



journeys

A PLACE. A TEAM. A PATH.

Breaking
the cycle of poverty.

A FORMULA FOR REAL-LIFE

happily ever afters

By Cynthia Sappracone, CI world-changer since 2013



Elizabeth
age 6

Giving every CI kid a *Place*, a *Team* and a *Path* is the way we're all helping create happy endings.



age 5



age 4

Growing up, I always wanted to be a writer — and a superhero! Becoming a CI supporter showed me I could be both — and that the two are tied together! Let me explain ...
To be a writer, I need a story. To get the story, I need an outline. (An outline is part of the system writers use to guide them through the writing process, so every great story has one. Children International has something similar — its “Place, Team, Path” approach. But more on that later!) To create the outline, I need to answer some questions:

1) Who is the main character?

For me, that is Elizabeth. She is a cute, 6-year-old with black hair and brown eyes. She likes to dance and play with friends and dolls.

2) What problem must she solve? Difficulties? Goals?

Elizabeth's problem was being among the neediest kids waiting for a sponsor.

Her difficulties? Many:

- Financial resources to attend school
- Being undernourished
- Inadequate housing
- Inaccessible or expensive health care.

Her goal? Break the cycle of poverty and strive to become a healthy, confident young adult.

3) Where will the story take place?

For Elizabeth, the place is Zambia (for now).

Side note: Remember when I mentioned CI's “Place, Team, Path” approach? Here's where that comes in!

PLACE: For kids like Elizabeth, there are no better havens than CI's 70+ community centers — true oases of hope with clinics, libraries, computer labs, tutoring areas and playgrounds.

Can you see this incredible story unfolding? I do! I see it in Elizabeth's smile, in her letters filled with gratitude and in success stories of youth who beat the odds upon graduating from the program.

Of course, every good story includes a dedication to recognize and appreciate those who helped create the story. So, on behalf of every sponsored child:

Thanks to the superheroes who turn every CI kid's story into a page-turner!

We couldn't do it without Every One!

4) Who are other characters?

This is where getting to be a superhero ties in! Every good story needs a variety of characters — champions, sidekicks, friends, etc. You and I — CI supporters — fit that role perfectly!

TEAM: Joining Team CI creates an astonishing ripple effect on CI kids and their families. Other people also encourage and support them: local doctors, coaches and staff, and nearly 9,000 volunteers worldwide.

5) What are the story's scenes?

Every scene needs a purpose to move the main character along a path toward the goal or to solve the story's central problem.

PATH: CI provides a clear path out of poverty for impoverished kids by focusing on health, education, empowerment and employment through country-relevant and age-specific programs and services. From toddlerhood to young adulthood, each sponsored child has access to exactly what she needs to succeed on her journey and break the cycle of poverty for good!



Cynthia is a young Italian Canadian and proud sponsor of two girls. She likes to travel, learn about different cultures and help others. When not working at a local coffee shop, she spends time writing, reading, bicycling and indulging in sweet maple syrup.

journeys

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Big opportunity

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Master chef:
CI edition

And much more!



CI donors, staff and sponsored youth try out the sports court in our new youth center in Cartagena, Colombia.

achieving
our
goal

join
the fun!
see more inauguration
photos and video at
children.org/la-esperanza.

By Gretchen Dellett and Marelvis Campo, CI storytellers

Two new centers in Colombia offer a fresh game plan to help kids and teens beat poverty.

“E speranza” means “hope.” And the community of La Esperanza in Cartagena, Colombia, was overflowing with it as the Cormack Family Community Center and Cormack Family Youth Center opened their doors last June to an eager community.

Hope is in high demand in this area, where youth mortality is five times higher than the average in Latin America. Other stats underscore the grim situation: One in five women ages 15 – 19 have been pregnant at least once. Armed robbery, drug abuse and gang violence occur regularly. In addition, many teens fall victim to being a “false positive,” where someone is misidentified as a gang member and killed.

A REFUGE FROM THE STREETS

The new youth center is a haven to all teens in Cartagena, not just the 70+ percent who represent CI kids in the area. With a computer center, meeting rooms, game area, sports court and dedicated spaces for art and dance, teens can socialize, learn leadership and job skills, and plan projects that give back to their communities.

