

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

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What Stone Hill's Early Childhood Development Center means to

Akhanyile, Buhle and Dweethu



SOUTH AFRICA

Living in a Shack

Stone Hill sounds like it could be the name of a planned neighborhood, like one you or I might live in. But in reality, **Stone Hill** or *Kliphuewel* in the local tongue, is just the opposite.

It is a place where those too poor to live in a city set up pieces of tin and other materials they could find that would provide them and their family shelter and protection.

Not welcome inside the organized streets and neighborhoods of planned and regulated cities, these marginalized families squat outside

the city of Durbanville, South Africa. It is rare to find a traditional family structure. It's not uncommon for children to be raised by a single parent, sometimes with the help of extended family. It is rare for a child's mother and father to be married and maintain a traditional family structure.

Living in a shack is a hard life. Many of the shacks are one room structures with dirt floors. If they don't have a mattress - and many don't - residents sleep on blankets on the cold ground. Everyday tasks are extra challenging - these families often lack tables or surfaces for necessities like cooking or doing homework. Students have a longer commute to school than their peers, and are often forced to learn in a

language that is not their first language. The already formidable challenges of school - understanding concepts, completing homework, finding transport to school and showing up on time, lack of supplied materials and textbooks, underpaid teachers whose attendance is inconsistent - are all multiplied by the challenges Stone Hill students face when they return home.

Obtaining meals is a challenge, as many families can't afford them. Often, young children are responsible to watch younger siblings, half-siblings and step-siblings until late into the night. For many, they would need to do this because their

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guardian or parent, often single, is working long hours.

Sewage often flows freely through the “streets” of the settlement, where children roam, often barefoot.

Medical challenges are exacerbated by the need to pay for public, unreliable transport into the city, where they are often turned away because health facilities are filled to the absolute max early each morning before they can manage the trip.

Unsupervised at the Dump

Adults are occupied with the daunting task of survival. On top of that, many are unable to function normally under the trauma they’ve lived through. While their marginalized parents cope with these things, even very small children are often unsupervised.

“The children spend time at a dumping site,” writes **Olga Tshikovi**, who works alongside ITMI’s **Charl van Wyk** and has lived in Stone Hill. “This is all children can do when they don’t go to any form of school or preschool.”

The lack of supervision is dangerous. Violence and lack of care for others and life isn’t uncommon among the residents of Stone Hill. Still, small children from families who squat outside of the city of Durbanville face an even more pressing danger.

Malnutrition

Research tells us that when a child doesn’t receive proper nutrition for the first 1000 days of life, it can interfere with normal development, impacting the rest of that child’s life, including the ability to understand spiritual concepts.

This is an issue for so many born to families living in Stone Hill.

For many families, their dismal income doesn’t provide enough for all the nutrition a growing child should receive. They struggle to find work and put food on the table.

The Early Childhood Development Center (*The Creche*)

ITMI supporters helped build the creche, or the **Early Childhood Development Center** in response to these issues in Stone Hill.

Our partners recognized this as a way to show the people of Stone Hill they were cared for, to protect small children who were vulnerable, be agents of justice in the face of gross injustice and to shape minds with Biblical principles from a young age.

Lwazikazi, a believer living in Stone Hill is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the *creche*.

The center was one of several outreach programs in Stone Hill that work together to demonstrate and declare the Gospel to the hurting in the settlement. Other outreaches include a medical clinic run by **Dr. Bradley Kuhn** (Charl

van Wyk’s brother-in-law), church services, a soup kitchen, a tutoring center opened by ITMI’s **Cindi Parris** and several youth programs and Bible studies.



Akhanyile: The Results of Proper Nutrition and Care

Asanda was 17 when she became pregnant with Akhanyile. She was supposed to be in 8th grade that year.

When our partners learned that Asanda wanted to finish high school, they took her and 3-month-old Akhanyile into a safe house that was established to give the young women of the community a safe place to sleep if needed.

