. Harvey and Raquel are passionate youth leaders who volunteer in their community to help other children. Their own lives are not easy. They come from very poor families. But, you'd never know it from their incredible attitudes, drive to help others and big ambitions. Their energy, enthusiasm and determination to go to university and better their lives radiates a hope and confidence that inspires everyone around them — it's truly heartwarming.



RACHEL BONNETTA (*FOX Sports* host)
CCFC volunteer ambassador, child sponsor & Community Rise donor
INDIA | Dec 14–24, 2016

“ When I think of one photo that captures the essence of my visit to India, it would have to be of a personal moment I shared with a group of women in a village just outside of Madurai. On this particular day, I was feeling overwhelmed by the challenges children have to face in some of these remote communities. These women came to cheer me up because they saw that I was sad. This photo reminds me that light can shine in the darkest of places and because of the love that these women have, any challenges can be overcome.



ADEY ASFAW
CCFC grants compliance manager, Canada
ETHIOPIA | Nov 29, 2016–Jan 23, 2017

“ Ethiopians may live in one of the poorest places in the world, but they are beautiful, loving and incredibly generous. People might not have eaten a meal, or have clean water to drink, yet they enjoy sharing every little thing. The kids' eyes are bright and full of hope, just like this beautiful girl I met in a school that CCFC donors support. The children were very happy to receive books and learning materials for their class. They're excited to go to school and determined to be good students!





Celebrating children's birthdays



As a valued Community Rise donor you've already made an incredible impact on children's lives. You've helped vulnerable children and entire communities around the world through your generous contributions. Thank you!

You can bring even more joy to a community by helping CCFC recognize children's birthdays.

Sadly, for many children in impoverished parts of the world, birthdays pass with little or no fanfare. Many children never get to mark this milestone in their lives.

For a child struggling in severe poverty, a birthday gift can be a bright ray of hope. Your generosity can make a world of difference and your kindness will be cherished and remembered for many years to come.

Thank you for helping to make children's birthdays — and futures — a little brighter!

You can send a gift at ccfcanada.ca/GiftForBirthday, call us at **1-800-263-5437** to speak to our donor relations team or email us at donor-relations@ccfcanada.ca.



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