Across the street, the expanded, refurbished community center is helping ever increasing

numbers of kids under 12. The old center served 5,500+ kids in a building meant for just 1,500. Now, with more space and a targeted focus on younger ones’ needs, CI has created a more relaxed, welcoming environment for learning and developing.

BUILDING NEW TEAMS

The centers in La Esperanza were made possible by Dave and Fiona Cormack and 135 other caring donors who believe meaningful change starts when one person comes together with others.

The new centers offer a whole new game plan: helping all children grow up **healthy** and **educated**, while teens gain skills to become **employed** and **empowered** to break the cycle of poverty. Score! ■

Learn how you can initiate change at children.org/build-a-center.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:

Visitors helped complete the youth center’s mural.

Computer games in the library? Yes, please!

Electronic babies help teens learn the realities of parenting.

The youth center serves all teens in Cartagena.





Rock ^

LITTLE AGENCY **BIG** OPPORTUNITY

By Ashley Puderbaugh and Dianna Mitchell, CI storytellers

Children in Little Rock, Arkansas, are learning the skills to take control of their futures.

Child poverty isn't just a problem in the developing world. Even wealthier nations like the United States struggle with its reality. That's why CI started a program to support impoverished kids in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1994.

"Helping kids in the United States is different than helping kids in our other countries," says Paula Rogers, education programs manager at CI's agency in Little Rock, Arkansas. "It requires unique programs to help them gain the life skills and education to break out of poverty. The programs also must capture their interest and involvement."

PROGRAMS FOCUS ON UNIQUE DIFFERENCES

CI set up its after-school program because — like children in other countries where CI works — kids in Little Rock had nowhere safe to go after classes ended. But the program provides more than simply a safe haven from negative influences. It also offers **academic and enrichment activities designed to improve reading and math skills and develop talents and hobbies.**

Certified teachers give kids a boost in literacy and math, while community experts teach courses such as technology, martial arts, choir and business. Last year, for example, an engineering student at the University of Arkansas – Little Rock led a robotics class, teaching kids mechanical operations, computer technology, problem solving and critical thinking.

But "soft" skills are important for future success too. So the staff at Little Rock works to instill positive traits like empathy through opportunities to give back to others. One such activity was the Empty Bowls Project, an annual international effort to help end hunger. Over the course of the school year, CI kids made and painted soup bowls. Then, the bowls were auctioned off to raise money for a local food bank.

"Kids researched hunger — not just hunger in the U.S. but in the world," Paula explains. "It's quite enlightening for kids. You know, they come to us really hungry after school, so they know hunger. But to see it worldwide and then to have a reason to help others? It's a fabulous project."

OFFERING SUPPORT, SUPPLYING OPPORTUNITY

Despite living in one of the poorest states, kids in CI's Little Rock sponsorship program have a lot of opportunities. From tutoring to mentoring, after-school programs to summer camps, these CI kids know they are loved and supported by caring staff — and that they can break the cycle of poverty once and for all. ■

Meet an inspirational Little Rock grad at [children.org/raven](https://www.children.org/raven).



You're helping empower our Little Rock kids through a wide range of program offerings, including (clockwise from page 6) **robotics, art, choir and martial arts.**

KIAI!!!

The ANGEL of PARADISE VILLAGE

By Carmie Carpio with an assist from Deron Denton, CI storytellers

One very brave, passionate volunteer in a dangerous community inspires multitudes.

The words “Paradise Village” are etched into a tall, rusty iron arch. Its metallic decorative wisps mark the entrance to a neglected community in Malabon, Philippines. But this sign is the only thing “paradise-like” about the community. Behind it, rows of shanties line the sides of narrow paths. You cross a stagnant river to get in.

The community — home to 300 sponsored kids — is a hiding place for gang members and suspects of drug-related crimes and even contract killings. Police raids and gunfire are frequent. Ederlina, the sole CI volunteer living here, is my all-access pass in reaching its sponsored families to tell their stories. Despite its dangers, with Ederlina, I feel secure. She is an expert in alternate routes and shortcuts. Her steps are sure; her pace is quick. People know and respect her.

