

# Lyndenite Bill Nienhuis takes lead of Childcare Worldwide

## Bellingham child sponsor organization was founded by Dr. Max Lange in 1981

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WHATCOM — Bill Nienhuis was on a mission and medical trip up the Amazon River in Brazil in 2011 when he was struck by the joy on the faces of the children and their mothers who came from surrounding villages to receive treatment.

"They were so happy to see us and they loved singing songs praising our Lord Jesus Christ. That experience changed me and set me on a path to seek out an opportunity to serve in full-time ministry," Nienhuis recalls.

At the time the Lynden resident was working with the FaithLife Corporation, then a fledgling Bible software company in Bellingham. He held various roles across 25 years, eventually becoming the director of production services, managing more than 100 software developers and an international team of contractors.

But a further call to serve was awaiting Nienhuis. He accepted an invitation to join the board of directors of Childcare Worldwide, also of Bellingham. This ministry of Christian child sponsorship was started as a vision of Dr. Max Lange in 1981, and it had flourished greatly in its mission, still operating from headquarters on Lakeway Drive.

Nienhuis was impressed by Childcare's impact in the world. Eventually, as the time came for Lange's retirement, it was to Nienhuis that the organization turned to be his replacement as president.



Just this month, Childcare Worldwide president Bill Nienhuis was in Kenya helping dedicate a new water catchment and purification system in a slum. (Courtesy photo/Childcare Worldwide)

That change was effective last Nov. 1.

Nienhuis is now forging his way in the new role. Through Feb. 21, he was on a two-week tour through Kenya and Uganda in Africa, getting to know the people and places of the sponsorship ministry

there.

Childcare also operates in Haiti, India, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Peru and Thailand.

Nienhuis blogged as he was on the Africa trip his impressions of the beauty of the land and its people, as well as seeing

schools and other facilities made possible by Childcare's giving. At Bavuni School in Kenya, Peter Horne has been an associate from the very beginning of the ministry.

Childcare provides general schooling as a focal point, also Christian char-

acter building, medical resources and sanitation systems. The overall goal is long-term change for the future among children helped.

In Kenya, Nienhuis paid a visit to Kaptembwo Slum, "a humble place with wonderful people," he blogged, where he participated in the dedication of a new water system. "The water catchment system helps a great deal. By collecting and filtering water, it becomes safe for consumption. It was a privilege to represent Childcare Worldwide, which funded and installed the system. After a ribbon-cutting ceremony, we ran the water and the kids washed and drank some of the clean water. I couldn't stop smiling as I watched their faces light up with joy at the sight of the clean and clear water."

Already last fall in an introductory blog about himself on the Childcare website, Nienhuis shared how he hopes to lead Childcare Worldwide. He likes to be approachable and a good listener, and strives to remove obstacles to allow people surrounding him to do awesome work, he says.

"I am confident that God has great plans for the ministry of Childcare Worldwide."

Also, since he has been at the center of the technology revolution in the last 25



Bill Nienhuis is getting acquainted directly with the thousands of people Childcare Worldwide aids in eight countries. He hopes to also speak to many supporters and donors in 2019. (Courtesy photo/Childcare Worldwide)

years, he believe he can contribute those insights into the future direction of the organization.

He will travel widely in 2019. He hopes to visit at least 100 U.S. churches to promote the work of Childcare Worldwide. The donors and sponsors who are scattered all over are what make the whole enterprise possible, he says.

Sponsorship of a child is meant to

cover all educational expenses as well as access to essential needs depending on situations. The basics are food, clean water and medical attention as needed. More than 10,000 children are served each year. Guidelines ensure the highest standards of child security.

Bill and his wife Melissa have four grown children, two of them married, and one granddaughter.

FOOTNOTE: One well-known dimension of Childcare Worldwide is the Ugandan Kids Choir of 10 sponsored children that does singing tours in the United States. The 2019 schedule includes five concerts in Whatcom County May 31 through June 15. The stops in Lynden are June 2 at Second Christian Reformed Church and June 15 in the Jansen Art Center.

## The Hinton Story



Top: Steve & Stephanie Joostens, current owner and manager, posing with their family  
Bottom: Hinton Chevrolet's location for nearly three decades

Hinton Chevrolet has been doing business right here in Lynden since its inception in 1947. The dealership was originally started by Dwight Hinton and Lawrence Reed, who were partners in a local community Texaco gas station.

Eventually, Mr. Hinton moved the business into the old Ford dealership downtown after ending his partnership with Mr. Reed. It remained there until the move to the current location on the Guide Meridian in the early 1980s.

Dwight and his son Mark ran the family business for years before Mark eventually took over the family business. In 2007, Steve Joostens became a partner in the business with Mark; Joostens would later purchase Hinton Chevrolet in January 2018.

Steve and Stephanie Joostens now continue to run the only locally owned GM franchise dealership in Whatcom County and continue to run it with the old-fashioned and straightforward business practices with which it was founded.

"I sell most of my customers on a handshake and love doing business this way," Steve said.

The Joostens have made a variety of improvements to the dealership, including new interior paint, remodels throughout, a new beverage kiosk, large televisions, new furniture, electronic charging stations and some new decorative items.

"The local community is a very important part of what the business represents, and we wanted to continue to invest into it even more," Steve said. "We wanted to update the building with our main concern being focused on our customers. We wanted a warmer environment that our customers could relax in and hope to continue more customer-centered improvements moving forward."

The Joostens plan to continue investing in the community and to grow their business in a slow, steady fashion in order to preserve a positive customer experience. Investing in the community brings customers in the doors, allowing Hinton Chevrolet to further invest in customer care and an experience to remember.

"We are in business to make money," Steve said, "but we make money in order to take care of our customers. It takes money to give and invest back into the community and we look forward to doing just that."

The Joostens were able to donate two cars so far since taking over the business, and they look forward to helping out when and where they can in the future.





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