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WHAT'S HAPPENING

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## THE *Value* OF SPONSORSHIP

I always enjoy receiving phone calls from our ICC Family. Many times I get phone calls from our family telling me stories about their sponsored child, or how grateful they are to ICC for continuing on with this amazing work. I love those phone calls.

Recently, I had a phone call from a lady who told me that "I can only afford to give my \$30 per month sponsorship, and I know that is not worth much, but it is all I can do right now." These words cut through me like a two-edged sword as I heard her share what she was thinking about this. To know that she felt this way was hard for me, but to know that she was giving all she could touched my heart.

I asked this lady if she would allow me to tell her about her \$30 sponsorship, and she consented. I told her a few of the situations that bring these children to an ICC Project. I told her that her money was helping to provide 3 meals per day, a mom and a dad, a bed to rest in, a Christian education, the opportunity to learn

of the gift of salvation. I told her how our ICC children grow up to become adults in their various countries and they start telling others about the love of Jesus and His free gift of eternal life for each one. I told her of the many baptisms that come each year through God's love that is shared with others from the contact of ICC young people, and how that has changed so many lives for His kingdom. When I finished, I then asked her, "Now that you know these things, how much do you really think your \$30 sponsorship is worth?" Her first comment was "Wow, I had no idea how much of a difference \$30 can really make in this world today."

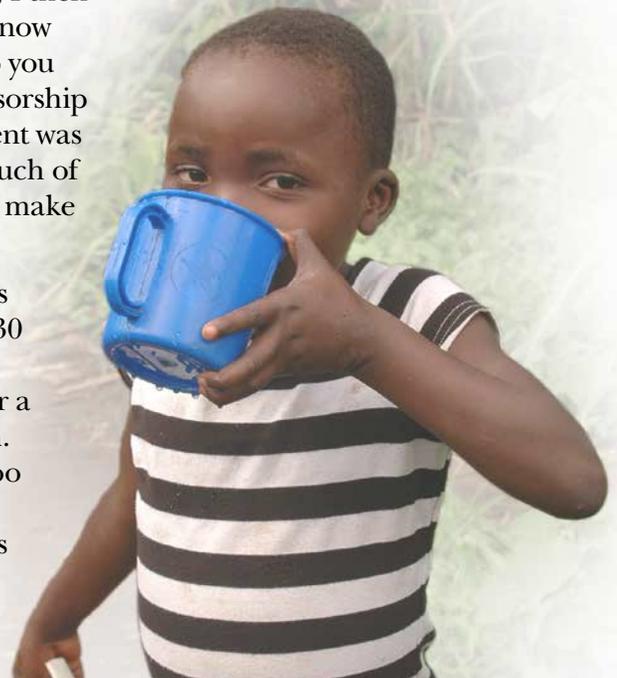
Most of us don't realize this either, we just think that \$30 can't do much, so we don't make the choice to sponsor a child that needs it so much. Well, I pray that now you too know what a tremendous amount those sponsorships are really worth, and that you understand what an amazing difference they

make in this world if we will just reach out, sometimes in faith, and provide them for His children.

When I think about it, I know just what that \$30 is worth – "Priceless!"

*Doug Congleton*

*Executive Director, ICC Americas*



# Blood Man

## Part three of a three part series

Hugo's world changed forever the day his father was killed. His mother tried to keep the family together after his murder, but the tragedy had such a dramatic effect on her life, and soon the family was separated. Hugo tried to make sense of what had happened, but answers didn't come. In his distress he blamed God. "Why me Lord? Why my daddy?"

Under the care of ICC he grew up into a happy and healthy young man. He was very helpful and obedient, yet deep in his heart he continued to harbor the plan to avenge his father's blood. He attended church with the rest of the children and understood that God loved him unconditionally yet he didn't think it would work for him. One day, as the congregation sang a special song he liked, something unusual happened in his heart. It was as if Jesus was talking to him through the words of the song and he could no longer hide his need for the Savior. Before his baptism he made a pact with God. "Dear Lord" he prayed, "I have lived with hate all my life. I have fostered murderous plans in my heart. Help me cast out this foe. Please help me forgive the man who killed my father. I will serve you in whatever capacity I can if you help me overcome."

The years went by very quickly, and Hugo became an exemplary young man. He was loved by everybody. Adult caregivers recall his cheerful smile and optimistic attitude despite the circumstances. The farm manager remembers him as a reliable helper, always willing to lend a hand. He even asked the farm manager one day to help him prepare a small plot of land, so he could have his own garden. He would run to his garden after school and spend hours caring for his plants. He felt a sort of closeness with the Lord as he tended the little seedlings. He would proudly bring the produce of his garden to the house mother to be shared with the rest of the household. It made him feel grown up and responsible to see the other children enjoying the vegetables he had grown.



Graduation



Still active in Pathfinders

True to his promise, he became very involved in church activities, especially Pathfinders. He graduated from high school with good grades and entered the Adventist University of the Dominican Republic. It didn't take him long to make friends there. Among his friends was a beautiful young lady from New York City who was attending the same school. Their friendship grew and after college they decided to get married and move to New York City. With the help of his wife he began to adapt to his adopted country. Soon he was working for the New York City Board of Education. The family began to grow with the arrival of their first child, a beautiful girl, then two more, a boy then a girl. He felt very blessed with his family and tried to be the best father and husband he could. Every once in a while he would think about the old country and all the things he had left behind. Sometimes he would think about his siblings in the Dominican Republic and feel a little nostalgic. Sometimes the old feelings of anger and vengeance would crawl back, and he would go to the Lord in prayer.

