

Christmas gifts delayed at Customs; finally arrive at orphanages

International relief shipments can prove to be a real challenge even after obtaining professional assistance with documentation. However, when dealing with foreign Customs services, one can never really know what to expect. We have navigated the Customs quagmire in the past and a few months ago again had to navigate a documentation maze in order to obtain release of the container by Romanian Customs. Our 40' container, filled to the brim with freezers, bunk beds, Christmas presents, and more, left Washington State in mid-October and was supposed to arrive at one of Kidstown's orphanages in Romania by mid-November. Essential to this shipment were 200+ Christmas packages which were designated for all the children in Kidstown's 10 Romanian orphanages. By arriving in November, the gifts could be distributed to each orphanage and be under the tree by Christmas morning. However, due to the Customs challenges we faced, the container did not reach its destination in Western Romania until December 22! Perhaps half of the children received their gifts by Christmas day, and the rest enjoyed an extended Christmas celebration when they received their packages a couple of weeks later. On behalf of the children, we thank each sponsor who sent a gift to their child. That was a very practical way to give some joy and encouragement to them.



After getting by the legal red tape, the container finally arrived at the Casa Otniel orphanage (above right). Freezers (above left) and bunk beds (below) will help to improve the quality of life of many children.



Director's Note

Abandoned children are people who God created, loves, and died for. They also hold a very special place in his heart because they are young and defenseless. We have a unique opportunity and privilege to serve and help them by providing them humanitarian aid, by praying for them, and by supporting the orphanage leaders.

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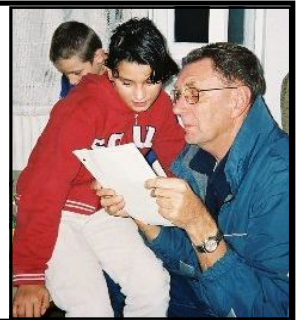
Our opportunity to help the needy

According to a UNICEF report, there are over 140 million abandoned children living in Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This leads us to believe that the actual number of abandoned children worldwide is much higher. Abandonment is caused by many factors including poverty, war, political policies, disease, and various others. In Africa, for example, one child is abandoned every 14 seconds due to AIDS, according to a 2004 report from Every Orphan's Hope. The need to help abandoned children is staggering and unless there are people who will rise up and help, the fate of these children will be imminent. In the Scriptures we see again and again God's heart on the topic of caring for the poor and the needy. "Blessed is he who is kind to the needy." (Pr. 14:21) "Whoever is kind to the needy honors God." (Pr. 14:31) "Blessed is he who has regard for the weak." (Ps. 41:1) "He who is kind to the needy lends to the Lord." (Pr. 19:17) "The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow." (Ps. 146:9) There are many Christians in the world who are helping orphans by establishing and operating Christian orphanages. Kidstown exists to support some of these orphanages by means of connecting people in the West to the orphan children who live in these homes. These children need our help. The orphanage leaders need our help! I invite you to join in this endeavor. Here are a few ways of involvement that Kidstown can offer you:

1. Prayer - you can pray individually, as a group, or as a church for orphans worldwide or for those living in a specific orphanage and also for the orphanage leaders.



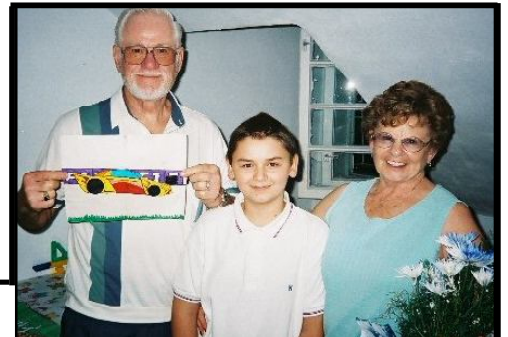
2. Encouragement - as a Sunday School class or Bible study group you can write letters to a group of children at an orphanage.



3. Projects - your church, youth group, or family can get involved in a special project which will help an orphanage.



4. Sponsorship - your family, Sunday School class, Bible study group, business or church, can sponsor a child or a whole orphanage! Sponsorship is a practical way of helping children and connects you in a special way to a child.



5. Exploratory trips - your senior pastor or missions leaders can travel to Romania on Kidstown-led trips to see the situation firsthand and to explore possible ways your church might get involved.