DETERMINED DESPITE RISKS — AND OPPOSITION

Ederlina recognizes the dangers of Paradise Village. “I do get scared here,” she says. “I never know what will happen next. I fear for my family. I fear for the sponsored children. What if they get mistaken for enemies?”

When she does her rounds, visiting CI kids’ homes, she must watch her back and be prepared to run. Her husband and others have repeatedly asked her to quit volunteering for CI. Although she says she’s considered doing so, apparently no amount of danger

will dissuade her. She’s now 15 years into her volunteer service and remains firm in her commitment to helping us fulfill our mission of helping kids.

PUSHING ASIDE FEAR WITH FAITH AND FORTITUDE

“It’s true that fear hangs here, but nothing can beat the joy I gain from helping and seeing children grow better,” she explains.

“I want to be there for them even in my little ways. I want CI’s field staff to feel supported. Besides, the trainings and experiences I have gained from CI mean so much to me personally. I just think of the children — including my own — and CI’s staff. And that’s enough to make me put on a brave face and have courage in my heart.”

When I think about Paradise Village, I think about Ederlina — and her strength. ■

Discover more about Ederlina and Paradise Village in Carmie’s in-depth story at [children.org/paradise-village](https://www.children.org/paradise-village).



Ederlina — sole volunteer in Paradise Village — is key to supporting the 300 CI kids who live there.



The river that borders this neglected village is overrun with refuse, and the rainy season adds another element of risk.



The so-called “streets” of Paradise Village are built on bags of sand, rocks and wood.

*How do kids in “paradise” escape their reality?
Keep reading →*



A refuge FROM REFUSE

By Ashley Puderbaugh, CI storyteller

Kids are born explorers — naturally curious about their environments and eager to learn about them. They navigate their worlds through trial and error. And when they have a safe place for full expression and worry-free play? They flourish.

But kids in poverty don't have easy access to such areas. See-saws and swings simply aren't common in the poverty-stricken communities where CI works. Instead, kids create their own playgrounds — in crime-ridden neighborhoods, stagnant and polluted rivers, busy roads, rocky construction zones and landfills.

THE HAZARDS THEY FACE ARE NUMEROUS:

- Broken, rusted objects that can cause injury or infection
- Disease (hepatitis, cholera and dysentery) from exposure to bacteria and human waste
- Parasites, which can cause stunting from malnutrition and other illnesses
- Traffic
- Gangs.

(continued next page)

With no safe parks or other play areas, kids play among construction junk in "Paradise Village," Philippines. (See previous story.) CI kids, however, have safe alternatives.



CI kids in Quito, Ecuador, experience carefree kid time on a tire swing at CI's community center.



UPPER RIGHT
 (From left) Jhon, Aj and Johnrain say the clean carpet at CI's community center in the Bicol region of the Philippines makes it fun to play — and learn — there.

RIGHT
 Saori finds fun among friends at the CI community center in Guadalajara, Mexico.

AN OASIS FROM PERILS

Thanks to your support, kids in CI's sponsorship program have access to our community centers, safe havens where kids can be kids without the worry of injury or sickness.

At centers with outdoor playsets, they can spend hours chasing each other or inventing fantastic worlds and magical places: Sailing the ocean on a ship, traveling the cosmos on a spacecraft or riding through forests in a carriage to a luxurious castle. They become adventurers, heroes and royalty capable of accomplishing anything. In centers where space constraints limit outdoor play areas (such as India and the

Philippines), kids head to CI libraries filled with games, toys and books.

"Playgrounds are very important, especially for urban areas like ours, because not all communities have play-friendly areas due to limited space," says Israel Bombarda, a field officer in Manila, Philippines.

"It's a child's right to play," Israel adds. **"Children International lets them play on safer ground."**

Even better — when CI kids are hard at play — they're also gaining skills crucial to their emotional, physical, social and creative growth.

