

1 January 2018

"May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy..." - Psalm 72:4

A Tragedy Interrupted.

Kamil's Story, by Jim La Rose

Confusion, fear, uncertainty swirled inside little Kamil's four-year-old heart and mind. Why was this happening? Where was he going? How long would he be gone?

In hindsight, it was best that Kamil didn't know the answers to these questions.

Poland

Kamil and his sister were removed from their family home and taken to a Polish *dom dziecka* or "children's home."

A *dom dziecka* is not an orphanage, since most *dom dziecka* kids still have at least one living parent.

But, because the parents have been deemed unwilling, unable, or unfit to provide proper care, the Polish court has removed these kids from their family homes and placed them in state-run facilities that might best be defined as "institutionalized foster homes." As such, these children are wards of the state and known as "social orphans."

Despite good intentions, a *dom dziecka* cannot replace a loving family. An article published in 2007 states:

- **90%** of adults who were raised in the *dom dziecka* system struggle in many areas in life.
- **60%** of Poland's homeless were raised in a *dom dziecka*.
- **more than 90%** of *dom dziecka* children have difficulties establishing healthy adult relationships.

It should be emphasized that the administration and staff at Kamil's *dom dziecka* work hard and truly care about the children, but there are just too many kids and too few resources, which creates the opportunity for an outside volunteer.

I (Jim) have volunteered at Kamil's *dom dziecka* for over 14 years. As far as I know, I am one of the only ones in my area who does this, although there are many opportunities.

My official roles have varied, but the one constant has been to build relationships with kids who are tragically slipping through the cracks of Polish society. Kamil is an example of this.

Note to the reader: The following is specific to Kamil, but Kamil's story is not, by any means, an isolated case. In fact, his experience is very representative of the many children who currently live in Polish dom dziecka.

Kamil and his sister lived in a *dom dziecka* for 4 years. They were then placed with a foster family, but 2 years later, this foster care ended. Kamil and his sister were returned to the *dom dziecka* system, this time

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to the dom dziecka where I volunteer. (Try to imagine the hardened, self-survival instinct that fragile young children develop when uprooted over and over.)

Kamil still has a relationship with his mom, but, he stiffens and looks away when speaking about his father. Kamil once told me, "My dad is bad!!" Kamil's voice then trailed off as he added one more sentence.... but it would break Kamil's confidence to print the heart-breaking content of his trailed-off comment.

To help Kamil's perspective, I once very tenderly told Kamil that our Heavenly Father works hard to bring good things out of bad situations. I didn't try to minimize the awful things that Kamil has experienced, but I did ask Kamil who he had met because he lives at the dom dziecka. He thought for a moment, and then smiled as he answered, "You, Jim." I assured Kamil that knowing him was a huge blessing back to me, too.

Even so, Kamil desperately wants to live with his mom. He fumes in anger that the court has thus far refused to let this happen. And understandably so.

Living at dom dzieckas has created a hole in Kamil's life: he lacks that one caring adult who is uniquely committed to him. (Again, try to imagine a child's life without the presence of an older, protective guardian... day after day after day.)

In Kamil's case, though, the Lord has seemingly provided something that most dom dziecka kids do not have.... that being an adult who IS uniquely committed to him.

That's the role I believe the Lord is offering me in Kamil's life.

Kamil is now 12 years old. As the Lord's representative in Kamil's life, I have two main goals.

1. To help Kamil establish and nurture a personal relationship with his Heavenly Father through faith in Jesus Christ.
2. To replace as many missing "family" experiences as possible.

Kamil and I began our special connection in the spring of 2017.

Last summer, Kamil accompanied me to our church's kids' camp. Kamil heard the gospel message, and in the privacy of his own heart, asked Jesus to be his Savior.

After camp, Kamil spent a week at my place. The first rule in my home for visiting teenagers is "Never Be Hungry." Kamil freely opened the refrigerator or cupboards many times every day. Some of his favorites, which he wouldn't normally have at the dom dziecka, were kiwis, hamburgers, Asian egg rolls, strawberries, corn-on-the-cob, Sloppy Joes, and cold cereal and milk. Kamil also loved using my kitchen blender to make fruit-flavored milkshakes.

Ways to Help Jim Interrupt Tragedies

Weekly Care Packages and Outing

Jim takes juice, fruit, and snacks on his weekly visits to the dom dziecka. On most visits, he also takes the kids around the corner for a hamburgers or fries.

One Week:

\$70

Quality Shoe Fund

The dom dziecka's limited resources make it a challenge to buy quality **shoes** for the kids. A good, quality pair of shoes protects their feet and makes these forgotten children feel presentable and good about themselves. Jim will apply any gifts wisely and responsibly.