This is often a need in Stone Hill for one reason or another. Young girls find themselves without a safe place to stay due to conflict with a parent’s abusive significant other or extreme poverty.

Akhanyile started attending the Early Childhood Development Center or, as Stone Hill residents call it, *the Creche*, when he was 3 months old.

At the *creche*, the growing toddlers receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Now 3 years old, Akhanyile’s development is right on par for his age - a unique accomplishment for a family in Stone Hill, where most struggle to provide the nutrition necessary for normal development in the first 1000 days of life.

Akhanyile’s family couldn’t afford the Early Childhood Development Center’s minimal fees, but he is able to play in this safe, stimulating and Christ-centered environment every day because of the generosity of others.



Buhle: Stability During Tumultuous Times

When Buhle first came to the Early Childhood Development Center in Stone Hill, South Africa, her mother, Katie, was fortunate enough to have a job.

She depended on the *creche* to watch Buhle while she was at work. When Katie lost her job, Buhle stopped attending the creche for awhile.

After that, Katie could only afford for Buhle to attend sporadically because the only work she could get was seasonal work at a grape farm.

Eventually, Katie was offered some help with the minimal fee so that Buhle could attend regularly. A few months ago, four-year-old Buhle lost her mother and is now staying with her father.

When Buhle comes to the Early Childhood Development Center, she enjoys playing on the slide and coloring, basic childhood opportunities most children in Stone Hill don’t experience except when they attend the *creche*.



Owenthu: Improving Motor Skills

Owenthu's mother, Sibulelo, was well into her teens when Owenthu was born. At first, Sibulelo's mother, Ntibeleng, was Owenthu's primary caregiver, because Sibulelo couldn't do it.

Now, Owenthu lives with her mother and her grandmother. Owenthu's grandmother does work three days a week, but it only just provides enough for food for the family, so Owenthu, too, is one of the children who is helped by the generosity of others.

"It was such a great excitement for her and her family to be able to attend the *creche*," Olga remembers.

Owenthu couldn't even hold a crayon when she first arrived, but her fine motor skills have developed well during her time at the Early Childhood Development Center.

Owenthu loves singing and dancing on the soft mat and large open area available at the *creche*.

Even though they only have it once a year - she gets very excited about bouncing on the jumping castle!

The Early Childhood Development Center is a crucial element of the outreaches in Stone Hill.

"There are many [Stone Hill] children in this situation and we are doing what we can to [try to] ensure that every child goes to a daycare or *crèche*. Starting where we are, with what we have," writes Olga.

The foundational reason it is important for the children of Stone Hill to be protected and properly nourished is that helping families in this way demonstrates to the families in Stone Hill the value their Creator places on each person in a way that is much more effective than just words could be.

This demonstration of value stands in direct conflict with what many believe about themselves because of the way their culture generally views them. Understanding this Biblical principal is a key stepping stone to understanding a Savior who pursues

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Inside the *creche*, children rest safely.



Sewage flows on walkways between the shacks in Stone Hill.



Above: The resident of a tiny shack in Stone Hill attempts to get his clothes clean.



Buhle develops fine motor skills in the safe environment of the *creche*.



Akhanyile and Lwazikazi, who operates the safe house for young girls.

David and Taru's 2020 Police Precinct Outreach is Still Yielding Fruit!

ITMI's **David and Taru Kumar** do own a small vehicle, but Taru doesn't know how to drive it. She walks or rides the bus for transit in their city of Bangalore, India.

Not long ago, Taru was on the street when she happened to see one of the police officers who belonged to the precinct where Taru and David did an outreach event at the end of 2020.

Mid-2020, thousands of rioters descended on this police precinct. They burned buildings, vehicles and personal property of police personnel.

The police are generally feared and despised by the marginalized. The precinct was one near David and Taru's ministry area, one they pass when they make the almost daily trips to Deepam Center, where they share Jesus with impoverished Muslim women and children living in Modi Road slum.

