



# Give Joy

20 years of stories







## Caio is Figuring Things Out

Caio loves animals, and is the youngest (and most stubborn) in his family. They live about a mile from the church where Living Stones is, but he loves making the walk, often collecting bugs and lizards as he goes. When he is not happy, it is trouble, as when one Living Stones worker found out, when he began throwing stones at her.

Caio's mother gave her life to Jesus at the church, after her kids asked her to come with them, but their father is still suspicious of Living Stones. Caio is trying to figure out where he fits into things, at home and at the program, and told us that he has decided he wants to be a turtle when he grows up.



## Gustavo

Gustavo's house is falling apart. Built out of mud and sticks and covered with a blue tarp, during the rainy season the walls have begun to deteriorate. Gustavo's father was killed selling drugs, while Gustavo was there. His mother works all week (and is gone) cleaning houses to provide for their family.

Gustavo was kicked out of school and labeled a liar and thief. He has learning difficulties and can't consistently remember how to write his name, but has a great gift of working with animals.

Through the daily love received at Living Stones, Gustavo is learning that he does not have to act out to receive attention. He has accepted Christ as his Savior, and wants to be a pastor when he grows up.





## Joao Joins the Family

Living Stones takes sharing the Gospel very seriously, as it is inviting someone into our family. We love and celebrate hands raised and eager hearts given to Jesus, but that is not the end of the story--it is just the beginning! This year we have seen many new kids in the program and community give their life to Jesus, and we rejoice! But we are especially excited when we have a chance not to just plant seeds, but to see them grow.

Children's Day (October 12th), we celebrated and shared Jesus in five communities to over 200 children: Joao was one of the boys who came forward and gave his life to Jesus. We have a special joy when the kids who are in our full-time program understand what it means to choose Christ: these are the kids we get to see grow up in Jesus and in life, as we laugh, cry, and truly are like family.



## Luiz Overcomes

When Luiz Fernando started coming to Living Stones in 2014, it was the last hope for his parents. Luiz suffers from some difficult learning disabilities, as well as being mildly autistic. He lived in his own little world, and refused to come out at school or at home.

One of Luiz's gifts is creativity. Instead of doing classwork, he would take his worksheet and twist, tear, and turn it until he had created a dinosaur or other creature.

Instead of disciplining Luiz, the Living Stones workers patiently saw his talents and used them to slowly draw Luiz out of himself. Now, during breaks, you can often find Luiz Fernando surrounded by friends, still creating interesting art pieces. Luiz is succeeding at school, at home, and at Living Stones: physically, spiritually, and emotionally.





## Misse Changes her Community

Misse grew up at Pastor Ricardo's church in Guadalajara, and gave her life to Jesus there. She was very active at church, but her world was torn apart when her parents started fighting. God began to work in her family to reconcile them, and taught Misse to trust Him no matter what.

She led her friend Lane to Christ, and later her family adopted Lane when she didn't have a safe home. Misse and Lane together have dedicated their lives to working with the kids in their community, who have nowhere else safe to hang out or play sports. They run the Living Stones program in Guadalajara. Her dream is to be a missionary and follow God wherever He leads.





## Paulo Learns Forgiveness

Paulo, known as Chimbinha, proudly brings his new Bible to church. While he enjoys coming to Living Stones, church is his favorite time of the week. He sings the loudest, smiles the biggest, and hugs the hardest. He has recently become a Christian, and is figuring out what that means.

He looked on shamefully as another child told a worker, "I heard him say bad words--does that mean he isn't a Christian anymore?" Together, the children at Living Stones are learning about forgiveness and love. It is a long journey, and often more steps backwards than forwards, as we work to show these children a new way of living life at Living Stones.





## Renato's Burns

Renato lives in the trash dump community. When Renato grows up, he wants to be a "Catador," (trash recycler/collector) as it is the only life he knows. Renato was helping his aunt in their makeshift kitchen. They didn't have money to buy gas for their stove, so to make the regular rice and beans, they needed to find another way to cook it.

Unfortunately, they used what they had, paint thinner, and a horrible explosion occurred. Renato was instantly covered in third degree burns all over his body. He lost all vision in his left eye. He will be hospitalized for over a month as they do many surgeries and try to help him adjust to life with permanent burn damage. Living Stones partners with a church group who is working with Renato and his family during this hard time. Please pray for them.





## Ricardo Passes it on

Ricardo's father died and he was raised by his uncle in an abusive home situation. At 18, they told him to leave. Through this hard time, he met Jesus and the Moraes family, who invited him into their home and disciplined him.

