

CBS SUNDAY MORNING: A CHANCE TO DREAM

January 26, 2019

Link to Piece: <https://vimeo.com/388113938>

It is breathtakingly beautiful music coming from one of the grittiest slums in the world. Eight boys living in Antananarivo, Madagascar - where 80 percent of people live on less than 2 dollars a day - who formed an a capella group they now hope will transform their lives. CBS News correspondent Seth Doane travels to Madagascar to tell the incredible story of Zaza Kanto - whose joyful harmonies have lifted them to national fame and given them a chance to dream.

American couple, John Miller and Virginia Summers, first saw the group singing on the street in 2018 while John was working at the US embassy in Madagascar. The boys' stunning vocals were unlike anything they'd heard before. "It was ethereal, like an angel singing" John told us. The couple started talking with one of the boys- Jimmy - who told them he was singing a song giving thanks to God for his life.

Jimmy explained that every Sunday, he and his friends would walk over an hour to a hostel in a wealthier part of town and sing -- in hopes of making a few dollars. So John and Virginia decided that they too would spend their Sunday mornings at this hostel, waiting for the boys. After several weeks, John started taking cell phone videos of the boys singing and put them up on YouTube, in hopes that someone else might notice their talent. In the last year and a half, those videos have been viewed more than a million times. "They're a treasure" Virginia told us. "I think they do something that nobody else does anywhere in the world. And they do it in a way that nobody else does -- it's remarkable."

The group has sung for the President of Madagascar and one of their songs was selected as the theme song for the national soccer team. But as Seth Doane discovered, even now, they still live in a shantytown where raw sewage flows between the homes and the children are so poor they make their own rugby balls out of plastic bottles. They told us they dream of a future outside the slum, and pray their music can take them there.

When our story aired in January, we were overwhelmed by emails from viewers saying how much this powerful and inspirational story had touched them. Generous viewers donated to a fund set up to help the boys access better housing and education. And thanks to the exposure from our piece, Zaza Kanto is currently negotiating its first record deal.

We are proud of this story and thank you very much for your consideration.

