



zoeempowers

2025 RWANDA VISION TRIP

August 1st -

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Friday, August 1

► ZOE LEADER MEETING

We stayed in Kigali, Rwanda, and traveled to various areas to visit the ZOE Empowers groups, businesses owned by ZOE children, and other cultural landmarks unique to Rwanda. The ZOE groups we visited ranged from graduates to those in their first month of being together.

We did not see groups on August 1 because it was a holiday, like Thanksgiving, their big harvest day. Ephanie & Marie Chantal presented a summary of the ZOE program, which started in 2007 and is now in 14 countries. As of August 2025, ZOE was helping 17,360 children, 5,208 families, and 204 groups in Rwanda. Zoe means "The God-kind of life."



Ephanie's dad died when she was 9 years old, and she saw boys growing veggies. So she thought she could do the same, and did. She then bought matchboxes to trade. As she grew a little older, the Geneside happened, and she saw kids in need. That is when she thought back to what she did when her dad died, and created a plan to help others. She asked the government to help with her idea, and that is where this beautiful program started.

Through the empowerment program, children/youth-led households must contribute in order to change their mindset. This helps break the handout cycle. The ZOE staff provides guidance to support the children, and the government and community leaders are involved to help as well. The government helps by providing land to farm on, staff to educate the children, nurses and medical care, and grants for the children's businesses. The ZOE kids are given priority because the leaders know the ZOE children are educated.

When creating a new group, the ZOE staff takes a list from the government and meets with the kids for a screening. They are children who have no parents, or live with a grandparent, or with only 1 parent, or a disabled or compromised adult, or negligent parents. They are also in poverty, which means they have no food or source of food, no properties (home, room to rent, or no business), and they do not have access to medical care or schools. When they meet with the children, they assess their physical health and have them fill out a survey. The ZOE staff provides the children with all the information for the next meeting, because most of the children don't have a phone.

Group formation is the beginning of the ZOE program, and the ZOE facilitators start by sharing Jeremiah 29:11 with the children and explaining that the words shared are from God, not Epiphany or the facilitator. Each group forms itself and assigns leaders: President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Mentor. The head of households are the ones being trained, and they are between 16 and 20 years old. In that first meeting, the ZOE staff shares about graduation, so they know where they will be in the future. They explain the importance of empowerment. Together, the group decides when they will meet next.



ZOEempowers

► ZOE LEADER MEETING CONTINUED

The program focuses on training the children in the first 6 months on the following areas of intervention: Food Security, Nutrition, Agriculture, Health (emotional and physical), Hygiene, Small Business, Child Rights, Money Management, Access to Education, Vocational Training, Secure Housing, Community Connections, and Spiritual. They teach them not to be selfish with their knowledge, but to share it with the community. They bring the children to a discussion about what they want, so ZOE doesn't just tell them.

The first training is the Dream Chart and action plan for the family. The dream chart is a drawing that helps to work through the situation they are coming from, help process it, release some of the trauma, and create hope in their life. Drawing helps express what they can't speak and is a universal communication.

The ZOE program equips children with the skills and knowledge they need. Knowledge lasts longer than a handout. In the Food Security and Nutrition trainings, they discuss the importance of vegetables, their benefits, and how to create a kitchen garden, as well as how to find food without exploitation. In the Health and Hygiene trainings, they focus on cleanliness and the importance of medical insurance. For the Small Business training, they taught how to track proceeds, provided guidance on educational opportunities, and helped identify businesses that the children can start. They can test their skill level, and they may be eligible for a business loan/grant through ZOE. Or they can be set up for apprenticeships or other official training. They are also taught how to open a bank account. Vocational training must comprise 10% of the program to receive the kit. Boys often seek quick money, so more girls go through training than boys.

ZOE provides 100% of the school needs (uniforms and fees) for the younger kids for the first year of the program. In the 2nd & 3rd years, the head of the household pays the costs. If they are older than school age, they will help with skill training/vocational training.

The children are taught about Secure Housing, which educates them about repairs and construction of homes, how the government can assist, and how to support one another. And Community Connection is a big part of the program's success. The children are encouraged to be leaders, access available government assistance, and participate in the community involvement/workday, the last Saturday of each month. By the time the children complete the ZOE program, they are positively known in the community. Every ZOE group does a group project. Through this, everyone contributes money to a group account, allowing others to get a loan that they will repay with interest.

