



Sisters & Brothers Program

Overview

Zambia, with a population of 11.5 million people, is among the world's poorest nations, with 64% of the population living on less than \$1 per day. With 15.2% of the population infected with HIV / AIDS, and malaria prevalent throughout the country, life expectancy approximates 42 years of age. It is estimated that there are 1.1 million orphans in Zambia. Many Zambian orphans live in a home with a relative or friend of the family where there is little money to support the orphan children.

The goal of the Sisters & Brothers Program is to develop and maintain a long-term friendship between American children and disadvantaged Zambian children. As both children get older, their communication will increase and their friendship will grow. This program is designed to foster an ongoing communication between children across continents.

The Sisters & Brothers Program pairs American children with Zambian sisters, brothers, and friends. The American children select photos of themselves; write letters; and provide clothing, toys, coloring books, crayons, and notebooks for their new friend or sibling. Our Flip Flop Foundation team members at Tiyanjane Theatre Organization select children from the Tiyanjane community who are most needy, and would make a good match. Upon receipt of the gifts, the Zambian children with their guardians compose a letter in response (likely in Nyanja, with English translation).

There are currently nine American children and teenagers supporting ten Zambian children and teenagers in this program. The Flip Flop Foundation organizes an exchange of gifts / letters between Zambian and American children three times annually.



Program Participants at Tiyanjane Theatre Organization (Oct 2008)
Photo: Shira Rohde

"Our 8 year old son, Justis, has always wanted a same age brother and our 5 year old daughter, Allison, has always wanted a same age sister. The Sisters & Brothers Program has provided this for our children. As much as they would like to, our kids are not playing soccer with their "brother" Christopher and "sister" Lisa in Zambia. However, they are developing a relationship across continents and cultures that is based on discovering mutual interests, appreciating differences, and connecting in a meaningful way. The boys' birthdays are a month apart; they are both in the second grade and share a love of soccer. Justis loves getting pictures of Christopher wearing soccer shirts that he has sent to him. Justis asked for books that he could send to Christopher in lieu of gifts for himself at his 8th birthday party. The girls share a love of beads and crafts. Allison immediately thinks of Lisa when she outgrows a dress that she thinks Lisa would like and saves it for her next package to Zambia. Through the simple exchange of letters, pictures, and small gifts, we see our children cultivating and opening their hearts and minds. We are thankful to the Flip Flop Foundation for this unique opportunity our children have to develop these very special kinships."

Dr. Peggy Moore, parent of two children enrolled in the Sisters & Brothers Program

Enrollment Guidelines

For the American family / child (age 4-17):

1. Provides desired age/gender of match of their Zambian brother/sister/friend.
2. Writes a letter about themselves, e.g., name & age, birthday, where they live, what they like to do, what language they speak.
3. Provides a small/lightweight package (no larger than an 11" x 14" envelope) for transport to Zambia.
 - o The package may include: letter & drawing, photos of the child, clothing, small toys or stuffed animals, coloring book/crayons, notebook/pens. (NOTE: Zambian children can be very small compared to American children of the same age, so please consider this when selecting clothing)
 - o The package should not include any toy/game that requires batteries or electricity.
 - o Please do not gift wrap any of the items.
4. The Program Coordinator will contact you four weeks prior to the trip to Zambia, and it is expected that you will deliver / mail the package to the Coordinator by the date requested.
5. A letter / package should be prepared three times per year.
6. Participation requires an annual donation of \$200 to support program expenses.

For the Flip Flop Foundation / Tiyanjane Theatre Organization:

1. The Flip Flop Foundation will transport the package to Zambia three times a year.
2. Our team members at Tiyanjane Theatre Organization will find a suitable match of an orphan or vulnerable child living in a home that needs extra support.
3. Tiyanjane Theatre Organization will coordinate the meeting in which the Flip Flop Foundation will deliver the package to the child and take pictures of the exchange.
4. With the help of our team or the child's guardian, the Zambian child will write a letter (which may contain drawings and information such as name & age, birthday, where they live, what they like to do, tribe & language). The letter may be written in English, or in Nyanja with English translation.
5. The Flip Flop Foundation will bring back the letter and photos and provide to the American family.



Shinizi, Brenda, Georgina, & their guardian (Oct 2008)

Photo: Shira Rohde

"I feel that my family has been given more by our sponsored sisters & friends than we have ever been able to give to the Sisters & Brothers Program. It is tangible for Giovanna and Tony to do chores and earn money to buy things for Shinizi and others; they often send their favorite clothes or shoes and a new stuffed animal. They are rewarded by seeing their sponsored friends using or wearing the gifts and love writing letters and drawing pictures for them. They can speak to each other across the miles, cultures, and language barriers. I am proud of this lesson of compassion and diversity at 6 and 4 years old, and with it, a love and interest in Zambia and Africa."

Gina Legere-DeJohn, parent of two children enrolled in the Sisters & Brothers Program

If you have a child who would like to have an ongoing friendship with a disadvantaged Zambian child, please contact us at sistersandbrothers@flipflopfoundation.org for more information about the program, and/or to register your child in the program.