Playgrounds are an important part of a child's development. And CI lets kids discover there's no limit to their imaginations. ■



Channel your inner kid! Visit [children.org/playgrounds](https://www.children.org/playgrounds) to download and print the CI playgrounds coloring page! Share your creations on Instagram and Facebook and tag them with [#CIcoloring](https://www.instagram.com/CIcoloring) and [#coloring](https://www.instagram.com/coloring).

IT'S ONLY (a) FAIR

By Patricia Calderón and Deron Denton, CI storytellers

“Kids! Sign up here for your life-changing skills!”

Especially, probably not the best way to get kids excited about participating in our poverty-busting programs. After all, to educate and empower kids, you have to find ways to engage them — and make that process fun! That’s why CI organizes day-long Youth Program Fairs, like one that recently took place in Barranquilla, Colombia. Getting kids enrolled — and enthusiastically jumping headfirst into our skill-building programs — is a big deal!

SNEAKING LEARNING INTO THE FUN

On a sunny day last May, a colorful welcome sign hung above the entry doors of the community center. Teen facilitators waited inside at tables adorned with posters describing various program options, while monitors displayed videos they’d made that explained the activities to both kids and parents. Some children created projects using glue, markers and colored paper, while others eagerly lined up for games.

The focus: Get kids signed up and involved. Initially, they just know they’re having fun. As they get older, they understand the intangible benefits they’re gaining.

Luz Fonseca, youth coordinator for CI in Colombia, was essential in planning and facilitating this successful event. “The skills that youth learn,” she says, “such as creativity, critical thinking, self-knowledge, conflict resolution, and others, are tools they need. One result of developing these skills is that **youth can see their lives from a different perspective** — and they become empowered by realizing their future can be transformed. They become agents of change, and when they see they can make a difference in the lives of others, they know they can change their own lives.”

APPEALING ACTIVITIES KEEP KIDS IN A SAFE SPACE

Our community centers, where the bulk of CI programs happen, are often the only safe spaces in the communities where kids live. And offering positive, structured activities that are age- and agency-specific — meaning that we cater activities to meet the unique needs of the kids in that community — encourages kids to visit the centers every day, insulating them from negative influences.

By listening to experts, staff in the field, youth and community leaders, we fill a void in neglected neighborhoods without the resources of better-off communities. ■

Discover the innovative CI programs helping kids break the cycle of poverty at children.org/programs-fair.

LEFT: Nayarith and Carlos showed younger kids how to “have a ball” by signing up for our Sports for Development program.



RIGHT: Using teamwork to solve a puzzle develops skills that are important for securing jobs that lift kids out of poverty.



Engaging kids means giving them hands-on experiences that are both educational and entertaining.

Grab a Scrabble® tile: **'EMPLOYMENT'**
EARNs A HIGH SCORE

By Deron Denton and Shane Alliew, CI storytellers

How often have you heard the joke that “work” is a four-letter word? Sure, it’s a word that doesn’t count for much in Scrabble®. But for CI teens, its value is incalculable.

The fact that many of us in the developed world can actually *find* work is what makes the humor in that joke even possible. Not so much for teens supported by CI. To them, gaining stable employment isn’t a game — and it’s certainly no joke. So we take our responsibility very seriously to empower these ambitious youth with important skills to help them become employed.

That’s why our career-readiness centers are always bustling with so much energy and life — helping teens become confidently (and competently) prepared for the workforce. Whether learning résumé writing, participating in mock interviews, getting career counseling or, in this case, taking English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in India, CI teens are building critical job-preparedness skills.

ESL programs are particularly critical in India’s competitive new economy, where some English proficiency is necessary for students to advance to secondary school. **Creating fun and engaging ways to learn** is one of the amazing things our programs — and our field staff who help develop them — are able to do, thanks to CI supporters. Our staff in India calls this one “Human Scrabble.” ■

Visit [children.org/scrabble](https://www.children.org/scrabble) to play a word puzzle and learn how we’re helping CI teens become employable.

take a look ↗



RULES
CI style

As part of CI’s English as a Second Language program in India, 21 teens followed special Scrabble instructions to optimize their learning:

- ① Give each team a basket of random letters.
- ② Work quickly to be first to form a 4-letter word.
- ③ Increase complexity for each round, building up to 5- and 6-letter words. No team can repeat a word.*

*Vocabularies increase for the win!



