

A group of diverse children, including boys and girls of various ethnicities, are gathered in a circle. They are holding hands and looking towards the camera with various expressions of curiosity and interest. The lighting is bright, creating a warm and positive atmosphere. The children are wearing casual clothing, and the overall scene suggests a sense of community and shared experience.

journeys

*from a
child's point
of VIEW*



Kids' fearless PERSPECTIVES

by *Gina Kellogg*
CI storyteller

When my son was little (a long time ago considering his 6-foot-frame now towers over me!), I loved eavesdropping on him and his buddies. Their unique perspectives often caught me off-guard — sort of a mix of sweet innocence and incredible insight.

I see that same combination in the answers CI kids gave when our field reporters asked them what superpower they'd like to have. I especially liked the response of [young Evis \(at right\)](#). Her answer was creative, crafty and hilarious! (Check it out on page 6. The other kids' answers were similarly witty — and compassionate!)

Our kids' superpower wishes give a peek into their perspectives on life. But to truly “get” their viewpoints, you have to consider their *experiences*. After all, it's not just their physical environments — which can be incredibly tough — that impact their outlooks; it's circumstances that discourage their mental, physical and emotional development — and even infringe on their basic rights.

That's why I can't help but get the warm fuzzies when I talk about working for CI. Our mission is to give kids a *place*, a *team* and a *path* out of poverty — safe, clean community centers; skilled, caring mentors; and smart, impactful programs



Find out what superpower Evis would choose if she could on page 6.



Read more about Melvin's journey on page 18.

that prepare our kids for successful futures. (It's pretty awesome to be part of the movement to end poverty!)

So, spoiler alert! I'm pretty biased about this issue of *Journeys*. Its stories really show how CI is changing our kids' views of themselves and their lives. For example, check out the photos by teens in our Youth Reporters program (page 14). *Ah-may-zing!* And, after all, how much more literal can you get in truly seeing our kids' perspectives on their worlds?! Plus, I love how their talent exemplifies the success of our approach.

But the great stories don't end there. Another fabulous example of CI's successful approach is Melvin, a grad featured on page 18. Melvin saw his limited opportunities in Honduras and grabbed tight onto CI's job-training program. He became a barista, helped expand the coffee franchise and now sends money home each month. He's not only lifting himself out of poverty, but he's benefitting his entire family — not to mention setting an incredible example for his siblings and other kids in the tiny village where he grew up.

Melvin is the perfect representation of what we strive for and want all of our kids to achieve!

And while his perspective could easily have been shaped in the worst ways by his environment and circumstance, he instead has a positive, uplifting view of the world — filled with hope and gratitude!

Take some pride in that attitude. You helped him craft that perspective with your caring support.

On behalf of Melvin and all our kids, thank you!

Gina

Gina Kellogg
Creative Team editorial director (AKA chief scribbler)

*p.s. keep reading
for lots more
kids' perspectives!*

journeys



ON THE COVER:
Photo by CI youth reporter Jhon D. (19), Quito, Ecuador

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The kids ALL WRITE

by Teresa Leggard and Marelvis Campo, CI storytellers

Dropping a line can really lift someone up! After all, think about the last time you received a letter from a friend. We're guessing it made you feel pretty special.

Dina Luz (15) gets those same warm fuzzies when she hears from her sponsor, Larry Schoff, who lives in New York. Letters have created such a strong bond that Larry and his wife recently hopped off a cruise to visit Dina in Cartagena, Colombia.

When they met, Larry says, "There was an almost-instant bond of friendship. When we write now, we share that friendship and love for each other. I always look forward to her letters."

Dina says Larry's letters keep her updated on his family's activities, which encourages her to share her own. **And because CI asks all kids to write their sponsor twice a year, that makes writing a letter a joy Dina looks forward to.**

INSPIRED TO WRITE YOUR CHILD?

Log in to your account at [children.org](https://www.children.org). Send a quick note from the greeting card options or a longer message with your choice of stationery designs. ■





"I feel so
happy and
proud of
my sponsors.
They are
good people."

We asked #TeamCI kids ...

If you could have a superpower, what would it be?



"To have Ninja magic — because the ninja fights very well, defeating the villain and also walks on water. I want to walk on water."

— Priti (13)
SAHAY, INDIA



"To have the power to go back in time. I often commit mistakes. But if I could control time, I'd just go back and correct my mistakes. Especially if my mistakes hurt the feelings of other people."