The children don't have to be Christian to participate in the program, but they are aware that scripture will be shared at the meetings and that ZOE is a Christian organization that shares the love of God. Through the spiritual training, they are encouraged to perform good deeds, help celebrate Christmas, and participate in small groups.

Before graduation, ZOE ensures that the children are connected to the community, familiar with local groups that can help with their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs, and have their basic needs secured. Graduation day is a celebration of empowerment.

Three months before the current groups graduate, the ZOE staff will identify a new area by consulting with local leaders, former partners, district leaders, and identifying school dropouts and those living in poverty. They have an introductory meeting with the leaders in new areas to tell them about the program, explain what ZOE needs, and ask if they have any needs. Then they see if they will partner with ZOE. They look to see if there are schools or opportunities to help the children grow in knowledge, and if there are other organizations already happening in the community that are similar. They work with the community to establish the best plan to help the children.

Saturday, August 2

TRAVELED NORTH

► JOHN CLAUDE - 23 YRS OLD

John Claude has 7 siblings and graduated from the ZOE program 1 year ago with the Brave Group. He started a boutique with dried crops after graduation. He sold the boutique and started selling fresh crops (sugar cane, cabbage, pineapple, squash, & carrots.) He buys the produce from different farmers and sells it all over to clients and at markets. His dream is to expand outside the country. He already expanded beyond the district. He is thankful we helped make his dream come true. He has 5 pigs, 20 chickens, 4 goats, and he puts money into 3 savings groups each week. John Claude got married in March 2025, and they are expecting a baby. His wife sells donuts. Two of his siblings are running businesses. One is selling peanuts and eggs. John Claude is saving money to buy a shop for his sister when she finishes training to be a seamstress.



► JOSIANE - 24 YRS OLD

Josiane has 3 siblings and is starting year 2 of the ZOE program with the Model Group. Josiane and 6 other ladies make plastic woven bags. The bags take about 40 minutes to make, and they last for more than 3 years. The more detailed bags take 2 hours to make. With what they earn, they are able to pay medical insurance on time and pay for the school materials and fees for their siblings. After Josiane learned to make the bags, she also learned to be a seamstress and is currently renting a sewing machine. These ladies each have several livestock as well.



► YVAN - 25 YRS OLD

Yvan has 3 siblings and graduated from the ZOE program 1 year ago with the Model Group. Ivan started doing shoe repair under an umbrella, only using a crochet hook, a string, and a few needles. He learned how to work on shoes from his dad and uncle, who both did as well. When he got a ZOE grant, he immediately moved to a one-room shop. At first, he was alone and worked hard. Zoe saw him and helped him get his first sewing machine. When given the machine, he was able to employ 2 workers, 1 being his brother Thomas. His business grew, and he expanded to a second room, adding 2 sewing machines. He learned he had to work hard, and now he runs his own business creating new shoes and repairing broken ones. He also has 6 employees who work with him. The local school gives him students to train, and today he has trained 40 people who are working independently, making shoes. He is doing very well, and so is his business. He has been able to build a house that he constructed. He provides school supplies and medical insurance for his 3 siblings. He has renovated his parents' house, owns a cow, and 20 chickens. His siblings' school wasn't great, so he was able to move them to a better school. The awareness of his business and the quality has spread to different areas. A youth minister visited him, which is a huge honor. He has even won awards for his shoes. Ivan is married and has 1 child. He plans to build more houses near his home for his friends, have a show in Muzanda where the gorillas are, and expand his skills and knowledge to develop his own shoe brand.





► **SAMUEL - 23 YRS OLD**

Samuel has 2 siblings and graduated from the Zoe program 1 year ago with the Hope Group. He started as a bicycle taxi driver, but now he is a motorbike taxi driver. He had to pay for motorbike driving training. Now, he leases his bicycle and runs a motorbike driving school, where he teaches others to obtain their motorbike driving license. He earns 180,000 Rwandan francs a week. He has 1 cow, 3 goats, and is considering getting pigs. He has a plot of land for a house and has received a driver's license.

► **JANVIER - 25 YRS OLD**

Janvier has 4 siblings and graduated from the ZOE program 1 year ago with the Togetherness Group. He started as a bicycle taxi driver, but now he is a motorbike taxi driver. He bought a motorcycle 5 months ago, which he is still paying for; however, it will be paid off in a year and a half. Janvier has purchased a cow and 2 goats, and he is also able to provide his siblings' school needs. His dream is to own a grocery boutique and have a plot of land to build a house on.



