

Hope Notes

*Program updates and highlights for
friends, supporters and partners of
World Hope International*

A young African girl with a warm smile, wearing a bright blue t-shirt, is positioned behind a yellow soccer net. She is looking slightly to her left. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a sports field with a brick building in the distance.

TOGETHER,
WE BRING
hope
IN HARD PLACES

Our Mission

World Hope International is a Christian relief and development organization bringing hope in hard places by partnering with vulnerable and exploited communities to alleviate poverty, suffering, and injustice.

Our Vision

We envision a world where people in hard places are empowered with opportunity, dignity, and hope so they can participate in the transformation of themselves, their families, and their communities.

Countries Where We Work



Cambodia



Haiti



Liberia



The Philippines



Sierra Leone

What's In This Issue

In each issue of Hope Notes, you'll learn more about how partners, supporters and friends of World Hope have a life-giving impact on children and their families. In this issue:

- ▶ Founder Jo Anne Lyon's Legacy of Hope
- ▶ Jamaica, Haiti Hurricane Relief Efforts
- ▶ How a Cambodian Youth is Uplifting His Community
- ▶ Trafficking/Exploitation Survivor Stories from The Philippines
- ▶ How Water Projects Bring Hope in Haiti
- ▶ Newly Trained Physiotherapists in Sierra Leone Are Changing Lives
- ▶ Our New Hope Alliance Partnership
- ▶ Two Supporter Spotlights: The Ott and Showalter Families



CLEAN WATER



GLOBAL HEALTH



PROTECTION



Leaving a Legacy of Hope

By Jennifer Jones

As World Hope International celebrates its 30th Anniversary this month, January 2026, it is fitting that we have spent several months working toward the audacious goal of raising \$8.5 million to continue funding programs already started that are bringing hope in hard places.

With funding uncertainties brought on by the political climate, especially the unexpected, abrupt ending of USAID funding that impacted many of our partners in countries where we serve vulnerable people, the fundraising goal has been not so much a “wish list” as a “needs” list

That's why we launched an “85th Birthday Challenge” celebrating founder Dr. Jo Anne Lyon's milestone birthday in a way that will honor her over the entire year. Through this fundraising effort, World Hope was able to meet the financial obligations of our core programs, and allow us to plan ahead for 2026. The generosity of our supporters was a God-given gift to those we serve.

Jo Anne's birthday gift to us was incredible videotaped conversations

about her vision to create World Hope and its humble beginnings 30 years ago, which we shared in short snippets, and in its entirety.

In [this video](#) found on World Hope's YouTube page, Jo Anne explains the calling that was placed on her life at the tender age of six. “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” (Amos 5:24, NIV). “Justice and righteousness. Together. Transformation. That's the call I believe God placed on my heart and my life,” she says.

A turning point came in Jo Anne's life when she was asked to accompany an ABC news team filming a documentary on the famine in Ethiopia in 1985. The famine claimed the lives of up to 500,000 people, including a woman who literally died of starvation at Jo Anne's feet as she visited a feeding station.

On that trip, God moved on her heart, and Jo Anne wondered where all of the Christian volunteers were. “I kept thinking the ‘cup of cold water given in the name of Jesus is a different cup of cold water!’” She

came home from that trip on fire with a passion and desire to do something. But she couldn't find anyone in the greater church who shared that same level of passion.

But a God-given calling is not easy to ignore, and nine years later, with the burning desire to *DO* something still smoldering in her heart, she was assisted by Don Bray, the then leader of Wesleyan World Missions, who helped her to give substance and shape to her vision.

That is how World Hope was launched in January 1996, with a headquarters "office" in her spare

bedroom. In 2000, when the Lyons moved to Washington, DC, headquarters was moved to Alexandria, Virginia.

Do you ever wonder what legacy you will leave?

Some are called to be in ministry, or to be missionaries in far off lands. Some are called to be volunteers in local missions. Others are blessed with the resources to fund these critical missions. But all are called.

Scan to watch the full interview between Jo Anne Lyon and Jenn Petersen.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

Go to blog articles [The Legacies We Leave](#) or [Prayers for the Future](#) to read more.

