



Periods Should End Sentences. Not A Girl's Education.

This International Women's Day, give
the life-changing gift of reusable pads!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF REFUGEES | MARCH 2023



**Girls in Rwanda
can miss up to 50
days of school per
year because they
lack access to pads
while on their
period.**



March is a special and important month! In honor of International Women's Day, we have the goal of supplying every girl in the Impact Hope program with reusable pads and menstrual hygiene education.

Why this Matters:

Many young girls in developing countries miss school for one week each month because they lack the resources they need during their period. That is up to 50 days of missing school per year! Girls in Rwanda, especially those in the refugee camps, are not exempt from this reality.

Impact Hope girls have shared their struggle. Their parents can hardly provide enough food for their family, let alone quality pads for their girls. Many girls will cut their old clothes to use as pads. As you can imagine, going to school like this is terribly uncomfortable.

For the girls sponsored through Impact Hope, they receive pads each month. But, what happens when they graduate?

We have the desire to help our girls not only now, but in their future. This includes providing menstrual resources for them.

How You Can Join:

Give them the gift of a reusable pad kit that includes different pad sizes, a carrying pouch, and menstrual hygiene education.

These quality reusable pads last for 12+ months and are designed out of scent-free, soft material that is ultra-absorbent and anti-leak.

Every \$25 provides one kit.

Scan the barcode to learn more and to provide pad kits today!

To those who
have already
made a gift,
thank you!



God, You Never Leave Me Alone

Mercy kept his faith amidst the trials of becoming a refugee. He shares how sponsorship has given him hope for the future.

By Joan Oksenholt

“You never leave me alone, You’re always with me, thank you Lord!” sings Mercy Ishimwe. Mercy expresses his love for Jesus through his singing and the songs of praise he writes.

Born in Congo, Mercy, his younger sister Desange, and his older brother Fidel lived good lives with their parents until the political instability in the area grew very strong. The family was caught up in the violent conflict. Mai Mai (rebel soldiers) were on the hunt for Tutsi’s, and their beloved dad was killed. Their neighbors, who they thought were friends, poisoned Fidel when he ate a meal with them. When their mother heard gunfire nearby, she grabbed Desange and Mercy and ran with them to her brother’s house. She had to return home to gather food for her children to eat on the journey to safety in Rwanda. Mai Mai found her in her garden and she was attacked. She was found, broken and bleeding, and her brother took her to the hospital for treatment. Then their uncle helped Mercy, Desange, and their mom flee to Rwanda. They were panicked, frightened by the bodies they saw, and grieving every mile of the way. Desange was two, Mercy was six. Their uncle had to return to Congo, and the family of three were alone in the Nyabiheke refugee camp.

“You gave us direction. Our lives have changed! Impact Hope - our parents forever! Impact Hope - we love you forever!!”



Mercy with his sister, Desange (also sponsored), and his mother. Sponsorship is not only a blessing to a young person, but their parents as well!

The UNHCR gave them a little food to eat - maize flour, beans, a little salt and oil. Their mother sold some of the food to buy fuel to cook with. She had no clothing for them and no blankets to keep them warm. Life in the refugee camps is difficult for everyone, especially widows with young children. It was very hard for Mercy’s mom to get enough food for her children to eat. Finding clothing was often impossible. Both Mercy and Desange love their Mom very much because of her courage and protection. She is the one who taught them to pray, to love God, and to respect others. Mercy has wisps of memory of their dad and older brother. Desange has no memory of either loved one; she was too young when they died. Their mother often talks about them and describes how wonderful their dad and brother were. The smudged photos she shows them are clear enough to see that Mercy looks just like his dad.

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Mercy attended school in the refugee camp until he completed ninth grade. The high school is miles away from Nyabiheke and students must walk up and down a mountain to get there. Girls are harassed as they walk and many of them quit school because of it. Life was very difficult and Mercy prayed that God would help change their lives because their mother was powerless to help. He remembers the specific week when he had been praying and crying in the woods of the camp. “God saw my tears and answered my prayers! Impact Hope came a few days later and chose me to enter Gakoni Adventist high school!” Mercy was filled with joy when he was selected to be the headboy - the leader of all the students. When he completed his senior year his sponsor sent him to a vocational school for music. Now he works for a music recording studio and writes songs about Jesus that he loves to sing.

A few years later Desange finished ninth grade in the camp school and had to face the long walk up and down the mountain to continue her education at the senior high school. It was very dangerous for her - she was harassed and intimidated constantly. A sponsor heard of this and now Desange is delighted to be at Gakoni too. “I have good food to eat, a comfortable bed to sleep in, wonderful teachers and friends and I’m in a safe place to learn,” she says. “Best of all,

I learn about Jesus and his love for me. I know that God has plans for all of us and He has led Impact Hope and our sponsors to help us.” She plans to go to vocational school after graduation.

Mercy visits his mom in the camp when he can and calls her often. Now she is filled with hope for the future of her children. The little family struggled together for many years. Mercy and Desange’s mom believes that Impact Hope saved all three of them and she will be forever grateful. All three of them hope that the story of their family will help strengthen the faith of everyone who hears it.

Mercy knows that God sent Impact Hope to throw them a lifeline. He wrote a song to express his thanks for rescuing them. “...It was a bad day. No one could help us. For us YOU became the solution! You gave us direction! Our lives have changed! Impact Hope - our parents forever! Impact Hope - we love you forever!!”

Mercy treasures the first letter his sponsor sent him. It begins with, “Just a little reminder that you’re in God’s care and in my prayers today.” Young refugees feel hopeless and forgotten. Their sponsors give them love, hope and affirmation.

Denyse is Proud to Call Herself a Hairdresser!



Denyse is one of the Center for Hope’s first graduating students! She has completed a six-month training program for hairdressing. Denyse said, “This trade school has helped me be confident. I came here knowing nothing about hairdressing, and now I’m a professional!”

When students attend the Center for Hope, they receive business and entrepreneurial training, along with their

trade. Denyse came to learn with the desire to be self-reliant and help others. Now, she is working towards starting her salon. She says, “I am a different person than when I came. I can’t go without thanking Impact Hope for supporting me.”

Thank you for being a part of these young refugee lives and allowing them the opportunity to thrive!

Staff Spotlight

Karrie Stoldt
Development Director



My greatest joy in life comes from spending time with my family. I am a mom to 6 kids and caretaker of many cows, goats, chickens, bunnies, dogs, cats AND my

mother. For fun I like to take selfies with my animals and play in my Garden. My favorite season is winter because of my LOVE of snow! I believe kids are the most amazing gift God gives us and I want every child on this earth to have the love they need and have a chance to succeed in life. I am so thankful to each donor who gives from their finances to make sure the youth in Rwanda get the opportunity to get an education, learn a trade and most importantly learn how God loves them so dearly!

Pathfinders Impacting Young Refugee Lives



Thank you to our Pathfinder Club friends at the Valley View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oregon! These kids have been sponsoring one young refugee since October 2022. Their generosity inspired their church family, who also chose to sponsor a student. We love to see kids partnering together to make a huge impact! Thank you, Valley View Church, for your passion for helping refugee youth!

Follow Impact Hope



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Three Ways **You** Can Make an Impact

SPONSOR A STUDENT

\$50 a month goes to providing a safe education at a Christian boarding school, medical coverage, and all living essentials.

DONATE

Whether you make a monthly donation or a one time donation, 100% of gifts goes directly to the mission.

SHARE THE STORY

Invite your community to get involved. Give a church presentation, host a dinner party, or send out an email sharing why you support these young refugees!