► **DAVID - 26 YRS OLD**

David has 4 siblings and graduated from the ZOE program 1 year ago with the Champions Group. He is a motorbike taxi driver. Through his earnings, he has bought land to build a house, a goat, and a lamb. He sold the goat and the lamb to buy a cow. He wants to continue to grow his business.

► **GROUP MEETING**

7 Groups joined us and celebrated the first fruits of their harvest with us. The groups were Togetherness, Model, Brave, Hope, Champions, Beginning, and Progress. We started with singing and dancing. They allowed us to give these first fruits to 4 elderly people from their area. These 7 groups generate income from farming, bicycle and motorbike taxis, grocery shops, boutiques, seamstresses, welding, carpentry, and running businesses. Before the ZOE program came, some of these children were homeless and lived miserable lives. They were mistreated, and their siblings were not able to attend school. They no longer live that life because of the ZOE Empowers program.



► **GERVAIS - 24 YRS OLD**

Gervais is from the Brave group and got an initial grant to buy a pig. That pig had 12 piglets. He sold the piglets to buy a cow and has since reproduced it. He has sold the calves and started a restaurant. He has hired 5 workers, put money in savings, and owns 2 pigs, 3 goats, 1 cow, and a restaurant. He can now help his siblings. One of them has a cassava leaves business, and the other is going to High School. Gervais has also built his own house.

► ADELINE

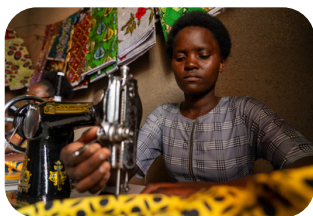
Adeline has 6 siblings and is part of the Model group. With her first grant, she bought 17 rabbits for breeding and selling. She is saving 5,000 Rwandan francs a month. She also sold drinks and jewelry. She is now able to help her siblings in school. 5 are in grade school, and 1 is in vocational training. She has 2 cows, 2 pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, and rabbits. Her dream is to buy a car or vehicle to transport her animals.

Sunday, August 3 TRAVELED SOUTH

► JOSEINE - 21 YRS OLD

► VALINTINE - 20 YRS OLD

Joseine has 2 siblings and is starting year 2 of the ZOE program with the Togetherness Group. She runs a seamstress shop with two friends, Valintine, who has 2 siblings, and their mentor Rosine. It is easier for the three of them to work together and share the bills of the small shop. Before being part of ZOE, they lived in extreme poverty, worked on neighbors' farms, and did manual transportation for farmers, and carried bricks. But they wouldn't always get paid, and if they did receive anything, it was very little money. They usually only ate one meal a day, if that. Their siblings couldn't go to school because they couldn't afford the necessary materials, and they had no medical insurance.



After ZOE helped them get trained to be a seamstress, Joseine saved for a sewing machine. She saved 2,500 Rwandan francs a week, bought a goat, and 2 rabbits, which have reproduced. Valintine was lucky to get a swinging machine. She has a goat that has given birth to 1 baby and has chickens that lay eggs. They both now have food to eat for themselves and their siblings, and can help their siblings with school supplies and medical insurance. Valintine dreams of expanding her shoe business by selling Crocs that the cool kids in school like. They are thankful to Mansfield for helping them achieve some of their dreams and some to come. They are able to eat healthy meals and promise to keep going forward.

► EMANUEL - 18 YRS OLD

Emanuel has 3 siblings and is starting his 2nd year in the ZOE program with the Zenith Group. Emanuel sells small livestock and breeds them. He goes to different markets every day. He buys livestock from local farmers in the village and takes them to the markets. It takes him 3 hours to gather the animals and then travel to sell them. He buys chickens for 4,500 Rwandan francs and sells them for 6,000 Rwandan francs. He also has clients who call in orders that he delivers right away, like a restaurant. From the profit, he has bought a bicycle that he used to rent, bought chicks, and is attending motorcycle driving school. He can get food and eggs from the chickens. He uses the eggs to sell chicks. He is also able to care for his siblings' school needs. Previously, he worked for others; now he works for himself and makes a profit.



► CLAUDE - 19 YRS OLD



Claude has 1 sibling and is starting his 2nd year in the ZOE program with the Zenith Group. Claude used to work at the neighbor's farms doing manual labor. He also got involved in drugs. ZOE provided him with training and a grant. He bought a pig and cared for it, and it gave birth to 8 piglets. He sold the piglets and acquired a cow, which, owning a cow, is a huge deal, especially during their first year of the program. He saved up and bought a bike. He now sells turkeys and rabbits. Turkeys are rare, so he keeps some because 1 can reproduce 20 chicks. He goes to the market 3 days a week. He buys more with the profit he earns. He can eat every day, and because of ZOE, his life is better.