For teens in India, ‘kite’ helps them learn high-flying English skills.

Hmm ... what can I spell with this?! ↗

"After I graduated, I tried to look for work, but couldn't find any. This program gave me the opportunity to find a job or even create my own company in the future."

— Isis Anahi
COPÁN RUINAS,
HONDURAS

A TASTE OF SUCCESS

By Gretchen Dellett and Jesús Almendárez, CI storytellers



so delicious!

A CI-sponsored food fair helps young entrepreneurs explore culinary careers in their tourist-friendly city.

The young men and women moved quickly, careful not to dirty their crisp white shirts as they arranged colorful displays of chocolate, bread, fruit juices and vegetables outside the Zinni-Neal Community Center in Copán Ruinas, Honduras.

They were nervous and excited to take part in CI's first Into Employment® Food Fair, an event organized to help youth find jobs in the tourism industry. (CI's Into Employment program connects teens' talents with the needs of the local marketplace.) Copán's ancient Mayan ruins make it a popular tourist destination, creating a high demand for job applicants with culinary and hospitality skills.

The teens presented business plans to sell their food products and held tastings for an audience that included a prominent chef, government and tourism officials, and local business owners.

JOBS FOR TODAY, SKILLS FOR LIFE

By shining a light on two of Into Employment's most popular curriculums, "Bar and Restaurant" and "Kitchen and Cuisine," the fair aimed to help teens qualify for good jobs — or even start their own businesses.

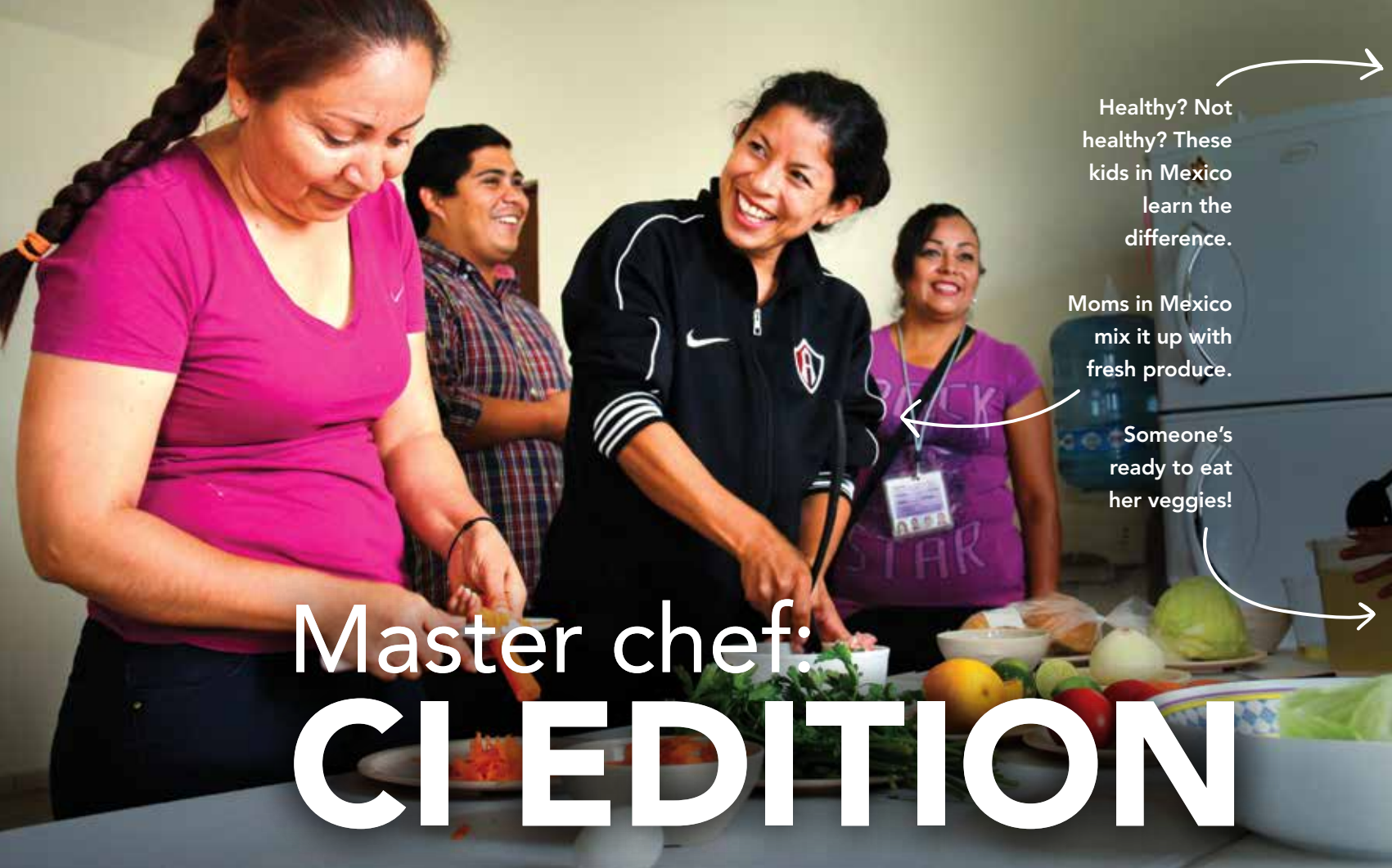
Into Employment's lessons are both practical and personal. "I've learned so much," shares aspiring chef Jaime (16) as he set out his *escabeche* (marinated vegetables) for tasting. "Computer (training); how to use Word, Excel and PowerPoint; how to make a budget — and life skills, such as changing one's character, how to behave, respecting elders ... They teach us a lot." ■