With the help of ITMI supporters, in August of 2020 David and Taru honored the members of the precinct with shawls (a sign of honor in their culture to some and to others, fine

cloth usable for a customary Indian garment) and offered them copies of the New Testament, which many of them accepted.

The on-duty officer was overjoyed to see Taru. She told Taru that she and her family had been reading the New Testament and it had prompted them to begin attending church!

It has been over a year since David and Taru conducted that initial outreach, but the Lord was taking what was offered and working in the

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Let's Help Tell Them About Jesus

...While We Still Can!

ROMANIA - UKRAINE

ITMI's Adi and Ema Ban returned to Romania after ministering among Romanian believers in the US. Many of the churches they visited were hungry for the Biblical wisdom they have to offer in the area of family life, parenting and relationships. The Q and A sessions lasted hours over their allotted times!

The Bans also spent some time strategizing and praying with ITMI Director, **Steve Evers** about the Lord's direction for their ministry during the time he spent with them in Florida.

In recent years, Adi and Ema have visited Ukraine to encourage the believers living in the areas that have been under Russian attack for years now. Their Young Couples' Fellowship groups have supported some of the faithful pastors and their outreaches to the hurting in their areas. Due to the hardships the locals are facing, many are open to the message of these churches.

As Russian troops increase near the border of Ukraine, the political situation seems to be intensifying. Amid circulating rumors of a Russian invasion following the Beijing Winter Olympics in February 2022, the Bans' contacts are busily reaching everyone they can with the Good News. Their desire to see people come to Christ is intensified as the future of the everyone living there is more uncertain than ever.

One of these pastors is prayerfully hoping to reach families in his area through a winter break camp for children and youth. This type of outreach is one that has a good track record for effectiveness in this area.

While these people can still be reached, we can help Adi and Ema provide Pastor Ilya Natalcinko and



Dasha, 15, was killed by a bomb in her backyard just months after attending a church camp in her Ukrainian city, where she was believed to have responded to Jesus.

his church with the funds they need to put on a winter break camp. A gift of \$17 provides the meals and craft materials needed for one student to attend camp.

The Bans also have a large personal need ahead. Due to a hereditary condition that causes the supporting structures of the teeth to degenerate, Adi is experiencing pain and missing some teeth. He will need implants, but before implants can be done, bone augmentation is required.

Having this dental work done now not only addresses pain that Adi experiences, but also helps prevent further bone loss. The Bans are looking at over \$20,000USD in dental bills to cover this work that is necessary in the near future.

As a missionary, Adi isn't an employee where he can benefit from group health insurance. The Bans, if they had the funds, would need to pay these out-of-pocket expenses from their missionary income. Please pray with us about this need, and consider helping the Bans if you are able.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

From the Director



DEAR TEAM: The Impact of Your Influence

Have you heard of Ted Geisel? I'm pretty sure that you have heard of him, just not by this name. Ted was somewhat entrapped on a ship as it crossed the Atlantic on stormy seas in the fall of 1935. Eight days of agonizing monotony combined with the ever present rhythmic thumping of the ship's engines was driving Ted crazy. The story goes, Ted's wife finally suggested that he distract himself by writing silly rhymes to the rhythm of the engines' thumping. This idea from Ted's wife changed the lives of millions of people, including Ted's.

Once off the ship Ted had this rhyme that he couldn't get out of his mind. Six-months later Ted Geisel, the children's author you know as Dr. Seuss, completed his first children's book. Ted or Dr. Seuss later shared that "I wrote the book to get it out of my head."

Ted's book didn't sell. Twenty-seven rejection later, he was headed home to burn the manuscript. That is when he ran into an old college buddy from Dartmouth who was the Juvenile Editor for Vanguard Press. They say twenty minutes later Ted had a book deal.

It has also been said that since those irritating ship engines in 1935, Dr. Seuss has sold over 600,000 children's books. I would like to adjust that to say, without the help of Ted's wife and the old class mate, Marshall "Mike" McClintock, the "Cat in the Hat" and all the other well-known children's books would not have been.