► BIKE TAXI PROJECT

Yunusu, 21 years old, 2 siblings; **Alexis**, 18 years old, 2 siblings; **Protais**, 19 years old, 3 siblings; **Fabrice**, 19 years old, 3 siblings; **Bertin**, 18 years old, 3 siblings; **Gevais**, 18 years old, 2 siblings; and **Fabien**, 24 years old, 2 siblings. These gentlemen are starting their 2nd year of the ZOE program. These boys start their day at 5 am and work until evening as bike taxi drivers. With a grant from Zoe, they have been able to buy bikes. Yunusu even has contracts to carry children to school and gets paid monthly. From the profits, they can care for their family, buy food, provide their siblings with their school needs, and buy livestock. Their dreams include owning another bike, employing a driver for it, owning a cow, and owning a motorbike.



► AGNIS - 20 YRS OLD

Agnis has 4 siblings and is starting her 2nd year in the ZOE program with the Unity Group. She is part of a group of 20 basket weavers from the Unity and Happiness Groups. The Aizize company buys items from these ladies to sell in America. They get their materials from farmers. They use agave for the inside and use corn husk to sew around the agave.



► GROUP MEETING

We joined 6 Groups for a meeting. The groups were **Zeinth**, **Seeds**, **Devoted**, **Unity**, **Togetherness**, and **Happiness**. Between all 6 groups, there are 177 households and 546 children. The problems before being part of ZOE was that they were not able to get daily meals, had to work hard labor, and earned little wages, carried manure, carried bricks, worked mines, worked on construction sites, and helped on a neighbor's farm, lacked school supplies, didn't have medical insurance, had illnesses because of improper hygiene, there was also drug use and prostitution with some.





With the training and help of the ZOE program, they are doing well. From the training, they have 557 businesses across the groups. From the profits. They have a total of 568 livestock. They have learned to share responsibility, how to care for themselves, and about children's rights. They have been able to get their siblings the school supplies they need, pay for vocational

training for their older siblings, and keep medical insurance. They work on a group income project of making bricks and work together to help build homes. They can afford a meal each day, livestock, and their siblings are in school. They are busy working instead of roaming the streets.



► ROSINE - SEAMSTRESS MENTOR

After the youth form their ZOE groups, they are asked to find a mentor who is spiritual, noble, and loves kids. When the group asked Rosine, she immediately said yes. Her group consists of 29 households that she meets with weekly. She helps with monthly trainings. The group was given fruit seeds (papaya, orange, and pineapple) that they worked together to harvest. If someone has a problem, they meet with her and they work together to find a solution. The group is very kind and successful. They work hard for a better future.

► TRAHIEEN - 4 YEAR HS STUDENT

Trahien is Rosine, one of the seamstresses' sisters. She used to be chastised in school; she couldn't concentrate or find food. But thanks to the partners of Mansfield, her sister Rosine has given her 2 rabbits, which produced 8 babies. Rosine makes their clothes, and is able to pay for their medical insurance on time, and the school supplies needed. They are thankful for what has been provided to Rosine, who helps her siblings.



► ERIC - 18 YRS OLD

Eric has 2 siblings and is starting year 2 of the ZOE program. He lived a tough life before ZOE. Now he is a beekeeper. He has two kinds of hives: 3 modern boxes and 20 traditional beehives. He makes traditional hives out of banana leaves for the locals and has hired two workers. He harvests 3 times a year. From his profits, he has bought 2 pigs and obtained one 1 from ZOE. He has built a large shelter for the 3 pigs and has 2 chickens. His dream is to have 100 hives.

► DIANE - 18 YRS OLD

Diane has 5 siblings and is just starting year 2 in the ZOE program with the Togetherness Group. Before ZOE, she carried bricks, and now she runs a business. She has a cassava, cabbage, and tofu business. She is able to eat twice a day. From her profits, she now has 5 chickens, 10 rabbits, 1 goat, 1 pig, is able to rent land to plant cabbage, and has 1 worker who helps with crops. Her dream is to own a cow and a house.

► SPECIAL VISITORS

What a special moment we had when we finished the group meeting. There were 4 young men and a young lady waiting to see us so they could update us on how well they are doing. It was awesome to see their joy and have them share with us. We were able to pray over them before they left.