Eat up more yummy photos and dish up details on Into Employment at children.org/taste-of-success.



ABOVE: A teen showed off a blend of freshly pressed fruit juices while learning to interact with the public.

LEFT: Chocolate delights awaited sampling by food fair visitors, which included a prominent chef, government and tourism officials, and local business owners.



Master chef: CI EDITION

Healthy? Not healthy? These kids in Mexico learn the difference.

Moms in Mexico mix it up with fresh produce.

Someone's ready to eat her veggies!



Quito moms' QUINOA SALAD

[keen-wah]

DRESSING

- ¼ c. vinegar
- ¾ c. olive oil
- 1 T. mustard
- ½ t. salt
- Pepper & oregano to taste
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 yellow pepper, diced

PREPARATION

Combine vinegar, oil, mustard, salt, pepper and oregano in a bowl and mix well. Add bell peppers and let sit for 1 hour.

SALAD

- 2 T. olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 c. fresh white button mushrooms, sliced
- Pinch of salt/pepper
- 1 ½ c. cooked quinoa
- 2 c. chopped spinach
- 2 c. chopped Swiss chard
- 3 c. chopped iceberg lettuce
- ½ red onion, diced
- Chopped cilantro

PREPARATION

In a pan, heat olive oil over medium heat, add minced garlic and sauté. Add mushrooms, salt and pepper, and sauté until mushrooms are browned. Repeat the process with the cooked quinoa until slightly brown. Allow mushrooms and quinoa to cool. Combine the greens, onion, cilantro, mushrooms and quinoa in a large bowl and mix. Add vinaigrette dressing just before serving.

By Sarah Trapp, Paola Gil, Patricia Calderón and Andrés Rosero, CI storytellers

Malnutrition, undernutrition and obesity are critical problems for many CI kids. (Technically, we call them Global Priority Health Issues.) To address them, we organize special programs — and not always for kids. Sometimes, we have to help the *parents* to help the kids. So, for issues related to eating, we've got extra tasty offerings: lessons on how to cook healthy meals.

Mixing it up in Mexico.

Mexico has the highest childhood obesity rate in the world, so learning healthy behaviors is vital. CI focuses on teaching mothers how to make tasty salads, while their children play games



Sadly, there's no place for pie in this pie chart.

using the "Healthy Eating Plate" (center).

Cooking by the batch in Colombia and the Philippines.