My encouragement today is to not focus on the books Ted produced for generations of children and their parents, but on what Ted's wife and classmate did to help Ted become something that he never knew was possible.

God uses the difficult times to help us become all that He created us to be. He also uses us to help others see all that God intended them to be. We get to pour into people like Piotr, Andrew, Adi, Ema, Paul, Johan, Molly, Charl, Kelly, Cherise, Fifi, Gerhard, Olga, David, Taru, and many more.

Culture in India pounds constantly like the never-ending thump of the ocean liner's engines. The never-ending cultural drone that you cannot step out of your predetermined caste or social status. This is crushing to the minds and lives of most all Indians. Those in the lower castes don't dare to rise above any number of understood life expectations. The wealthy or more fortunate don't feel the need to reach down and help the lower caste dwellers since they are in this caste because they "deserve" to be there.

David and Taru continue to minister in their God-ordained areas of ministry, both in the Muslim slum and to rural, untrained pastors who desperately want to know more of God's Word and wisdom. Yet they are always willing to stretch beyond their "normal" acceptable ministry areas whenever God leads us to encourage and suggest new opportunities for God to be known in their land.

The influence and help provided by ITMI and our supporters, daily plays out in the lives of ITMI's national partners from Eastern Europe through Africa and into India and beyond. Thank you for being one of the ones that enable those on the ground in each of these areas to experience and share God's blessing and His provision when they step out in faith.

Six hundred thousand books later for Ted, and many souls and changed lives later for ITMI - because we all did what God called us to do. Blessings and flourishing to you, amidst and in spite of the world's constant whirring and pounding in 2022. Our God reigns and nothing can stop His plans.

In His Service,



David shares with women from the Muslim slum. The women are graduating from David and Taru's training program where the women learn to sew.

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a loving relationship with them. The people of Stone Hill need to know they are cared about, both by the Lord and His people.

Partnering with the van Wyks, Kuhns, Parrises, Olga, Lwazikazi and the team of believers working in Stone Hill is a great way to be part of Biblically-based, Christ-centered transformational programs that are reaching the marginalized, impoverished and hurting.

It's the beginning of a new year.

Perhaps the Lord is calling you to commit to a monthly donation of \$28 or a one time donation of \$336 that would extend the benefits of the *creche* to another child in need for a whole year. If that's not you, would you commit to praying for the children that attend the creche and their families once a week? Ask Jesus to work in their lives, to protect them and bring them and their families into a saving relationship with Him.

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers

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lives of this family that entire time, unbeknownst to the Kumars or to us!

David and Taru were already planning additional outreaches for early December (2021). One of these outreaches was to be at the same precinct. Another would include the impoverished, broken families of the children who attend Deepam Primary School, daily learning from Taru and her dedicated staff about Jesus and being prepared for grade school. A

third outreach was planned for the impoverished and oppressed women who come to Deepam center to learn to sew, in hopes of earning a small amount of income to help their families.

New Testaments will be given to each of these groups. Join David and Taru in praying for the recipients, and asking the Lord to use His Word to reach many through this endeavor!

-Summer Kelley, Steve Evers



Taru teaches children from impoverished, marginalized families at Deepam Primary School in Modi Road slum.

FOR PRAISE

1. India - Kumars - How the Lord has used them in the lives of police precinct personnel and others.
2. Romania - Bans - A rich time in the United States ministering in Romanian churches.
3. Zambia - ECA - Grade seven students passed exams and are moving on to secondary school.
4. Poland - Nungessers - Successful surgery for Richard in December and continued healing.

FOR PRAYER

1. India - Kumars - A saving response to Jesus in the hearts of those reached during December.
2. South Africa - Stone Hill - That the families reached by the *creche* might give their lives to Jesus.
3. Ukraine - Bans - Provision of funding for Christmas Break camps and the Gospel message to reach many.
4. Romania - Bans - Provision for Adi's upcoming dental procedure.
5. Poland - Tomek - Ukrainians living in Poland affected by political situation with Russia.



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