Standing Together with Jamaica & Haiti

By Jennifer Jones

The Wesleyan Church has partnered with World Hope International to help with relief efforts following the devastation caused in October of Hurricane Melissa to wide areas of Jamaica and Haiti.

World Hope immediately began working with several partners, such as Haiti Air Ambulance, MEDIC Corps and LIFT Non-Profit Logistics, to deliver emergency aid, medical support and other critical resources. We reached more than 620,000 people who were impacted and flew 300 helicopter missions to transport goods to communities isolated by flooding, landslides and damaged roads. We were able to send 15,737 food kits to families, which is almost 500,000 pounds of food. We also distributed 6,219 cases of water and 434 water filtration buckets. In



addition, 76 Starlink units donated by SpaceX were deployed across more than 40 communities, restoring critical communication. Because of our pre-established relationships with the government of Jamaica and these relief partners, World Hope

was able to hit the ground running the day after the storm.

"This is what we mean when we say we must be ready to act swiftly to bring hope in hard places," said President & CEO Jenn Petersen. "The flooding in Haiti and Jamaica left so many families to fend for themselves without basic needs, such as food and water or any type of dry living conditions." In addition to those critical resources, so many small pockets of communities lost all communication, leaving them feeling helpless and alone. While World Hope has regular program operations in Haiti but not Jamaica, because of the significant presence of The Wesleyan Church in Jamaica, World Hope was able to offer assistance there as well.

The Wesleyan Church has churches located throughout the country, and supports the Caribbean Wesleyan College in Westmoreland, Jamaica. According to Rev. Joel Cumberbatch, the General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Holiness Church of the Caribbean, "most of the buildings on campus have been badly damaged or completely destroyed." The church on the campus, Torrington Wesleyan, lost its entire roof and significant damage was sustained by local grocery stores and houses.

"Undoubtedly, we would need the

collective and united support of our Caribbean and international brothers and sisters and partners, in order to undertake the onerous task of the maintenance of reasonable and comfortable existence in some instances, 'clean up,' and rebuilding," he said.

In Haiti, where World Hope has had a presence for 20 years, we were able to fund 500 food and hygiene kits. Our Country Director for Haiti, David-Kensley Saintil, said the encouraging news is that World Hope-supported Lagonave Wesleyan Hospital was not damaged in the hurricane. However, one of our partner schools, located in one of the hardest-hit areas—Petit-Goave—was hit hard, and World Hope teams are supplying that area with various supplies. The storm claimed 40 lives in Haiti, most coming from Petit-Goave. In addition, the homes of Wesleyan Church-connected pastors and workers were lost as well.

Because of generous supporters, World Hope was able to let our friends and neighbors hit hard by these storms know they had not been forgotten.





A Bunong Youth Uplifts His Community

By Liming Liv

In the remote village of Pu Sham in Mondulkiri, Cambodia, a young Bunong leader is emerging as a powerful example of hope, resilience, and vision for the next generation. At just 21 years of age, Samoен Nhoeun is not only pursuing his personal dreams, but is also deeply committed to preserving his cultural heritage and equipping his community for a better future.

As the youngest of six siblings, Samoен stands out not only for his ambition but for his dedication to uplifting his community. Today, he is one of eight interns at World Hope International (WHI) Cambodia, where he volunteers three days a week supporting programs that serve local indigenous communities. His internship is part of a broader effort funded by the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) REDD+ initiative, which provides young leaders like Samoен with the tools to succeed academically and professionally.

At the same time, Samoен is pursuing an associate degree in information technology at the Mondulkiri Provincial Technical and

Vocational Training Center (TVET). This unique combination of hands-on fieldwork and classroom learning is molding him into a dynamic changemaker—one with both the knowledge and empathy to drive lasting change.

“I want to become a resource for my community,” Samoен shared, reflecting on his long-term goals. “Not just for today, but for the future of all indigenous children who dream of something better.”