One day after getting home from work he had a talk with his wife. He told her he felt he needed to go back to the Dominican Republic, and he needed to go alone. The day came and he made the trip. When he

arrived, a throng of memories assaulted him and took him back to that fateful day when he had waited until past midnight for a father that never came home. He made his way to the old town and the neighborhood where he lived as a little child. He went by the park where his father had taken him to play baseball so many times. Before making the trip, he had gathered information about the whereabouts of the man who killed his father, and after asking around he made his way to the old man's house. His heart raced with every step he took. When he arrived at the house where the killer allegedly lived, he paused for a moment before knocking at the door. An old man came out looking pale and sick. With moist and sunken eyes the old man looked at Hugo for a moment, not recognizing him. He seemed a little confused.

"I am Hugo Cabrera. You don't remember me, but you killed my father when I was a very little boy. As a child I made a pledge that one day I would find you and avenge my father's blood." He paused for a second to swallow. His throat felt tight and dry. "Even though what you did to my father hurt us deeply, God never abandoned us." He noticed the old man shaking uncontrollably like someone experiencing great torment. "After my father's death, our mother tried very hard to provide for us, but it was very difficult. We suffered hunger, disease, and loneliness, but in His mercy God brought us to a home for orphaned and abandoned children run by kind Christian people who loved us and taught us love and kindness. They introduced us to Jesus in whom I found salvation. For many years I fantasized about the day that I would come and kill you the same way you killed my father, but when I gave my life to Jesus, He took away all my hate, and today I am here to tell you that I have forgiven you. Don't torture yourself any longer with guilt, because I am forgiving you for what you did. Furthermore, I would like to invite you to accept Jesus as your Savior and confess all your sins to Him and give Him all your past so that you may experience the peace that I experience today."

The man looked at Hugo not knowing what to say or do. Slowly he lowered his head as if afraid to look at the face of this godly man. Hugo turned around and left the same way he had come.

"I had to do it," he tells me as he relates the story. "For my own sake and for the sake of the old man, I had to do it. It was very important for me to go and personally find this man and forgive him on behalf of my family. This man was my father's friend. I can only imagine the eternal torment in his heart as he thought about what he did." With a smile he looks at me, "I am still "Blood Man", a man who has been washed and restored by the blood of the Lamb."

I have been listening to Hugo for a long time and as he pauses, I don't know what to say. I realize I am being a witness to a living expression of the love of Jesus. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." Matt. 5:43-45

"I consider it a closed chapter in my life," he finally says. "And I will tell you one more thing; there is nothing more beautiful than the power to forgive!"



Joel Reyes  
Director of Public Relations



Hugo and his family today

This story is the conclusion of a three month series. For back issues of this story you can download them at our website: [www.forhiskids.org/newsletters.php](http://www.forhiskids.org/newsletters.php).

# Sponsoring an older child

**Y**ou can hear them from a distance. It's the children returning from school after a long day in the classroom. They are excited and looking forward to the delicious supper that awaits them at home. They are also looking forward to playing on the large soccer field until the day is over and they are called for evening worship. Amongst the group of children walks a young man. The kids call him "Big Brother," and he wears that badge with pride. Like the rest of the children, Big Brother is also happy to be returning home after a long day. He too is looking forward to the yummy meal they will share when they get home. However, unlike the rest, Big Brother will not be going to the soccer field and playing after supper. He will instead put on his work clothes, grab his tools, and go complete a repair job he didn't finish the day before.

Adan is the campus' repair man and that's what he does after school, on weekends, and vacation days. Many times you will find him working under the glow of a flashlight, fixing things that cannot wait until the following day, sometimes a broken water pipe or a leaking faucet. So many things break on a campus full of children, and Adan is always ready to fix them. The adults appreciate him, and the campus administrator depends on him.

Adan is a very hard working kid, and like many of our children, he struggled with school, but through dedication and hard

work he graduated a year ago. He is very handy with tools and has a fascination with aircraft. After graduation he expressed a desire to be an

aircraft mechanic. He joined a program for aircraft mechanics at a flight school in San Salvador and has been working very hard to keep up with the rigorous demands of the program.

As an older child Adan is a very good son and a mentor for many of the younger children. But unlike his younger brothers and sisters, he does not have a sponsor; in fact he has not had a sponsor for more than two years. Adan represents a large number of older children in our ICC children's villages who don't have sponsors. Most sponsors prefer to support small children, and even though I understand that an older child may not offer the same charm and attraction as a cute little toddler, our older ones are just as much in need of love as the little ones. Adan knows he is unconditionally loved by the house parents he calls mommy and daddy, yet he misses the connection with a loving sponsor. Many of our children came to us after suffering much abuse and abandonment. Often they bounced from place to place before coming to ICC. Then it took them a while



to realize that our love for them was permanent and that their sponsors cared for and loved them. They loved writing letters to their sponsors and felt like part of their family. As they grew older some of their sponsors could no longer support them and terminated their sponsorship. The older they grew the more difficult it became to find new sponsors for them, until one day they were left with none.

As I share Adan's story with you today, I would like to invite you to consider sponsoring one of our older students. Adan is only one of them. We have a large number of unsponsored older students in our children's villages around the globe. They may be bigger, stronger, and tougher, but they need love and compassion just as much as our little ones. They also want to know they are loved and that there is someone far away praying for them and loving them as if they were their own. Please give us a call or send us a note if you would like to be part of the life of one of our older students.