

Daniel's* Story

*Not his real name — to protect his privacy

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In April of 2019, a ferry boat capsized on Lake Kivu in the D.R. Congo. One hundred and fifty people drowned in the accident.

A day or two later, Judith was walking near the lakeside. She noticed a little boy huddled by a building. She understood that something wasn't right, so she approached the little boy and spoke to him.

She found out his name, and the story tumbled out. This little boy, Daniel, had been on the ferry when it capsized. He was the only one in his family who survived. Now he was all alone and scared.

Judith understood all too well what it feels like to be orphaned, for she herself had been an orphan. A government authority noticed her compassion for Daniel. "You are the only one who has paid any attention to this boy," he said. "You must really have a heart for children!" Judith put Daniel in school and tried her best to provide for him. However, this was difficult, and she thought about how much better his life would be if he could grow up as she had—in a home at the Patmos Children's Village.

She decided to take Daniel to Patmos to see if he could become a part of the children's village program.

Judith and Daniel arrived at Patmos and received a warm welcome. The administrator heard Daniel's story and was impressed by Judith's compassion. He understood the difficulty she faced trying to work and provide for Daniel by herself.

Once it was decided to accept Daniel into the children's village a question was raised. "Which house mother would be the best to care for Daniel?" Immediately, the name of one house mother came to mind.

"Georime!" Georime is such a loving and tender mother. Even though she already had a house full of children, it was decided to ask her if she would be willing to take in one more child.

The administrator called for Georime. When she arrived, she was introduced to Judith and Daniel and heard his story.

Georime's care and concern for Daniel were immediately evident. When she was asked if she would be willing to take him into her family and provide for his care she said, "Of

course, I will take him!” She placed her hand on Daniel’s shoulder and willingly accepted him into her family.

There was something especially meaningful about that moment. Like Judith, Georime understands very well what it is like to be an orphan, because she is also was one of the children who grew up at the Patmos Children’s Village.

She had been orphaned when she was very small. She had been welcomed into the village family in 2002 after her parents died in the civil wars that raged in that country. Now she is one of the children’s favorite house mothers at the village.

As Georime and Daniel walked down the path toward home, the scene was amazing. A grown child from the children’s village was now paying forward all the love, care, and compassion that had once been shown to her.

The child who had once needed a family was now the mother who welcomed another child into a family.

ICC family members who support orphan children like Daniel are making an investment. This investment provides such a rich return when the grown children live to serve as they have been served.

What happened that day was more than one child finding a home. It was love moving from one generation to another.

It was a family receiving another child. And it was a grown child who had once been cared for becoming the caregiver.

That is the kind of transformation that happens when we give a child more than food and shelter.

We give them a family.

We give them belonging.

We give them an opportunity to experience the love of God—and, one day, to pass that love on to someone else.