CI gives lessons to moms in these countries on preparing inexpensive, nutritious food. They then take their chef skills into their neighborhoods, cooking up batches to feed malnourished CI kids. Kids get something nutritious in their tummies before heading to school, and moms know they're making a difference.

Giving cooking demonstrations in Ecuador.

CI helps moms in Quito, Ecuador, give demonstrations to other parents using ingredients like Swiss chard, rice with quinoa, and mushrooms. The cooks

harvest many ingredients from their own personal or community gardens. Younger kids tag along, and everyone gets to sample the fruits — or, rather, *veggies* — of their labor.

THE JOY OF COOKING

Elida Camacho, from Barranquilla, Colombia, has become one of CI's master chef moms. She says, "I have learned how to live. I have learned how to prepare healthy foods. I have learned how to love the kitchen, because I didn't used to like it, and now I love cooking! ... I'm a volunteer so that our children can be healthy. When a child is well fed, he or she is a healthy, happy, joyful child."

Educated, empowered parents and children make a strong team to combat childhood nutrition problems. And when it comes to teaching healthy behaviors, you can never have too many chefs! ■

Hungry for more?
Great photos await at children.org/master-chef.

"Healthy Eating Plate" is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 3.0 License.

EXPAND your WORLD

Paula Rogers, the always-inspiring education programs manager at our agency in Little Rock, Arkansas, really “gets” the best ways to motivate and challenge kids. Here, she provides you with some pop-culture picks that have empowered her to help CI kids.



Paula is a past-recipient of the annual Lewis Hines award from the National Child Labor Committee.



MOVIE: “Finding Forrester”

This movie tells the tale of Jamal, a gifted young writer (played by Rob Brown), befriended by a famous recluse (Sean Connery). The relationship between the inner city teen and the cantankerous writer demonstrates the impact one person’s encouragement and support can have on another’s life.

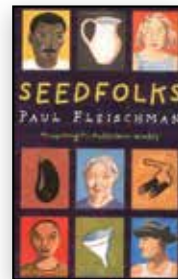
Buy or rent it via Amazon, iTunes or your local library.



TED Talk: “The story we tell about poverty isn’t true” by Mia Birdsong

Our greatest resource in the fight against poverty is the people living it. With nearly 1.5 million views, this TED Talk reminds us that “marginalized communities are full of smart, talented people, hustling and working and innovating, just like our most revered and most rewarded CEOs.”

Watch it at Ted.com by searching “Mia Birdsong.”



BOOK: “Seedfolks” by Paul Fleischman

Using the viewpoints of 13 people, this Newbery Medal winner tells of a neighborhood working together to transform a vacant city lot into a community garden — a heart-warming exploration of how a community is born and nurtured in an urban environment.

For more inspiration, head to children.org/paula-expand-your-world.

Use [amazon smile](https://www.amazon.com/Smile) and support CI with your purchase!

JOURNEY FURTHER



PLACE



The heart of communities in need

Where was your favorite place as a kid? For CI kids, it’s our community centers. Life outside our centers is hard. So, inside we offer lots to love: playgrounds, medical clinics, special spaces for teens, libraries, computer labs, multipurpose rooms (think karate classes, movie nights and graduation ceremonies) and kitchens.

Check it out at children.org/community-heart.



TEAM



A volunteer brings positive change

Rico is the only CI volunteer on San Miguel Island in the Philippines. After more than 28 years, he is still passionate about sharing his knowledge with nonsponsored families in hopes of improving the lives of everyone in his community.

Check it out at children.org/power-of-rico.



PATH



Here are three more real-life stories illustrating the CI Approach — giving kids a **PLACE**, a **TEAM** and a **PATH** out of poverty. (Bookmark children.org/stories to see new content weekly!)

Dressing for success: Challenging traditions and transcending poverty

In La Soledad, Guatemala, women wear aprons. If they don’t? People assume they’re lazy. But Marleny is challenging this perception with the help of CI’s Into Employment program. She’s proving what female productivity really looks like — apron or not — by opening her own business: a clothing store.

Check it out at children.org/dress-for-success.



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