Thanks to the support from the KSWS REDD+ initiative and WHI, Samoен’s journey is not only changing his own life, but also is lighting the path for others. He represents a new generation of young leaders committed to creating opportunity, preserving culture, and empowering communities—starting with their own.

This is what hope looks like in action. And Samoен’s story reminds us that investing in young leaders today will help build a stronger, more resilient tomorrow.



Surviving Exploitation in the Philippines

By Mariel Aira Mateo

Healing isn't linear. It doesn't happen overnight. But when surrounded by care, trust, and practical support, it can transform lives. These are just two stories of healing and hope. World Hope International Philippines has been a part of in helping children directly impacted by Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC).

Alice's Story

Alice* was just 13 years old when she became a survivor of such abuse and exploitation — a harrowing experience that no child should ever endure. The trauma was compounded by the fact that her abusers were members of her own maternal family.

After her rescue, Alice was placed in a protective facility. While she was physically safe, adjusting to her new reality was overwhelming. The emotional shock of being separated from her family and processing what had happened left her withdrawn and confused to the point that she

rarely engaged in group activities and struggled to express herself.

A psychological assessment revealed that the trauma had severely impacted Alice's development. Though a teenager, her emotional and cognitive abilities were on the same level as a five-year-old.

In 2023, Alice was reintegrated with her non-offending family members and referred to World Hope for support. Through our Healing Home program, Alice and her family received assistance for their daily needs, education, and psychosocial care.

But she struggled to keep up with her peers. Teachers recommended she transfer to a special education class that was better suited to her learning pace. She was later diagnosed with a learning disorder that affected her ability to read and do basic math. However, she also demonstrated a strong grasp of life skills and independence.

With this new understanding, WHI tailored its support to fit Alice's needs. She began attending twice-weekly tutorial sessions designed to reinforce her lessons and build her academic confidence. Gradually, Alice began to thrive. Through determination and the steady encouragement of her family and WHI staff, Alice proudly graduated from Grade 6 in 2025. Her mother

shared the family's gratitude: "She is now able to read even without a tutor. She also knows how to do many tasks at home. She is happy with all the help you have given her. Thank you so much to all of you."

Alice's story is still unfolding. With every lesson learned and barrier overcome, she rediscovers her voice and right to a safe and hopeful future.



Althea's Story

In another case, a girl named Althea* was safely reunited with her family with the support of World Hope. Althea participated in trauma-informed healing workshops designed for survivors like her. Over time, she began to speak more freely and smile more often. Each session gently opened a door to healing.

In 2023 and 2024, Althea and her family participated in special bonding events, including family strengthening activities designed to restore trust and connection. For a family shaken by trauma, these moments brought laughter, togetherness, and healing.

As part of the family's reintegration plan, WHI also supported Althea's mother with a livelihood grant. With this, she started a small business offering printing and ID laminating services, empowering her to contribute financially and regain confidence in providing for her family.

Althea's and Alice's stories are ones of strength, not just survival. Their families are no longer defined by trauma but by resilience, connection, and hope. This transformation is a powerful reminder of what trauma-informed care and compassionate community support can achieve.



A Reservoir of Hope in Terre Sel, Haiti

By Pastor Etienne Prospere & David-Kensley Saintil S.

In Terre Sel, a rural community in Haiti, the struggle for water once defined everyday life. For years, families depended solely on rainwater to survive. When the rain stopped and reservoirs ran dry, people walked dozens of kilometers just to find clean water. These exhausting treks stole time from education, risked their lives, and left little energy for rebuilding livelihoods. Even basic activities for hygiene, such as handwashing, were often out of reach.

My name is Pastor Etienne Prospere, and as the head of the Terre Sel Wesleyan Church, I've lived through this hardship with my people. I've prayed with mothers desperate to soothe their thirsty children and watched as children missed school to help carry water for miles. Our community's energy was consumed by a basic human need.

But then something changed.

In partnership with World Hope International (WHI) and a community of generous donors, a new reservoir was constructed. And with it came more than just water—it brought transformation.