— John (12)
BICOL, PHILIPPINES

"I want to be a princess. With this power, I would change other princesses into cats so I could be the only princess."

— Evis (7)
BARRANQUILLA,
COLOMBIA





want more?
turn the page
& also check out
children.org/superpower



“To be able to help people, especially the ones who have fewer opportunities. I would use magic powers to make people live longer and happy.”

– Jaime (14)
QUITO, ECUADOR

“To compose music to change the world. This would be a different superpower, wouldn’t it? But I would like everyone everywhere to unite with music and to make a better society.”

– Anthony (17)
GUATEMALA

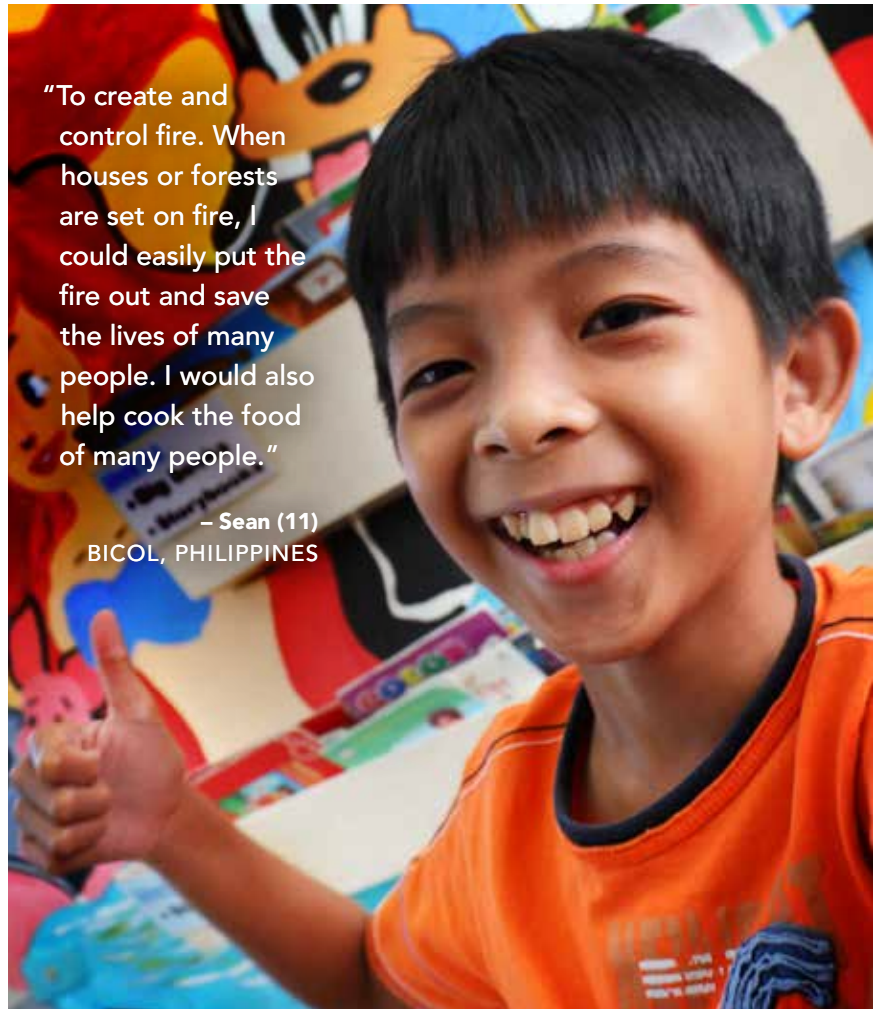


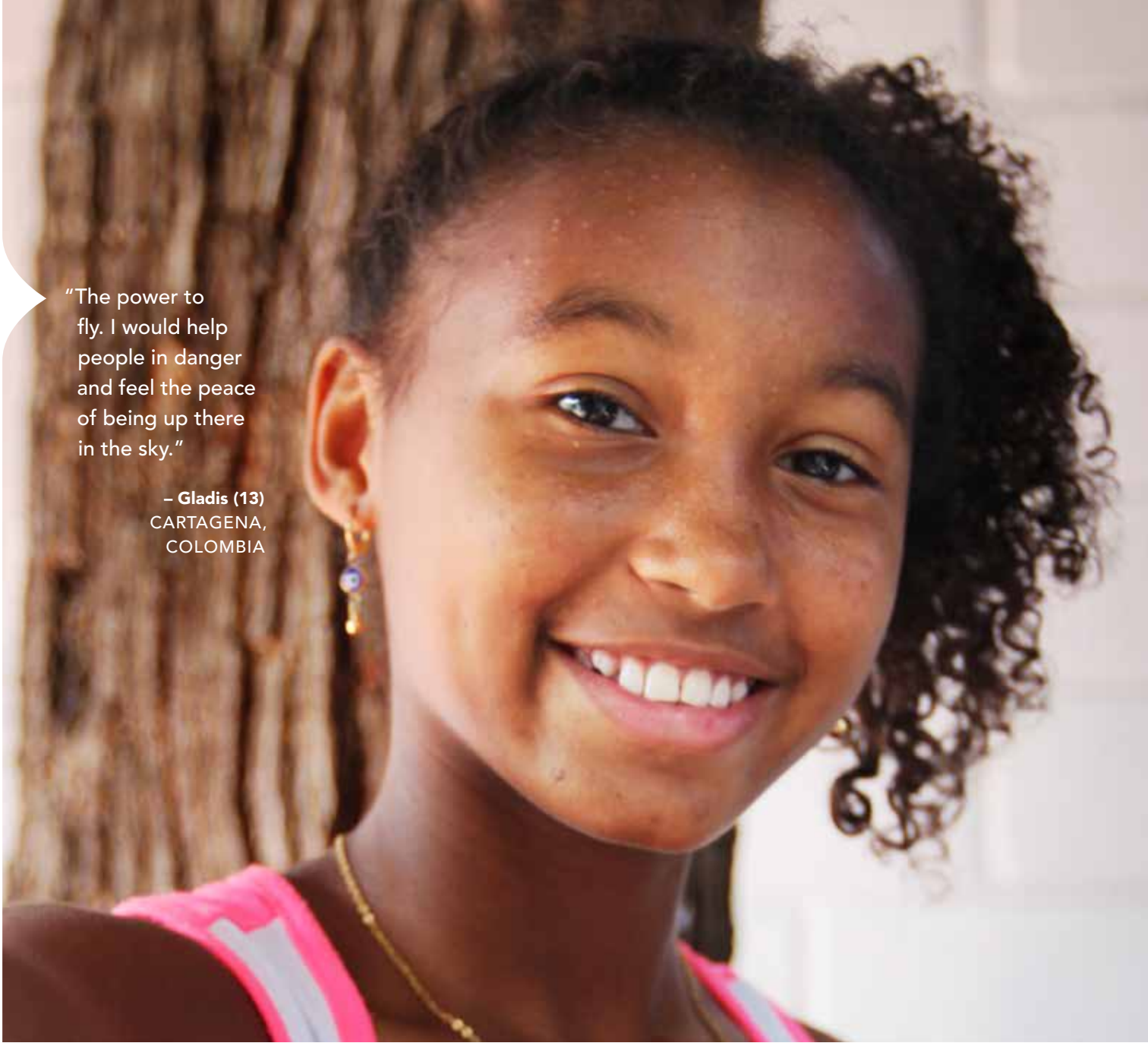
“Telekinesis. Because I want to move stuff with my mind.”

– Deiondre (8)
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

“To create and control fire. When houses or forests are set on fire, I could easily put the fire out and save the lives of many people. I would also help cook the food of many people.”


– Sean (11)
BICOL, PHILIPPINES





“The power to fly. I would help people in danger and feel the peace of being up there in the sky.”

– Gladis (13)
CARTAGENA,
COLOMBIA



“The power of Spiderman — so we can also have a Spiderwoman — because he can jump and leap from one building to another and also thrash the green villain. I want to jump from high buildings and also tie up the robbers and, yes, give poor people food.”

– Anjali (13)
KOLKATA, INDIA

BELOW:
Miguel loved the Spiderman cup that Cynthia's family gave him.

RIGHT:
Bella got a quick hug from Génesis after sharing gifts she brought.



ABOVE:
Warren helped Jeremy look through his gift bag.

RIGHT:
Miguel was eager to get his first taste of a hamburger.



IN PERSON:

How to hold a hamburger

by Jeannie Irons, CI storyteller

What would it be like to see your sponsored child in person? Come along as we share photos of one family's visit to meet their sponsored children in Ecuador.

The Bravo family — Warren, Cynthia and teenage daughter Lauryn Isabella (Bella) from La Mirada, California — started the day by meeting all five of their children at the local CI community center, where they shared gift bags that contained jackets, T-shirts, pajamas, socks and candy.