► GIZWE - 17 YRS OLD

Gizwe has 2 siblings and just started his 3rd year of the ZOE program. Seeing him was extra special for those who had come to Rwanda 2 years ago. Gizwe had just started the program at that time and was so sad and lonely. ZOE was able to provide him with an initial grant, which enabled him to get goats and livestock. He sold the goats and acquired a pig that gave birth to 8 piglets. He sold those and bought a plot of land where he will build a house. He sells cassava flour and owns a pig and 12 rabbits. Today, he has food and medical insurance, which is important to help his mom, who has epilepsy. She is doing better now that he has provided the medical care she needs. His smile never left as he shared, and in the end, he said he is no longer living in isolation because he has many friends.

► ALEXIS

Alexis has 4 siblings. He is a bicycle taxi driver. But he just bought a new motorbike from the factory. He also sells charcoal. Alexis has purchased a milking cow, 10 sheep, and land where he planted trees that can be harvested in January. The bicycle taxi is still operating. He is free from the debt of the land and puts money in the group savings and personal savings. He earns 100,000 Rwandan francs per month and 1,500,000 Rwandan francs per year. His dream is to buy a plot of land and build a house. Alexis supports his siblings and teaches them how to own a business. He gave his brother a grant to start his own motorbike business. Gave his sister a sheep and a goat because it is a way for her to get income while in school. Now that she has finished school, she has bought a sewing machine. The youngest brother is 17 and a senior in high school. Alexis gave him 2 baby goats to raise and a piglet. After a year, the pig gave birth to 10 piglets. With those profits, he bought a calf and is waiting on a 2nd one. He also assists 3 neighbors by sharing goats with them. The neighbor helps care for them, and in return, they will split the babies when they are born.

► PAUL - 25 YRS OLD

Paul has 2 siblings and adopted 2 other children. He graduated from the ZOE program 1 year ago. Paul is an artist, paints paintings, creates carvings, fixes motorbikes, and does auto body repair. Even after graduation, he still does all these jobs. He has trained 3 others to do the same and has 3 workers. Paul has supported his siblings, including one who is in a private university to become a teacher. She attends school on the weekends and has a canteen business during the week. She will graduate next year. Paul wants to further his studies. He owns a motorcycle and has a place/shop to keep his stuff safe. Paul gave his siblings 3 chickens to lay eggs and has 4 goats. He plans to buy a plot of land to build a house on and to start selling clothes. He paints to relax and has a government contract to make the village's entrance signs.



► JOHN PAUL

John Paul got a goat from ZOE and was trained on the Dream Chart. He started a bicycle taxi business. With the profits, he bought chickens. He now has 20 chickens. He purchased a plot of land to build a house, and another to grow trees. He owns his bicycle and another one that he rents out. He joined the savings group. He had 5 goats, which he sold, and bought a cow. He is selling bananas and supplies them to 2 schools, which is good business. In 3 months, he earns over a million Rwandan francs for his banana delivery business. His next dream is to buy a motorcycle.

Monday, August 4

TRAVELED SOUTH

► NEW GROUP - 2ND MEETING

3 groups were meeting. The Brave group has 30 families with 98 children, The Senergy group has 23 families with 79 children, and the Unity group has 22 families with 76 children.

This meeting was the first training since part of ZOE's focus was on creating their Dream Chart and Family Action Plan. The ZOE leaders explained to the children that if they don't know where they are coming from, they can't see where they are going. There are 5 main parts of the dream chart. The leaders also explained that ZOE does not do everything for the children. The children have to contribute, and ZOE will be their helper. Jazel from the Brave group expressed that seeing the whole chart makes it easier for her to see. Obed from the Unity group asked how to draw his parents' splitting for what made him sad. And Joyeuse asked how to draw if someone abused her emotionally. The group was very interested in working through the Dream Chart. As for their dream of the future, ZOE expressed that it needs to be achievable in 1 year and be a dream that will change their lives.

Alice, the Project/District Lead and Program Facilitator, started with the Bible verse: Jeremiah 29:11. She asked why it was important to have a dream. She said that when you have a goal, you try to go forward; if you don't, you may go ½ way or might not go far. She told them that after they create their Dream Chart

Dream Chart:

- What makes you feel sad?
- What makes you happy?
- What happens in the community that you do not like?
- What is your dream for the future?
- What will be your guiding principles to achieve your dream?



to hang it where they can see it every day. They told them that they know it is not easy to meet these goals, but they know they can do it. They can find hope in God, as Jeremiah 29:11 says. God will strengthen your work. She also encouraged them to pray and remember that God has a plan for them. Ephanie reminded them that they have to do part of the work, and ZOE will help. One who helps, helps themselves. God will help those who help themselves. All 3 groups meet on Sundays each week. They are so new that they have not yet selected their mentors.