Today, Terre Sel is no longer defined by drought. The reservoir captures and stores water from the rainy season, sustaining us through dry months. Our children now stay in school. They can wash their hands, and our schools promote better hygiene and wellness. Parents no longer live in fear of the next water crisis. Instead, they focus on farming, small businesses, and their families. Hope has returned, not as a dream—but as a daily reality.

This change has been nothing short of miraculous. With secure access to water, our dignity has been restored. What once seemed impossible is now a source of pride. And we know we're not alone. We are strengthened by the global community that believed in us and invested in our future.

To all those who made this transformation possible—thank you. You did not just build a reservoir. You helped restore a community's faith in tomorrow. On behalf of the people of Terre Sel, I pray God blesses you as richly as you've blessed us.

Your support is more than charity—it's a living stream of hope.



New Hope in Motion in Sierra Leone

By Celine Gunaratnam

On September 8, Sierra Leone didn't just perfunctorily acknowledge World Physiotherapy Day, it witnessed a healthcare movement. In hospitals, markets and community centers across nine regions, a new generation of leaders stepped forward. They are Sierra Leone's first locally trained physiotherapists—and they are already transforming lives.

Just two years ago, not a single physiotherapist had graduated from a training program within the country. But in 2023 and 2024, that changed. These trailblazing graduates, now in their internship year, are not only delivering care—they're raising awareness, shifting mindsets, and planting the seeds for a healthier future.

From Kenema to Bo, Kono to Freetown, the atmosphere on World Physiotherapy Day 2025 was electric. Music and movement filled hospital corridors as interns from the new physiotherapy program visited wards, talked with patients and caregivers, and shared simple but powerful tips on how to stay active and independent with age.

In public markets and streets, these young professionals took the message even further—distributing flyers, starting conversations, and answering questions. For many people in Sierra Leone, it was their first encounter with a physiotherapist. It was the first time someone explained how exercises, movement therapy, and rehabilitation can restore dignity and reduce pain.

"People saw us and asked, 'What is physiotherapy?' And we got to show them," shared one intern. "We're not just helping people walk again. We're helping them live again."

Teams from World Hope International's Enable the Children (ETC) program were hard at work in remote communities, delivering physiotherapy care to children with disabilities and training local health workers and caregivers. This dual approach—celebration in cities and service in villages—ensures that no one is left behind. The impact is especially felt in communities where rehabilitation services have never existed before.

The success of this nationwide celebration didn't happen overnight. As a physiotherapy mentor employed under WHI's ETC program, I worked to gain the support of the Ministry of Health and the Sierra Leone Physiotherapy Association (SLPA). We helped each intern plan and lead their own event—offering guidance behind the scenes while letting them shine in their communities. It wasn't just about awareness. It was about ownership. We wanted these new professionals to see themselves as leaders. And they rose to the challenge.

For World Hope International, World

Physiotherapy Day 2025 was more than a day on the calendar. It was a milestone for locally led sustainable health care. Most importantly, it was a moment of hope for the future. Because when people learn how to care for their bodies—and when they're given the tools and support to do so—they thrive.

When children, elders, and families see a new face in their community—a trained physiotherapist who speaks their language and understands their reality—they don't just see a clinician. They see a future filled with movement, dignity, and healing.

Hope Alliance Initiative

By Jennifer Jones

In early 2025, World Hope put a formal name to something that has been part of our DNA since the beginning—partnering with churches. That name is the Hope Alliance, a partnership created to walk alongside churches as we live out our shared calling to bring hope, healing, and restoration to the world.

To support this initiative, we welcomed Rev. Matt LeRoy, a respected church multiplier and leader within The Wesleyan Church, as our Church Partner Representative and key point of contact for churches across the U.S. Alongside World Hope President & CEO Jenn Petersen, Matt spent the summer sharing the Hope Alliance vision and inviting churches into this work.



In just the first few months, churches such as Celebrate Church, Heartland Church, and New Life La Plata committed to partnering with us. All of our Hope Alliance partners combined contributed more than \$205,000 in 2025. Just as importantly, these partners also commit to pray as a congregation for the world's most vulnerable. In return, World Hope provides stories of transformation, reports, and guest speaking opportunities to encourage and equip the church. We are honored when churches partner with us to care for the vulnerable, welcome the foreigner, comfort the grieving and sick, and serve those in need. As the global Church, this is the work we are called to do—together.

