

NFL Pro Bowler Aaron Kampman Fueled by Faith

✖ Many NFL players are ill-equipped to live outside the glare of the spotlight, leaving 78 percent bankrupt, unemployed or divorced within two years of retirement, according to NFL player Kern Ruettggers. But NFL Pro Bowler Aaron Kampman knows what it means not to be judged by his total number of tackles or QB sacks.

Motivated by their Christian faith, Kampman and his wife, Linde, recently traveled to El Salvador with Compassion International to visit poverty-stricken children who know nothing of the celebrity status Americans often give NFL players. The Kampmans were accompanied to El Salvador by Jaguars teammate Russell Allen and wife, Ali, and Seattle Seahawks' Craig Terrill and wife, Rachel, also motivated by their faith.

"A lot of times here in the States I am recognized as a NFL player, and many think that gives me great value," said Aaron Kampman. "While I love the game, it is through the eyes of these Compassion children that I can see a greater value and importance for my life beyond the football field and the potential we each have to help a child."

While

in El Salvador, the Kampmans, Allens and Terrills visited their sponsored children, Jonathan (10), Natalie (7) and Katherine (9), respectively. Each child's eyes lit up when meeting the football pros, but not because the children were hoping for an autograph. To these children, Kampman, Allen and Terrill were simply the men who make school, health care, nutritional supplements, regular meals and spiritual support possible. While in El Salvador, the NFL players also visited Rudy, the 13-year-old sponsored child of Super Bowl Champ Jordy Nelson of the Green Bay Packers, who was unable to make the trip.

"Rudy didn't care about the T-shirts and sports paraphernalia we brought him—which was surprising for someone who has probably never received his own brand-new shirt," said Allen. "The entire time we spent with him, he gripped the photo of Jordy and asked repeatedly, 'you really know my sponsor?'"

In the sports world where many times the "bad press" is all that makes the headlines, these three players refuse to accept that they are solely defined by their positions as NFL players. Kampman plans to continue to partner with Compassion International and encourage other players to take an interest in the lives of the children who desperately

need their
help.