► DIVINE - 19 YRS OLD

Divine has 5 siblings, and this is the 2nd meeting in the ZOE program. She is living with her mom, and her dad has disappeared. Her mom has a mental illness, she is never happy, and always says she wants to die. Every evening, her mom will gather her things and say she wants to die. All their relatives have disappeared. She has dropped out of school to care for the family. The siblings have also dropped out. She also has feelings that she wants to kill herself, but through ZOE, she wants to change. The saddest thing to her is seeing how her family has left, even though the kids are so young and still need to be cared for.



► PAULIN - 20 YRS OLD

Paulin has 5 siblings, and this is the 2nd meeting in the ZOE program with the Senergy Group. His father is in prison, and his mom and other brother left. He is taking care of all his siblings. To obtain food, he secretly visits the mining site by midnight, despite the fact that it is illegal. A guy pays him to get it, but sometimes doesn't pay him. His siblings can't go to school and are hungry. He is sad that his siblings ask where their parents are, and when he can't get food for them. They go to sleep hungry. But he said he has hope.



► MARIE JOSE - 19 YRS OLD

Marie Jose has 5 siblings and a son. This is her 2nd meeting in the ZOE program with the Senergy Group. Her parents left and got remarried to others; neither cares for the kids. She said that for her siblings, she needs to work and earn money to provide food. She struggles to get a job because she has her son, Dylan, and is nursing. She said, "Imagine how hard to breastfeed my kid when I don't eat." She went to get food, and a man tricked her into going into the house to get some leftovers. Once inside, he locked her in and raped her. He denied he did that to her, but that is how she got pregnant with Dylan. She struggles to take care of 5 children and to have milk for the baby when she is not eating. Because she attended the ZOE meeting, she was unable to work and has no food for her siblings, maybe not even for tomorrow.

► ERIC - 17 YRS OLD

Eric has 2 siblings, and this is the 2nd meeting in the ZOE program. His mom is a sexual worker, so she is sometimes there and sometimes gone. His dad has disappeared. He has to go around the neighborhood to find manual labor. If he doesn't get food, his siblings go to sleep hungry. He will go at midnight to steal, and sometimes he gets caught and they beat him. Because he steals, he doesn't have friends, and no one shows compassion or offers them food. Sometimes his mom gets drunk at night when she is home and beats them, so they run away from home.



► DENISE - 20 YRS OLD

Denise has 5 siblings, and this is the 2nd meeting in the ZOE program. She is the oldest, and because of family conflict, her parents left. They live with their 70-year-old grandmother, who has health issues and can't care for them. Her siblings dropped out of school. To find means of survival, they walk around. Something that made her sad was when she went to check for labor. The wife was gone, and the husband raped her. She now has a baby, and as a result, no one will hire her. She said, "Imagine doing labor without eating, sometimes will faint."

► ALEX - 17 YRS OLD

Alex has 1 sibling, and this is the 2nd meeting in the ZOE program with the Brave group. They are living alone. Parents come and go, and are not stable. He was forced to drop out of school to search for food for his younger sister. He works at the sand site for construction. Alex fills 60 lb sacks and only earns 70 cents, which is exploitation. To have 1 meal, he needs to make 10 sacks. They need 500 Rwandan Francs a day to eat. He has never had medical insurance and is sad that his parents left him. He asked, "Why does God allow?"





► ZACHARY - 17 YRS OLD

This is Zachary's 2nd meeting in the ZOE program with the Senergy Group. He went through his Dream Chart. He said he hates all kinds of abuse. Is sad his father died when he was young. He likes to play football. And his dream is to have a pig that gives birth to piglets. His guiding principles are to work hard, have savings, avoid drunkenness, and pray.

► YVONNE - 19 YRS OLD

Yvonne has 3 siblings and a child of her own. This is her 2nd meeting in the ZOE program with the Unity group. Yvonne broke down several times as she shared her Dream Chart with us. She hates sexual abuse. When she was young, she was tricked and raped at a man's house over food. The man will not help her

with the child. She dropped out of school, which makes her very sad. She was really good at soccer and wanted to become a famous soccer player. Now she will dream of owning a food crop business and selling cornmeal so she can provide the school fees and meals for her child and her siblings. The Guiding principles she will use are: Pray to God daily and know that He is happy for her, put money in savings, and never get discouraged.

