What a year it’s been for the Rwandan Orphans Project and our Imizi Children’s Center!

Last year we faced our program’s greatest challenge and you, our supporters, came to the rescue and helped us secure our future for years to come. That achievement made 2015 ROP’s best year yet, but I’m very happy to tell you 2016 was an equally great year for us and those we support.

Why is that? Well, from the moment we settled into our new home we began making renovations and improvements around our property that have made our Imizi Children’s Center a better place for our children. But while those changes are important, what Imizi is really all about is helping vulnerable people, and this year we have been able to serve more than ever before.

And we’re not only helping kids anymore. Recognizing that adults can also benefit from our presence in our rural community we began hosting meetings and workshops for local people and the family members of children who stay with us, where they could learn about family planning, sexual health, positive parenting, gender equality and other topics. Our goal is to help solve domestic issues before they lead to a breakdown of the family. To us preventing a child from leaving home to live on the street is just as important as helping those who are already out there.
We’ve had many achievements this year, and we hope you are as proud of them as we are. In 2016:

- **We increased the total number of vulnerable children attending our school from 140 to 200.** These are children from our community’s poorest families who cannot afford to pay for public school, so they attend Imizi’s school completely free of charge.

- We completely renovated one of the boys’ dormitories, making it more comfortable and safe for them. We also constructed new toilets and an eco-friendly outdoor kitchen that is great for the environment and **saves us money**.

- We began constructing a massive underground water storage tank with a rainwater collection system that should ensure our children and animals have access to water even during the long dry seasons.

- **We successfully reintegrated 11 children back into their families.** Each of them will continue going to school with the support of ROP.

- **We rescued 19 children from homelessness.** Three of them were only five years old, while the others were all under 10 years old.

- We have five boys who have completed secondary school, two who have finished vocational school and one who has graduated university with a bachelor’s degree. In 2017 we will be supporting 21 in secondary school and 8 in vocational training.

- Eight - that’s right **EIGHT** - of our graduates have performed well enough to earn government scholarships to university starting next year. **That is a record for ROP and a huge achievement for these amazing young men.**
We are proud of each and every one of our children, who have been through so much but work so hard to make better futures for themselves. We wanted to tell you about just one of them today, to show you that the money you donate really does make a difference.

Irene (pronounced ee-ren-ay) came to us as a young boy many years ago when ROP was still just a shelter in an abandoned warehouse. As ROP matured so did Irene. A young man with great character, a gifted athlete and a hard worker, Irene was a natural leader at the Center, and when our boys began electing their own leadership, Irene was unanimously voted to become the ROP’s first Head Commissioner.

A few years into secondary school Irene recognized that he was not a strong performer academically, so he asked to join a trade school. Much to the surprise of the children, Irene chose hairdressing and joined a year-long program where he worked hard and performed well. Irene soon found a job with a salon, cutting hair, sweeping the floor and making appointments.

A year later and Irene shocked us all when he told us that he had been promoted and was now managing several salons across Kigali.

Apparently the owner saw in Irene a strong work ethic, leadership skills, good character and someone he could trust to run his business. Irene now has a steady salary with good prospects, rents a house for himself, and is even able to help some of his friends who are unemployed.

Irene’s success is not ours alone. We share it with all of you who support our cause each year.
ROP’s Imizi Children’s Center is full of future mechanics, carpenters, engineers, entrepreneurs and hairdressers. Thank you for helping our children pursue their dreams and secure their futures.

To all of those who have donated to us this year and supported us in other ways – thank you for your continued support. We are so grateful to have your support as we do our work.

For those who wish to make a donation as we approach 2017, you can visit our website for details of how to do this.

Give a donation

The support we get during the holiday season helps us ensure we are on stable financial footing for the next year so we can help as many vulnerable people as possible.

Once again thank you for being a part of a great year for ROP and Imizi. From our family to yours we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2017.

Warmest regards,

Sean, Jenny and everyone at the ROP and Imizi Children’s Center