Learn more at [Hope Alliance](#)
or email Matt LeRoy and team
at [hopeallianceteam](#)
[@worldhope.org](#)



Partner Spotlight

By Jennifer Jones



The Ott's

Ryan and Amie Ott live a family-oriented life in Marion, Indiana. They and their four children—Jaxon, Sydney, Reese and Dreyson—share their home with dog Maverick, three barn cats and nine chickens on what they affectionately call “the ranch.” Their neighbors include Ryan’s father, World Hope International (WHI) Board Vice Chairman Gary Ott, and his wife and former board member, Connie.

Charitable giving, especially to World Hope, runs deep in the family. It began when Gary and Connie took a mission trip to Zambia years ago, which led to both serving on the WHI board. They later gave toward eight water well projects in honor of their eight grandchildren and committed to taking each grandchild on a

mission trip as a teenager. “These trips have been so meaningful and instrumental in shaping our kids’ worldviews and helping them see the needs that exist beyond themselves,” says Amie.

Amie has traveled with her children to Sierra Leone and Liberia more than once, allowing them to experience firsthand Enable the Children’s work and the impact of clean water on entire communities. “My favorite experiences include interacting with the kids and seeing the joy on their faces when we would shop,” Amie shares. “It was a blessing to watch my children grow in their faith and step outside their comfort zones. I hope to pass the legacy of Christian stewardship on to them and their future children.”

Amie says her heart is drawn to initiatives that help children and families thrive physically, emotionally and spiritually. “For people to thrive, their basic needs must be met,” she says. “Water is life and everyone deserves access to clean water.”

In August, the Ott's hosted friends and family in their home to introduce them to WHI's work and President & CEO Jenn Petersen. “We were excited to have Jo Anne Lyon there too.”

Reflecting on their legacy, Amie adds, “God has given our family a compassion to serve the vulnerable with our time, talents and treasure. It is our conviction to help people in the name of Jesus. Generosity alone is good, but generosity in the name of Jesus is great!”

Partner Spotlight

By Jennifer Jones



The Showalters

Jenny and Daniel Showalter of Carmel, Indiana, are also connected to World Hope Vice Chair Gary Ott—Jenny is his daughter. Like Ryan and Amie, they hosted friends and family in their home this summer to share World Hope's vision and mission, especially the work of protecting vulnerable children.

Jenny and Daniel have three children—Charlotte (15), Hallie (13) and Kai (7). Jenny shares that while their family had known about World Hope for years through her father, the past two years marked a shift toward deeper involvement.

In 2024, Jenny and her daughters traveled to Sierra Leone and Liberia with family members to experience World Hope's work firsthand. "Some of the most impactful moments were

visiting children with disabilities and seeing how God is using WHI's therapy staff to bring hope to families who often feel unseen, in their communities," she said.

Jenny's daughters witnessed the value placed on education in Liberia and the joy it brought students simply to attend school. In one community, they distributed small gift bags with toothbrushes, toys and candy. "My oldest said her most impactful memory was when a child begged her for a toothbrush," Jenny recalls. She had never seen anyone care about a toothbrush, something many of us take for granted.

The family also saw the joy of communities benefiting from clean water through wells supported by the Ott family. "Seeing how water impacts every part of life—and how we often do not view it as a blessing from God—changed our perspective forever," Jenny said.

Following the trip, the Showalters felt called to do more. After collecting hundreds of seashells on a family trip, their daughters decorated and sold them at a farmers' market to raise funds for World Hope. They also hosted a patio gathering to introduce friends to WHI's work and support clean water projects.

"What we love about WHI is that no only does it care for people's basic needs, it does it while also sharing the gospel of Jesus," Jenny said. "We're excited to partner in work that is impacting God's kingdom, one child and one community at a time."

It is only by working together and partnering with you that we can **help bring hope.** Because of your compassion, we can help protect the vulnerable, diminish poverty, and alleviate suffering.

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