Shoes:

\$85-95

Groceries for Former Dom Dziecka Resident

Daniel is a former dom dziecka resident that still has an ongoing special connection with Jim. Daniel, who now has a wife and two kids, struggles financially. Jim takes this family grocery shopping once a month.

One Month:

\$150-200

Support Jim Learning Polish

Jim mostly blesses these needy Poles from his own income. For one year, in order to become independent in his Polish language skills, Jim is stepping back from his supplemental income sources. Jim is not financially desperate, but things are much tighter than usual. Any assistance would be appreciated.

Any Amount
is Helpful!

Jim is also willing to send a personal report to each donor who requests to know how any given donation was specifically applied.

Kamil and I made our week together an in-city "family" vacation. We went to a trampoline park, spent three afternoons at our local water park, and made four trips to Kamil's' favorite, the go-karts. We bought a basketball and spent hours playing sports together. Kamil helped with household chores, like mowing my lawn, and, because I am a teacher at heart, Kamil also had specially prepared English lessons.

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From the Director

Dear Team: Interrupting the Cycle of Poverty

It's a new year! We all enjoy the beauty of a fresh start. Who doesn't look forward to the new freshness of a warm spring day?

ITMI is excited for what God will do this next year as we all seek to serve our Lord, hand in hand touching those that have so little and yet who are so willing to do their part, get their hands dirty and empower and strengthen our on the ground partners in India, Africa and Eastern Europe.

Before we close the book on 2017, allow me to share with you a special bit of news about our partner in Kabwe, Zambia.

Eugene and Audrey Kalunga have for 20 years encouraged and provided young rural Zambian families a chance to launch their children outside of the basic impoverished existence of a dusty, grass roofed, mud hut village. Education, both spiritual and academic are the only real means of stopping the vacuum of the black hole existence in destitute rural Africa. Almost 18 years ago ITMI helped Eugene move the 50 some children he was teaching from his small African home's front room into an old Zambian railroad office building that was being auctioned. We - many of you - helped Eugene acquire the building and turn it into a place for quality Christian education.

Now, 20 years later, Eugene and Audrey and their staff at **Excellence Christian Academy** have trained many, many children. Those children have been changed and renewed in both head and heart. Many of those children have now proven the strength of their character and the depth of their quality education by assuming positions of authority and importance – all the way to the Zambian school department in the country's government. **Eugene has been pleaded with to start more and more elementary schools in Zambia. Now, with ITMI's help, Eugene has done it!**

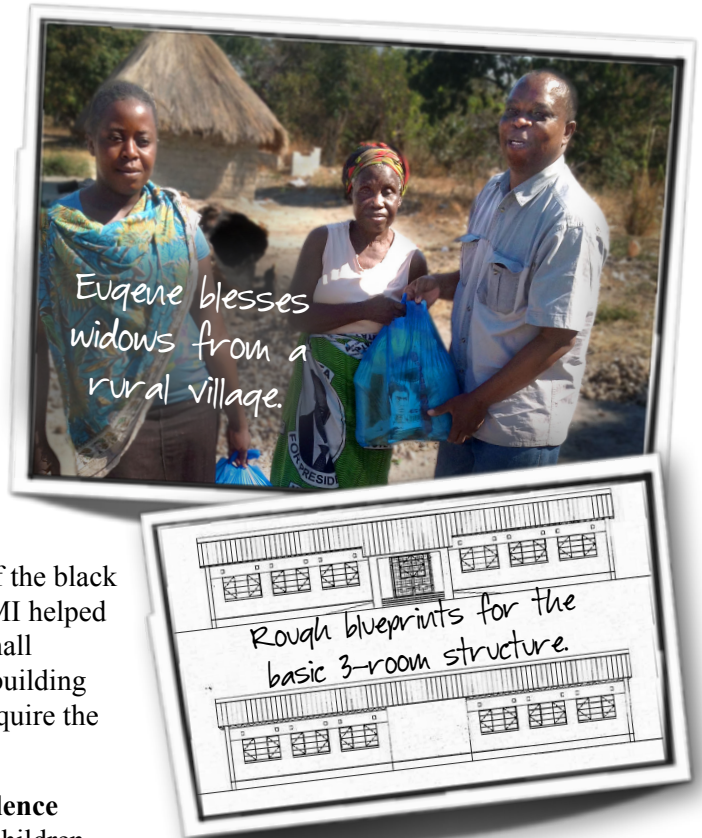
For years now, Eugene and his evangelism outreach team have gone on missions trips into the Zambian bush. They go where many big church leaders don't want to go. You see, there isn't money to be made there. It is an actual sacrifice for those that go. They have now planted a church in a remote, rural village called **Lubemba Village, Kabowa**. There are now 62 children that have committed to come and be spiritually educated at this small church. These children, their parents and the department of Education are asking for ...more. They want their children to have an academic education. Yet there are no schools for many miles, and the parents have no vehicles - except maybe a bicycle, and those are even scarce.