He began preaching under a street light in Guadalajara, which then led to a church and Living Stones program. After many years of church planting, Pastor Ricardo is now leading Living Stones and the church in Lagoa de Itaenga, where he grew up.

It is incredible to see what God can do in children that are invested in, and shown that they are special and loved. Ricardo knows what it is like to grow up in difficult circumstances: and how God change your story.





## When Tragedy Strikes

The holidays bring us together, as do tragedies: when they are paired together it is often overwhelming. The end of October, the unthinkable happened. The ex-husband of one of the mothers at the Trash Dump Community attacked and murdered her. He was jailed soon after, orphaning their three young children: Werik, Taina (pictured), and Rafael.

Living Stones has a prayer partnership with a church group that ministers in this suffering community. They have taken in the children until they can be adopted by their aunt. We are working with them to make sure the kids have basic clothing, needs, and food during this difficult transition. Please pray for them and their community, and consider joining our prayer team. Write to [amobrasil99@hotmail.com](mailto:amobrasil99@hotmail.com) for specific questions on how you can help.





## Camila Leads Worship

The second week of February is Carnaval in Brazil; filled with music, dancing, and danger for at-risk children. Camila lives in the small town of Cajueiro Claro, where most locals spend Carnaval drunk or absent. Camila has grown up in the Living Stones program, and now leads the worship team at church. She wants the opportunity to go to church camp and share Jesus through her music.

Camila doesn't have the funds for camp. She is working hard to earn a scholarship by memorizing verses and reading books of the Bible because church camp is the highlight of her year. We have around 20 children, including Camila, who want to earn scholarships for camp. Can you provide a couple? [wribrazil.com/carnavalcamp](http://wribrazil.com/carnavalcamp)





## Cesar's Hunt for Easter

Cesar (the tall one on the middle) is from Belem (Bethlehem, in English). Living Stones doesn't have a church or program in Belem, but any time possible, Pastor Flavio comes and brings the kids to join in at Cajueiro Claro. Cesar has made a decision for Christ, and Living Stones is working hard to grow that relationship.

Cesar and his family are the poorest in their needy community, and his father died tragically when he was young. Each Easter season, Cajueiro Claro has an Easter Egg Hunt, where the Gospel is shared: an opportunity for everyone to hear. Last year was Cesar's first egg hunt ever, and he found so much more than just chocolate!

Help us provide Easter Celebrations for all of the communities that are reaching out to children like Cesar: children who wouldn't get a chance to celebrate Easter otherwise: [wribrazil.com/kitsforkids](http://wribrazil.com/kitsforkids)





## Neide's Greatest Wish

Neide's greatest wish was always to become a mother. She was raised Catholic, and married the boy next door. But eight years and many miscarriages later, she was so depressed that Christmas came and went without being noticed: what was there to celebrate?

Then Neide found out she was pregnant, to her happiness and horror: would she just lose this baby again? With this new life growing inside her, and so many unanswered questions, she came to Cajueiro Claro church. God got a hold of her heart and she soon gave her life to Jesus.

This was born safe and healthy, and after seeing such a dramatic change in his wife, Neide's husband started attending church. Less than a year later they were both baptized! God used Neide's greatest wish to bring her a whole new life!

Help Living Stones celebrate Mother's day:  
[wribrazil.com/momentsformoms](http://wribrazil.com/momentsformoms)





## Flavio's Trek for Transportation

Flavio was once an at-risk kid that some people invested in. At 16, he started teaching at the first Living Stones program. In 2010, he felt called to reach the small, hard, rural community of Cajueiro Claro, so he started walking four kilometers (each way) to build relationships with the children and start a Living Stones program there.

Today, the Living Stones program and church in Cajueiro Claro is going strong, and Pastor Flavio has a vehicle to get there. Each year we have a Trek for Transportation, remembering the dedication and determination that Flavio and other workers have to reach the neediest children in Brazil. We walk or run four kilometers in solidarity and prayer for the children, and we raise the money needed to fuel the Living Stones worker's vehicles. Come join us, or sponsor someone else who is:

<http://buildinglivingstones.org/trek>





## We Have no Story

The two boys in the picture, now men, saw their father killed when they were young. They have no story for Father's Day. After talking to every leader and worker in Living Stones, we found there are no stories to share with you about Father's Day: about how lives were changed and families brought together through a father stepping up and becoming a man of God. Children, yes. Teens, yes, mothers, yes. Fathers? No. Perhaps you even felt it yourself this past Father's Day: the ache for what could be; for what should be. In Brazil, Father's Day is the second Sunday in August. Help us provide an outreach to the fathers of the Living Stone's children. We want to change the story--we want to write new stories. [wribrazil.com/dayfordad](http://wribrazil.com/dayfordad)