There was so much raw emotion from these brave children as they shared their stories. The brokenness in their eyes was heartbreaking. But there is also so much hope knowing that with the ZOE Empowers program, they will soon be self-sufficient! Through the three-year program, they will receive microgrants, life skills, and vocational training to become secure, healthy, and connected community members!

Tuesday, August 5

TRAVELED NORTH

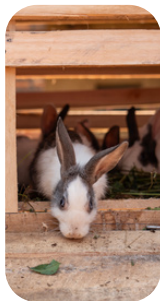
► EPHANIE KNOWLEDGE

The main vegetables they grow in Rwanda are: Greens, Cabbage, carrots, corn, beets, potatoes, and cassava. They are encouraged to grow other veggies as well. Every household gets 1 avocado tree and 1 banana tree for food. Banana leaves

are very valuable because they are used to help with cooking, covering food while cooking, and other tasks such as making baskets. Taking a banana leaf from a neighbor is stealing because it is usable in many ways. Green bananas are used for cooking food. It takes banana seeds 18 months to produce bananas. Fruit plants/trees take 1 year. You can rent a banana tree from a farmer until your banana tree is big enough. The government comes and trains the groups.

Rwanda has five provinces: North, South, East, West, and Kigali City, and there are 27 Districts. Today we will be in the North Province, specifically in the Gicumbi District, and the Byumba Sector. We will start by meeting at the market, which is usually open at 3 pm. The ladies came to the market early today so we could see them.





► ARAINE - 20 YRS OLD

Araïne has 3 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Labor Group. Before ZOE, she did hard labor to survive, which she said was so tough for them. Araïne did not have enough to provide daily needs for her siblings or herself. ZOE was an answer to their prayers. With the initial grant, she bought rabbits to sell and some for reproduction. From her profits, she was able to support herself and her siblings. She sometimes buys more from a bigger market to sell at the smaller

markets, and at other big markets. This has helped her escape poverty. Araïne makes money day after day. From the profit, she has been able to buy 2 goats; she received 1 goat from ZOE, so she has a total of 3 goats. She also has 2 chickens. Her dream is to become a tailor and will receive training next year. She is so thankful for Mansfield. God Bless You.

► KEVINE- 18 YRS OLD

Kevine has 2 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Unity Group. She has a fruit-selling business (oranges, gooseberries & bananas) She rents a bike to go to a big market to buy at wholesale. She uses the rented bike to carry the products back to their area. She then sells the produce in their area. Even with renting a bike at 1,000 Rwandan francs a day, she still profits 10,000

Rwandan francs over 2 days. With her profits, she can provide for her family. With her weekly savings, she can buy more and keep some for her family. She has 3 goats, 2 she bought and 1 from ZOE. Kevine is so thankful to Mansfield for their support. She wants us to

see that her life is changing and is better.



► SANDRINE - 20 YRS OLD

Sandrine has 2 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Unity Group. She has a fruit and vegetable selling business (bananas, avocados, cabbage). The profits help provide their household needs, fees for her siblings to go to school, and health insurance for them all. From the rest of the profits, she bought 2 sheep and 3 rabbits. She also received 1 more sheep from ZOE.

Sandrine's dream is to own a cow. She wants to thank so much Mansfield.



► DIVINE - 19 YRS OLD

Divine has 4 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Labor Group. She has a business of selling vegetables (eggplant, carrots, tomatoes, red onions). Zoe was an answer to their prayers. She received weekly income-generating training. And received 1 goat from Zoe, then bought 1 goat from her profits, which produced 2 babies. She felt abandoned by God before, but now she goes to church and can provide for her siblings. Her dream is to have a canteen project (store with fresh stuff like porridge, tea, cakes, milk, sweets), which is very needed in that area. The market there has a large number of customers. She is so thankful for Mansfield. Thank you.



► LATIPHA - 20 YRS OLD

Latipha has 2 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Self-Reliant Group. She sells green bananas. She buys from the market in the city, and rents a bike to carry them back to the area. She gets help to move the bananas back and forth from storage to the market. More than 20 kilometers each way. She wants to say "thank you so much Mansfield, for providing grant." She is now able to provide daily meals for her family. From the profits, she has bought 2 goats and received 1 from Zoe. Her dream is to be a main seller for green bananas and Irish potatoes.



