

Hearts 'n Hugs For Kids

Newsletter

January, 2009

MINISTRY UPDATE

It was about four months ago that I sent you an email about my new ministry – making dresses and shirts for kids in orphanages! Lots has happened since then, so let me bring you up to date.

First, it's been quite a learning curve! Obviously, I knew there were lots of orphans, but I've literally been stunned with the magnitude of the problem. Statistics vary depending on the web site and how an 'orphan' is defined, etc. but there are several things that come across loud and clear. For instance, Sub-Saharan Africa has been hit harder by AIDS than any other place in the world. There's an estimated 14,000,000 AIDS orphans and the number continues to grow. There are over 2,000,000 orphans in Uganda alone!

Most (if not all) Russian orphanages are run by the state. There are a few Christian ministries that have been able to get in to work through local churches to provide some teaching to the kids. The sadist part is that statistics show that when the children leave the orphanage they have not learned life skills much less any Christian values; 80% of the girls become prostitutes and most of the boys will end up in prison!

So, how can anyone make a difference when the problem is so huge? ONE CHILD AT A TIME!! In my research I've been amazed at how many Christian orphanages have been opened in the last 10 years. Churches, other ministries and individuals are stepping up to the plate and working to make a difference.

Since I started making the dresses and shirts, I've sent 130 of them to 3 orphanages in Haiti and 3 in India. Just a few days ago I sent emails to 12 orphanages and got fast positive responses from 6 of them – in Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, Brazil and two from Uganda!

RESPONSES!

From Deidrah in Uganda –

“... The dress that I have seen a picture of is absolutely fantastic and the shirt is just adorable. I would very much love for my kids to be seen in such wonderful attire. Not only made to look cute but also made from someone who has a heart to bless...”

From Leisha who works with an orphanage in Uganda –

“Wow, I am just so impressed with your offer... I just spent two months at our orphanages in Uganda and during that time I got to go shopping with the kids for one new outfit each because of some kind donors in the States. I can't even tell you how excited they were to have brand new clothes...”

From Richard who works with children in the slums in Brazil –

“... we are definitely interested. The children's lives are always blessed when someone extends kindness towards them, especially Americans. It's very common for almost every Brazilian child to have a dream of visiting the USA...”

Just yesterday the contact from the Philippines requested 135 outfits. According to their web sites, some of these orphanages only have 25-50 kids while others are very large. The one in Mexico is working on a building that will house 400. Currently, I have 200 dresses and shirts in varying stages of completion.

PURPOSE OF DRESSES FOR ORPHANS

1. To give a child something new that they can call their own. (Most of these kids have never had anything new!!)
2. To communicate to each child that they are special and loved. (Included with each outfit is a little card that says "This gift was made especially for you because you are a very special person. I pray that you will grow to always love and serve Jesus! Gramma C.)
3. To impress on each child that Jesus loves them!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you live here in the Valley and like to sew – or know of someone else who sews – and would like to join me in making these outfits, I'd love to have your help. In the next few weeks I would like to enlist several other women who would work with me in making these garments. Let me know if you're interested or if you know someone else who might be.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Thanks again to those of you who have financially supported this ministry! Every gift that is given goes completely to purchase the T-shirts, other sewing items and postage to send them. I don't take any kind of salary and don't even claim mileage to get supplies. Since I'm able to get the T-shirts wholesale from a screen printer I've learned to know, the dresses cost \$5.00 each and the T-shirts \$2.50.

As you probably recall, I'm working under the umbrella of *Ripe For Harvest*, a non-profit ministry. Let me explain how that works lest someone makes a contribution and things I'm ungrateful. Their 'fiscal month' runs from the 15th to the 15th. Then on the 30th of the month I get a read-out of all gifts that have been deposited to my account during that time. Here's how that affects you - if you sent in a gift and *Ripe For Harvest* received it in the mail on January 16th, my January 30th read-out wouldn't reflect that gift. That means I wouldn't see it on my read-out until February 28th. I know it sounds confusing, but that is their system and while I always

recognize your gift with a thank-you, it may be delayed.

I'm anticipating a large response from orphanages who would like to receive the dresses and shirts. If you feel passionate about helping some of the most needy children on earth, I invite you to partner with me financially. Checks should be made out to *Ripe For Harvest* and the number **267** put on the 'For' line at the bottom of the check for proper identification. Send it to:

Ripe for Harvest
2824 N. Power Road, #113282
Mesa, Arizona 85215-1674

Thanks so much for your help! You're very special people because you're my family and friends and you've helped me get this ministry started. You're the best!!!

Yours – for the kids' sake,

Darlene (to some)
Darl (to others)
Mom (to still others)

P.S. We just got back from the T-shirt warehouse. Earlier I had been told by someone who buys from this warehouse, that they wouldn't even talk to me since I wasn't a screen printer nor did embroidery. Well, they made the exception and now I'll be able to buy directly from them!!! The prices will be the same as I was getting before from the T-shirt 'store', but I won't have to impose on them any longer and now will be able to order as many as I want at any time!