## Cammilly Won a Scholarship!

Cammilly is a hard worker, and wants to be a teacher when she grows up. She lives with her mom, younger brother Joao, and stepfather. Her father left to live with his "other family" (many men have two common-law wives) when she was 5 years old. Because of the Living Stones program, and all the extra tutoring she received, Cammilly won a scholarship to a private school in a near-by town. The only sad part was that she's unable to continue with Living Stones (her new school is an all-day program). Cammilly and her family were excited that her brother Joao was able to take her place at Living Stones: In Lagoa de Itaenga, 150 kids signed up to join Living Stones this year, but there was only room for 60 children. We need you to join our child sponsorship program called Foundation Builders so that we can reach children like Cammilly and Joao. [wribrazil.com/foundationbuilder](http://wribrazil.com/foundationbuilder)





## Rachel's Birthday Wish

Her birthday was the same day as my nephews, but she didn't know that. Like many of the kids from Living Stones, she didn't know when her birthday was because there was no money to celebrate, and her family was focused on survival, not on remembering another year of life.

When we began celebrating birthdays at Living Stones, something changed. The children began to see that they were special, and that they had received a wonderful gift: time. Time to learn, to change, to grow, to make a difference in the world. When we celebrate them, we celebrate that God made them for a reason: something only they can do in the time they have been given.

I have always loved birthdays, but I never imagined what a difference they could make. Living Stones has celebrated over 500 birthdays since 2011: my birthday wish is to celebrate 100 more.

[wribrazil.com/10forthem](http://wribrazil.com/10forthem)





## Cezar Finds Jesus

Cezar's family didn't go to church--they made trouble. But Cezar did play sports, and when he was invited to join a basketball team, he didn't care where it met. For three years he came to the sports ministry in Guadalajara, played hard and went home.

In December 2015 something changed. Cezar started listening when they talked about God. He started to fight less. He started to go to church. And there, he gave his life to Jesus. When his family partied, he began to pray. Cezar is now a leader for the other kids (and a very good basketball player). Sports ministries make a difference. In Guadalajara, the local school does not have a gym: there is no other safe place for the kids to play. We need churches and individuals to come along side and support children like Cezar for \$30 a month to keep this program going.

[wribrazil.com/foundationbuilder](http://wribrazil.com/foundationbuilder)





## Maria Eduarda's Shy Smile

Maria Eduarda lives in Cajueiro Claro, in a small home with dirt floors. There is no running water, and life is not easy. She and her three sisters just moved into the area, and have been able to find friends at Living Stones. As it gets close to October, every child in Brazil is thinking the same thing: Children's Day is coming!

When Maria Eduarda was asked about Children's Day, she said, with a shy smile, she hoped there would be a party. She then whispered into my ear: "Children's Day is my birthday! I will be eleven!" Children's day isn't just for kids who can afford it, it is about celebrating that God made each child, and so they are special and valuable and loved. Help us celebrate: [wribrazil.com/10forthem](http://wribrazil.com/10forthem)





## Luan's Full Tummy

Luan's big smile quickly gets him out of trouble, and trouble finds Luan quickly. He lives in Cajueiro Claro, his days filled with Living Stones and running around the community barefoot. Many days his family has enough to eat. But some days they do not—enough days to be a serious problem. Brazil has come a long way in the past 10 years, and children are not starving to death. But many, like Luan, do not have food security. Regularly not having food triggers the brain to go into survival mode, making it harder for the children to learn. Living Stones is the only social program in the area, and we feed them hot, complete meals four times a week: this fills in the gaps and helps Luan's smile to shine. It only costs about \$1 for a meal. This Thanksgiving, let's remember those who don't have:  
[wribrazil.com/5for5](http://wribrazil.com/5for5)



# The Biggest Needs for Living Stones



God's transforming hand in the lives of these children. Only He can make the heart change that will last.



More passionate local leaders and volunteers that will step up and make a difference in their community and church.



Long-term partnerships with individuals, groups, and churches that will come alongside a community and a church in Brazil and make a difference. We call them Foundation Builders.

Note:

Find out how to become a Foundation Builder:  
[wribrazil.com/foundationbuilder](http://wribrazil.com/foundationbuilder)



"To love. To be loved. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify that which is complicated or complicate what is simple. To never look away. And never, never, to forget."

- Arundhati Roy -