Next, the Bravo family took the kids and their families out to lunch. "The kids had never seen what a hamburger or a pizza looked like," Cynthia says.

"My daughter was teaching the kids how to hold a hamburger. They loved it."

After lunch, they went grocery shopping to buy necessities such as rice, beans, powdered milk and canned goods. It's no small feat to take so many families shopping but, Cynthia says, "It's so worth it."

Leaving was bittersweet. Cynthia says she, her husband and daughter were extremely moved by meeting the families. At the end of the day, she adds, "When it's time to go, that's when I start crying."

But the visit only increased their commitment to their kids and CI. Seeing their impact in person led them to grow their family of sponsored kids from five to nine. And they've already returned — just this summer — for another trip.

To see more of the Bravos' visit to Quito, follow their day online at [children.org/bravo-family-visit](https://www.children.org/bravo-family-visit). ■

THE BRAVOS' QUITO KIDS

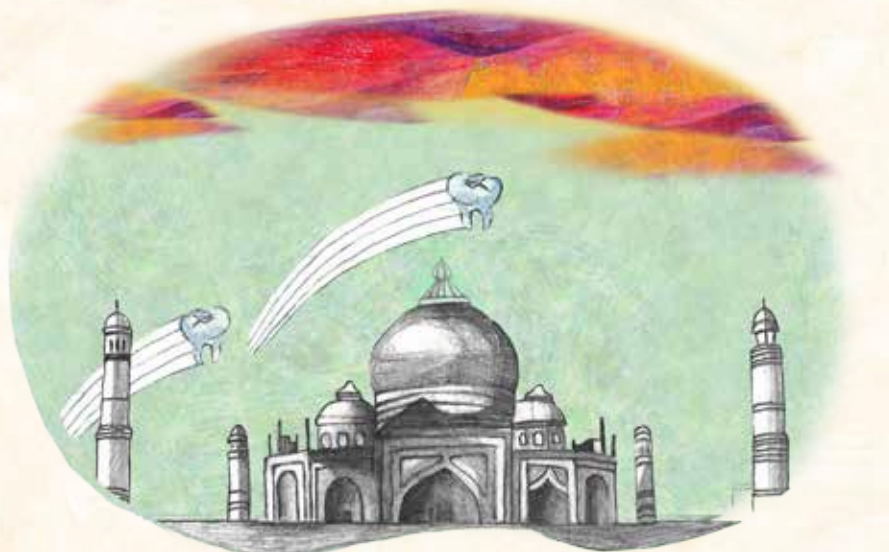
- Jeremy (7)*
- Miguel (8)*
- Génesis (9)*
- Johan (9)*
- Gerardo (10)*
- +Dorian (3)
- +Alison (4)
- +Nurys (6)
- +Jordan (6)

*kids visited on this trip

tooth fairy TALES

by Liz Davenport, CI storyteller, and
illustrated by Dani Maslan

To a child, losing a tooth is a rite of passage — part of the physical reality of turning from baby to big kid. But depending on where a child lives, the transition is celebrated or recognized differently.



Tossing teeth

Our **CI kids in India** have a tradition that's smile-worthy.

They throw their lost teeth.

It's a simple strategy, really. If the lost tooth came from the top of the mouth, the child will throw it toward

the floor. If it came from the bottom of the mouth, they will throw it toward the roof.

Indians believe the new tooth will grow toward the old tooth and will come in strong and straight.

Some children wish that a mouse's tooth replaces their own. This is a wise wish, since rodents have teeth that continually grow! 🌿

Playing hide & seek with pearly whites

Why use a pillow to conceal your cache?

Filipino children take hiding their teeth to a whole new level.

After they lose a tooth, they hide it and make a wish. After a year passes, they go looking for their hidden gem. If they can still find their tiny tooth, they get to make another wish. 🌿





A mouse takes the cake (er, tooth)

Typically, mice aren't welcome inside a home, but Ratoncito Pérez isn't your ordinary mouse. The clothes-wearing rodent is the honorary tooth guardian in many **Spanish-speaking countries**. And although he has many names, he evolved from a tradition involving field mice. Mothers — worried about the health of their children — would offer their kids' baby teeth to mice in return for a bountiful harvest.

The story went from folklore to full-on fairytale in 1894 when the Queen of Spain asked a Jesuit priest to write a story for her 8-year-old son, Alfonso XIII (King of Spain), when he lost a baby tooth.

