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**IN THE DANGEROUS WORLD OF AN AFRICAN ROCK QUARRY,
ONE LITTLE BOY IS SAFE**

Stephen Batte Finds Home, Safety, New Life

KAMPALA, UGANDA—One whirlwind week after receiving international attention as an orphaned child laborer, Stephen Batte is home for good.

Stephen, age 9, was featured in an Associated Press article describing his life as an orphaned refugee from northern Uganda, working 12-hour days in a Kampala rock quarry. With a homemade hammer and no safety equipment, Stephen smashed rocks for 18 US cents a day, making gravel in the same quarry where his mother died in a rock slide, leaving him orphaned and alone. “Life has always been hard here,” Stephen told Associated Press correspondent Katy Pownall, “but since my mother died, things have been much harder.”

Stephen’s story crisscrossed the globe, igniting a firestorm of compassion. Legacy World Missions, a nonprofit organization dedicated to meeting the needs of Uganda’s vulnerable children, received calls from concerned people across the country. “We got phone calls and emails from all over the country,” says Angela Warner, executive director of the Georgia-based charity. “Everyone wanted to know how they could find and help this child. I knew it was a long shot, but worth every effort.”

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The search for Stephen concluded on Sunday, June 8, when, with the help of Legacy World Missions, Stephen was located in the Acholi Quarters, a refugee camp in Kampala where many displaced people from Uganda's war-torn northern region live. With permission from the tribal chief and local council, Stephen was adopted by David Knowlton, founder and director of Jesus and Me Children's Ministries, an outreach organization working with the vulnerable children of Kampala, including those orphaned, infected with HIV/AIDS, abandoned or homeless. Using therapeutic music, art and storytelling, JMCM gives the participating students the tools to succeed in school and in adulthood. In his new permanent home, Stephen Batte, the child that captured the world's attention as he labored on a rock pile, will attend school for the first time, leaving the hardships of the quarry behind him as he begins a new life.

"We couldn't have asked for a better outcome," said Pastor Gary Warner, Legacy World Missions' founder, who was present when Stephen's new family took custody. "Everyone is truly happy, including Stephen's tribe. They know this is a golden opportunity for this boy." Legacy World Missions first made history with an innovative food relief partnership program funded by USAID and the MAC AIDS Fund.

Still, many more children just like Stephen remain on the rock pile, toiling at the quarry to feed themselves and their families. With no safety codes or protective equipment, injuries are frequent and often disfiguring, as workers as young as four years old chip rocks with homemade tools. "Stephen's story is so touching," Angela Warner said, "but it's crucial for people to understand that there are so many more children living in these same dire circumstances. It's vital that we offer some measure of support to all of them."

As Stephen Batte prepares for his first day of school, he may not understand the impact his story had on people the world over, or the efforts undertaken to find and help him. Stephen is just glad to have the chance to be, for the first time in his life, a normal boy.

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For more information about Stephen Batte, Legacy World Missions or Jesus and Me Children's Ministries, or to schedule an interview, contact Angela Warner at 678-715-4844.