► PARTNERSHIP WITH ARAINE

One beautiful thing we heard about was how the ZOE children form partnerships with their neighbors who are not a part of the ZOE program, but need help. One story we heard was how a gentleman shared his goat with his neighbor. The neighbor cares for the goat. When the goat reproduces, they will share the offspring. If there are twins, they each get one of the twin babies. If only one is born, the ZOE child will receive the first baby, and the neighbor will receive the second born. Today, on behalf of First Methodist, we created a partnership with Araine, sharing one of her rabbits. We asked her to care for the rabbit, and we will check in when we return to see how our partnership has been going.



► GROUP MEETING

The leaders and mentors of 6 groups joined us to share their progress and what they have learned. The groups are: **Example** - Bandebereno, **Faithful** - Abizerwa, **Labor** - Umurimo, **Unity** - Abunzubumwe, **Self-Reliant** - Kwigira, and **Devoted** - Abadahemuka. They performed a welcome dance for us, they introduced the groups, leaders, and mentors, they had us introduce ourselves, and then the ZOE staff introduced themselves. The group report started with "Dear partners, group leaders, may you have peace." The President of the Faithful group, Ange (21 years old with 2 siblings), presented the



report for the Faithful, Labor, Self-Reliant, Unity, and Example groups. There are 596 children between the groups. The problems they faced before ZOE's partnership were: finding meals, as they mostly only had 1 meal a day due to hard labor; carrying neighbors' garbage; siblings not attending school; not having health insurance; lacking proper hygiene; some dealing with prostitution; and some being thieves. But after Zoe's help, they

were put in groups and made a group community. In dreaming and family planning, they made dream charts. They now have food security and received seeds (avocados, tomatoes, oranges). They were trained in income-generating activities and received grants to start businesses. The businesses they have are: 18 Bike Taxi, 8 Tailors, 24 Veggie & Fruit sellers, 4 Selling items, 14 Livestock, 6 Welding & Mechanics, and several sell eggs. They were trained on how to care for livestock, and 172 livestock have been given to them. Some have started reproducing, some are used for milking, and some for manure. With the 186 livestock sold, they bought: 2 cows, 73 Sheep, 37 Goats, 25 Chickens, 9 Geese, and 40 Rabbits. They learned about reproduction, health, and hygiene. They helped each other build kitchen gardens and learned how to use manure for farms. ZOE has helped siblings with school materials. Some are in college. They receive health insurance. The group activities are: crop planting for one another and a car shop in town. They get enough food for the day, so they don't roam the streets, and their siblings are in school. "On behalf 6 groups, 172 members, we are thankful just after 1 year, help so much."



► IRAGUHA - 19 YRS OLD

Iraguha has 2 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Unity Group. Before ZOE's partnership, life was hard. He had to really work hard for his siblings, who were not in school. He did hard labor. When he first joined ZOE, he received training and then got a grant for a bike taxi. He now helps his siblings attend school with profits and have food. He also has money for savings. He said, "I am one lucky to have a cow. Thankful for Mansfield. God Bless You."



► PERELINE - 20 YRS OLD

Pereline has 2 siblings and is in the ZOE program with the Labor Group. Before ZOE, she used to do hard labor to feed her siblings and would complain. Because life was hard, they had no health insurance. But because the ZOE program made groups and provided an initial grant, now she is a fruit and vegetable owner. With the profits, she is able to provide the daily needs for her siblings, pay school fees, and put money in savings. ZOE helped achieve more by also providing school materials. They now eat 3 meals a day, and her siblings are in school. ZOE has done so much for them. With the profit, she has 2 goats that she uses the manure to fertilize the vegetables. She said, "Thankful for Mansfield to give grant."

► MORE FROM THE LEADERS

"We love you so much. With grants we are all working and have business and harvest and we want to give you the harvest."

Siblings from the groups presented each of us with a bowl of different produce that they had harvested. It was a beautiful gesture to show us their thanks for our support. What a beautiful last day with our ZOE kids!

► ZOE RWANDA

There are 408 Active Groups, 5,000 Head of Households, 17,000 Children.

We were able to have dinner with the ZOE Rwanda staff who could come. What an incredible group of people that are serving in Rwanda helping God's children take the steps to a better life!

God is at work through the Zoe Empowers program and it is changing the communities in Rwanda in such incredibly powerful ways!