The tale spread with colonization, and now many Spanish-speaking children leave their teeth under pillows with the hopes of being visited by a red backpack-wearing mouse that leaves behind a little money or a small gift. 🍀



*log in to your account at
[children.org](https://www.children.org) to share your traditions
in a letter to your sponsored kid!*

UP!
UP!
UP!

CI YOUTH REPORTERS EXPOSING



①

A team-building exercise helped teens learn they could rely on others and boosted their confidence.

Sandra B. (18)
Quito, Ecuador

②

CI's community center gave a group of buddies a safe space to bond while waiting to see the doctor.

Gissela P. (19)
Quito, Ecuador

③

A reality of the poverty in Lusaka, Zambia, this pic captures children searching through garbage to find usable materials, such as plastic bottles, to repurpose to hold water and cooking oil.

Rabbi B. (17)
Lusaka, Zambia

④

Learning to speak up for themselves, CI kids participated in a 2015 International Youth Day event, "I Am Un-BULLY-able."

Mari Tonie L. (20)
Quezon City, Philippines



Major news organizations embed reporters in troubled areas, war zones and other newsworthy places to get the most accurate, first-person reporting. CI flipped that concept on its head and turned kids with a passion for journalism into real reporters right in their own communities.

Our Community Youth Reporters program teaches teens valuable skills they just might use in future careers. Plus, as they develop stories and photos about real-life challenges — and triumphs — they quickly learn their "voices" have value. Others truly care about what they have to say and can be moved to action.

For you? Their photography provides a remarkable street-level view from their unique, insider perspectives.

IMPACT

Find more on the next page →

“Chaos, violence and lack of time prevent people from noticing special details that will change their day in a second. Sometimes, all you need to do is stop and observe.”

- Gissela P. (19), Quito, Ecuador



③



④



⑤

⑤

Girls — burdened early with chores such as gathering water — require extra support when it comes to getting an education.

Moses S. (20)

Lusaka, Zambia

⑥

No knowing where this little guy is headed, but he's making quick time to get there. Titled "Run, baby, run" by the photographer.

Vince G. (18)

Quezon City, Philippines

⑦

These joined hands — of fellow youth reporters — represent the teamwork that creates "satisfied, joyful cooperation," according to the photographer.

Vanessa C. (19)

Quito, Ecuador

⑧

Little ones found a safe place to get dirty on the playground at one of CI's community centers.

Mari Tonie L. (20)

Quezon City, Philippines



⑥



⑦



*but wait,
there's more!*

Learn details about CI's unique Youth Reporters program at [children.org/youth-reporters](https://www.children.org/youth-reporters) and see more of their amazing photography.



the ripple effect

by Jesús Almendárez and Gina Kellogg, CI storytellers

Melvin tips the heavy mug with one hand, carefully directing the stream of frothy milk into the caramel-colored coffee with his other. Slowly, a rippled design begins to coalesce as he continues tipping and pouring. When he's done, the large, heart-shaped pattern atop the aromatic cappuccino brings to mind Children International's logo.

It's not much of a stretch to imagine how that image represents the ripples of change that CI's support have created in Melvin's life and those of others.

Melvin expertly crafts a cappuccino at a coffee bar in San Pedro Sula. Because of his steady employment, he is able to send money to his family in Copán Ruinas and inspire his younger siblings to dream.

GENERATIONS OF HARDSHIP

Melvin (21) grew up knowing his father and mother, Victor and Rosa, always wanted him and his five siblings to have better futures than they had. Every day of their lives growing up in El Llano, Honduras, had been a laborious challenge — from gathering firewood and cooking over an open flame to working the land to grow corn and red beans.

Such hardships are commonplace in Honduras where some of the poorest people in Central America dwell. Sixty percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Housing and sanitation are basic, and many children don't receive more than three years of schooling. Melvin was an exception, making it through primary school (grade six). Still, his future and those of his siblings looked bleak. They didn't expect to attain lives much different than their parents.

A NEW OPPORTUNITY & PAYING IT FORWARD

On a visit to his local CI community center three years ago, however, Melvin got a glimpse of a new future. He learned about CI's Into Employment® program. With his parents' encouragement, he applied and was selected for its hospitality training.

Melvin trained at a coffee bar in the nearby town of Copán Ruinas and eventually was offered a full-time barista position. After a few successful months, the shop owner chose Melvin to help open and work at a new location in San Pedro Sula.