As you read this, Eugene is directing the builder to build a small, simple, basic 3-room school. He is enlarging his original goal since there are 40 or 50 more children in this village that don't yet come to the church, but need to know Jesus and their 1-2-3s and A-B-Cs. ITMI and our partners have helped Eugene realize his fervent prayers for a school. The government committed to provide funds for a teacher if Eugene could get the building built.

If you want to purchase a few desks and tables and chairs, we still need some help. It will take about \$2167 to outfit this under-construction school building with seats for the children, desk or tables for teacher(s) and a desk and chair for a small office.

Thank you for making Christian education in Zambia possible. We are now, after all these years, seeing the ripple effects that will continue into eternity!

In His Service,



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With school soon approaching, Kamil and I spent a day school shopping. After purchasing new clothes, a school backpack, and two pairs of good shoes, Kamil was proudly and confidently ready for the first day of school. It was a wonderful week together.

To obtain permission for continued weekends together, the dom dziecka director wrote a letter to the Polish court asking that Kamil be allowed to visit me any time that Kamil wasn't in school. Within 24 hours, we had the judge's "Yes" answer.

This was truly the Lord's miracle hand at work!!

Since August, Kamil has averaged two weekends a month with me, and he now refers to my place as "our" home.

Kamil and I pray together before he goes to bed. When Kamil is with me on Sundays, he and I attend church together. He especially likes the praise and worship music. While driving in the car together, Kamil freely sings along as I attempt to sing praise songs in my painfully limited Polish.

A dom dziecka caretaker told me Kamil's behavior has dramatically improved. Kamil's school grades are better, and Kamil's English teacher especially noted a "sudden improvement" in Kamil's English language skills.



Kamil has a very generous heart, but he's rarely had the chance to buy Christmas presents for other people. Kamil told me that two years ago he was able to save 2 Polish zloty (about 55¢). He bought one chocolate bar, wrapped it up, and gave it to his family for Christmas. It was the only gift he could afford.

This past December, wanting to bring some "family normalcy" to Kamil's life, I offered him the

option to buy Christmas gifts for anyone of his choice. We set a budget for each gift, and went Christmas shopping together. He made very thoughtful choices. He was so excited as he carefully wrapped each present. It was truly heart-warming to see the child-like delight on Kamil's face as he surprised 12 different people with his personally-selected Christmas gifts.

Whole-life redemption is a step-by-step process, but the Lord is truly restoring Kamil's lost childhood, building a positive future for Kamil, and most importantly, Kamil's name is now written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Yet, there is still much more to be done.

Please pray the Lord uses me as His hands and heart as He brings to completion the good work begun not only in Kamil's life, but also in the lives of other Polish children in this sphere of ministry.

-Jim La Rose

For Praise

1. Jim La Rose - Poland - Jim's continued impact in the individual lives of marginalized and forgotten Poles.
2. Richard Nungesser - Poland - Just over 2.5K USD raised by Bread of Life for sick children in Poland in December!
3. Eugene Kalunga - Zambia - Provision for the new village school, giving children hope and a future.
4. Paul and Molly - India - Entire family of 25 made a Christmas visit to the slum where the new borehole was installed.
5. Gerhard le Roux - South Africa - Provision of funds needed for clothing the family and necessary medical care.

For Prayer

1. Johan Leach - Zambia - The provision of a motor for the gifted boat, increasing evangelists access to cross the river.
2. David and Taru Kumar - India - Two teachers needed to help outreach in Muslim slum through Christian Education.
3. Piotr Zaremba - Poland - Continued prayer for growth of the new Bible-centered elementary school.
4. Paul and Molly - India - Guidance and provision for opening a training school for pastors in Southern India.
5. Charl van Wyk - Zimbabwe - As regimes change, pray for the new leaders to follow Biblical principles.
6. Steve and Kent Reisenauer - Uganda - Fruitful ministry opportunities in Uganda and South Sudan this month.
7. Tomek Jezyk - Poland - Prayer and financial support allowing him to continue doing what God has placed on his heart.



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