



Jeannette shares her story with you.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF REFUGEES | October 2023

“Many people think that refugees are people who don’t have knowledge, ability, talent, or skills, and don’t have power. We can be heroes. We can be leaders. We have ability. Maybe the opportunity is very low, but we have the ability.”

Jeannette, Impact Hope Student

Renew Hope!

Did you hear? 154 refugee students sponsored at schools outside of the Impact Hope program lost their funding and were faced with the heartbreaking news of being sent back to the camps, essentially wasting an entire year of their academic pursuits. **Renew their hope today!** Find out more on the back page.

I Am Refugee, But I Am Also Human

*By Alyssa Johnston
Impact Hope Content Coordinator*

The grass thatched roof didn’t offer much for cover in the rainy season monsoons and the dull, red clay walls gave only a slight respite from the dry season heat. It wasn’t much, but it was home. Jeannette grew up in this humble two-room home in Nyabiheke refugee camp in north eastern Rwanda.

Jeannette was Congolese, but had never seen the mountains of the Congo. She had older siblings, but they were gone and married by the time she was born in the refugee camp. Jeannette was full to the brim with dreams and thoughts, but had no voice to share them. **“Our life was not good.”** Jeannette told me. With her mother being ill, **Jeannette carried a heavy load in her family.**

Jeannette’s day started at six a.m. with a quick bath and brisk walk to school. With only enough food for one meal per day, she walked to school on an empty stomach. The school gave one bowl of porridge at 11 a.m., just enough to temporarily relieve her hunger pains. By two p.m., it was time to come home and fetch water and begin cooking a meal for her family over a three stone fire. Then, she moved on to washing clothes. Both these chores were an entire afternoon of work.

For Jeannette, those precious hours of daylight after her household duties were completed were devoted to studies. In fact, Jeannette was quite smitten to tell me she was the top student (Cont’d inside)



Young girl in Nyabiheke refugee camp where Jeannette is from.

(Cont'd from front) in her refugee camp! The highlight of her long days were sweet visits with her grandfather. Jeannette was very close to him. She remembers her grandfather followed Jesus, unlike the rest of her family.

Jeannette lit up when I asked her if she had a hobby. She proudly told me she was a poet; and a good one too! **As a freshman in high school, Jeannette entered into a nationwide high school poetry contest in Rwanda, and won!** But when contest authorities learned she was a refugee, they instead took the winning prize and gave it to a Rwandese contestant. Can you imagine how discouraging that would feel?

Jeannette then told me about a woman named Andrae Grieder, a well known Swiss poet who visited Rwanda. Andrae, both poet and social activist, hosted another poetry contest in Rwanda exclusively for refugees across the nation's six camps to give refugees a chance to share their voices. Yet again, out of the hundreds of entries, Jeannette won! **Her poem was titled, "I am a Refugee, but I am also a Human."**

I asked Jeannette what inspired her to write poetry. She remembered first writing poetry when she was ten years old. "I like to talk, I am very social." Jeannette explained. As a young girl, she recalled a teacher catching her not

paying attention during class lectures and asking what she was writing on her paper. The teacher didn't find a secret note to a classmate, or a rebellious doodle, but a lovely poem. Her teacher was impressed. **"I like to inspire and share. I choose to use poetry as a way to spread a message. Many people think that refugees are people who don't have knowledge, ability, talent, or skills, and don't have power. We can be heroes. We can be leaders. We have ability. Maybe the opportunity is very low, but we have the ability."**

This young woman is now a sponsored Impact Hope Student! I asked Jeannette about her thoughts on school. She replied, **"It was my dream to go to boarding school. At home, there were many obstacles because of chores. I am the first in the class. I can't be late to school because I have nothing to do!"** Jeannette dreams of attending university to become a teacher for young girls like herself. I can hardly imagine that a young woman like Jeannette would be stopped by anything as she pursues this dream!

At Gakoni Adventist boarding school, Jeannette decided she wanted to follow Jesus and was baptized in 2021. Jeannette remembers her grandfather as the one who introduced her to Jesus and loved her the way God loves her. Isn't it incredible what the love of a grandparent can do?

Jeannette is able to pursue her dream because a sponsor like you said yes to giving a safe education and home to one more young person.

For those who have made a sacrifice to sponsor a student or give to support these youth, thank you! Jeannette is one of hundreds of others whose life will never be the same.



You Gave Them a Summer They Won't Forget!

In August, students filled Rwankeri Adventist Academy for the annual summer trade program! Students spent one month learning a new skill and being in a safe, Christ-centered environment with friends. Trades included agriculture, tailoring, hairdressing, electricity, culinary arts and batik!



Tyler with local Rwanda children.



August 2023 | Big Puddle Films team and Impact Hope team filming in the refugee camp.



Lights, Camera, Action! Meet Student Missionary

Tyler, a student from Walla Walla University, arrived in Rwanda this past August to begin his student missionary year! Tyler is studying Product Design and has a passion for photography. Tyler had dreamed of serving others overseas while using his creative talents. That's exactly what he is doing with Impact Hope! He will be assisting the stateside team by taking student pictures, including sponsorship photos, and getting student stories so we can share more with you! Tyler is also helping Jason Satterlund and his team from Big Puddle Films by getting extra video footage to create a series that allows you to get an intimate look into the lives of refugees and our students. Stay tuned for more details in the future!



Rice fields in Rwanda, a common sight when you're traveling throughout the country!

"You're Already Paid Up!"

We have six children who all attended the Adventist grade school in our small Oregon town. Budgeting for each month's school bill was a challenge, but especially when it was time to enroll everyone for the new school year. One year, things were especially tight, and I prayed for a way to come up with the funds. On enrollment night, I was prepared to plead our case and see if we could only pay part of the bill. When it was our turn, I stepped up to the table and said we wanted to enroll all the children for another year but...before I could say another word, the lady broadly smiled and said, "I see you're already paid up." I told her there must be a mistake, but she smiled and said, "No, an anonymous donor has paid the enrollment fees for each of the children." She wouldn't even give me a hint! So now we are able to lend a helping hand, and it's exciting to watch these young people grow and get a start in life. God is so gracious.

Fay Grimmel, Impact Hope Donor

Renewed Hope for 154 Abandoned Students!

154 refugee students sponsored at boarding schools outside of the camps lost this funding and were faced with the heartbreaking news of being sent back to the camps, essentially wasting an entire year of their academic pursuits. **These kids, who have already endured unimaginable hardships, are at risk of losing their chance of quality education and a better life.** The United Nations High Commission for Refugees asked Impact Hope if we could partner and help support these students and keep them in school.

Will you consider partnering with us this month with the mission to send all 154 students back to school?

- \$200- 1 student
- \$400- 2 students
- \$1,000- 5 students
- \$5,000- 25 students



Scan the QR code or visit Impact-Hope.org to give today!



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!

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