Today, life for the entire family has greatly improved. Melvin is now paying it forward by contributing to his family's irregular income. In one month, he earns what his father might earn in one year. He says he plans to go back to school, and his father says his brothers and sisters are motivated by Melvin's success.



IMPACTING GENERATIONS

Melvin's accomplishments couldn't have happened without CI's youth-development programs. Expanding these programs to help more kids is at the heart of our strategy to eradicate poverty.

Want to help? Create a legacy of hope and success for these hard-working kids by including CI in your estate plans. CI's Development Team can explain the many options available to help you design a bequest that best fits your goals or interests.

To get started, contact CI's Development Team at **800-888-4089** or **development@children.org**. ■



Capturing SMILES

by Verónica Arévalo and Liz Davenport, CI storytellers

Our sponsors first fall in love with their kids from their photos. But what happens behind the scenes to capture kids' images?

Sometimes smiles — the language that connects every culture — can be hard to produce.

Even for a trained photographer, taking the perfect photo can be tricky. By the time kids reach their turn in front of the camera, children like Barbara (6, pictured) in Guatemala, might be anxious or embarrassed. CI photographers do their best to put kids at ease.



what happens behind the scenes to capture kids' annual photos?

We grabbed some video recently in Quito, Ecuador, so we could share what happens behind the scenes. Go online to see CI Team members work to get 9-year-old Darla to give them the perfect shot. Visit children.org/darlas-annual-photo.

EXPAND your WORLD

Get a glimpse into the realities of our kids' lives with some select choices in the arts, culture and entertainment chosen by CI team members around the globe. Whether you want to learn something new or just have a little fun, these are sure to educate, inspire and entertain!



MOVIE: "Ixcanul"

The Guatemalan entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 88th Academy Awards, "Ixcanul" tells the tale of smart 17-year-old Mayan teen María, destined for an arranged marriage. Her coming-of-age journey provides a fascinating look at modern life in rural Guatemala.

~ Suggested by Verónica Arévalo, CI field reporter, Guatemala

Check it out on YouTube, IndieWire and soon through streaming.

MUSIC: Vallenato songs

A traditional musical genre born on the northern coast of Colombia, vallenato music involves gatherings known as "parrandas." The songs are considered a threatened cultural heritage by UNESCO. Armed conflict, a new wave of vallenato and declining space for parrandas threaten its survival.

~ Suggested by Patricia Calderón, CI field reporter, Colombia

Sample vallenato music on YouTube, at folkways.si.edu (search for "ayombe") or purchase on Amazon.

BOOK: "The Room on the Roof" by Ruskin Bond

Based loosely on the author's childhood in 1940-50s India, this beloved novel unfolds as teenage Rusty runs away from the closed European community he's always known. He is changed forever by his exposure to vibrant Indian culture.

~ Suggested by Shane Alliew, CI field reporter, India

Get it on Amazon.com or from your local bookstore.

Sign in through [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and a portion of your purchase supports (y)our poverty-busting work!



The stories in this issue of Journeys are just a small taste of what you will find on our new website. These are three of our favorites. (Bookmark [children.org/stories](https://www.children.org/stories) to see new content weekly!)



Take in some rooms and their views

Perspective is everything. And whether we're conscious of it or not, our surroundings play a role in how we view the world and our place in it. Take a look at some perspectives CI kids have from their homes. Check it out at [children.org/child-window](https://www.children.org/child-window).



Meet an amazing volunteer who has changed many lives

We rely on more than 8,000 volunteers to make sure our programs and community centers in 10 countries run as smoothly as possible. Each is inspired to create positive change in his or her neighborhood. They, in turn, inspire others. Here's the story of one special volunteer — who has been with CI since 2003 — in Lusaka, Zambia. Check it out at [children.org/lusaka-volunteer](https://www.children.org/lusaka-volunteer).



Visit a community that is anything but paradise

Our field reporter in Quezon City, Philippines, feels a deep connection to one small community outside of metro Manila. Despite its high crime and staggering poverty, she sees hope and determination in the eyes of the sponsored kids and the one CI volunteer who live in Paradise Village. Peek inside this dangerous, yet tenacious, Filipino community. Check it out at [children.org/paradise-village](https://www.children.org/paradise-village).



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or editor@children.org.

our vision

Our vision is that every child graduates from our program healthy, educated, employed and empowered to break the cycle of poverty.