The difference you can make in the life of one or more children is tangible! If we all helped we could reduce and potentially eliminate the tragic epidemic of orphaned children! The need to help abandoned children is great and it is clear that God wants his Church to help them. There are channels through which you can become involved. I invite you to involve yourself and help these children! Please contact Matthew Smith at Kidstown with the way that you would like to help. Thank you for caring!

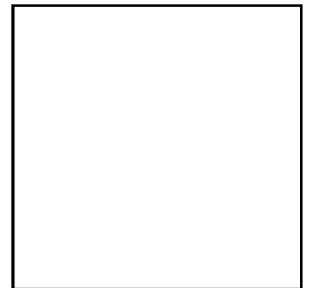
Donations needed for film crew



Kidstown has a unique opportunity to create a new video which will be used to educate and encourage others to help abandoned children. A film crew from Los Angeles, California has agreed to travel to Romania this Spring in order to shoot the necessary footage. It is possible that they will be able to arrange for editing and production without much cost to Kidstown. In gratitude to them, Kidstown would like to pay for their travel expenses. The total travel expense for this crew will be about \$7,500. We still need to raise \$5,500. If you would be interested in contributing to this project, please designate your donation towards "video project". Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for helping in this way!

Prayer Requests

1. The houseparents at one orphanage recently resigned in order to pursue other employment outside of Romania. Pray that God will supply excellent houseparents to replace them; houseparents who love children and most importantly who love God and who will share His love with the children.
2. Severe weather, poor quality roofing, and substandard construction methods have rendered a roof of one of our orphanages in need of repair. There is a potential donor in the Seattle area. Pray that funding will be granted so that the roof can be fixed.
3. Pray for the children who live in the orphanages. They come from difficult backgrounds and have much damage in their souls. Orphanage leaders are faithfully telling them about Christ, but each child has to make a decision for him/herself as to whether or not they will believe in Him. Some children do believe and some do not. Some are angry at God because they are orphans. Others love life more than Christ. Pray for these children.



Ministry opportunity

Kidstown is looking to expand its ministry team by adding the following position:

Ministry position: *Special Events & Promotions*

Requirements: *This position requires a person who is a believer in Jesus Christ, is energetic, can present the vision of Kidstown effectively to others, and who enjoys and is competent in the successful planning and execution of special events.*

Other information: *Part-time position. Compensation to be determined.*

Interested? *Send resume and cover letter to director@kidstown.org or to Kidstown International, 119 N. Commercial, #165, Bellingham, WA 98225. No phone calls, please.*

What happens when my child turns 18?

Many of you have sponsored a child for many years and some of you may have recently begun to sponsor an older child. We have often been asked about what happens when the children reach 18 years of age. In Romania, where Kidstown has worked for about 11 years, the law states that children 18 years of age must leave the orphanage. The Christian orphanages we support, however, have found ways to keep these older children under their protective umbrella until they are ready to go out on their own. Some of these orphanages have even built transition housing, located adjacent to the orphanage, where older children can live as they pursue skills training or higher education. None of the children in the orphanages Kidstown supports are simply thrown

out on the street. All of the children are viewed as members of the orphanage family and are given every opportunity to learn and develop before being released into the adult world. As children reach age 16 and beyond, Kidstown tracks their progress. For those children who are able to attend higher education, sponsors are encouraged to continue sponsoring. It is the goal of each orphanage, and Kidstown as well, that each child be equipped and ready for adult life before they venture forth.



The Alesd Home orphanage built a transition center (green building) next to the orphanage (brown building). Eight fully furnished suites were made for older children who are transitioning to adulthood.

Kidstown Essentials

Kidstown was formed in 1996 in response to the desperate need to help orphans in Romania. Initially helping 35 children in one orphanage, Kidstown now strives to provide long-term support to over 230 children living in 11 different Christian orphanages in Romania and India.

Kidstown endeavors to link families, couples, individuals, schools, churches, and businesses to children in Romania and India. Sponsors for the children provide financial, emotional, and prayer support for the children. It is through these relationships that sponsors can make a positive impact on the lives of children and change the course of their futures.

Kidstown is registered in Washington as a charitable organization and is classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) entity. Kidstown is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and has an independent auditor review its finances on a yearly basis.

A copy of the most recent financial statement is available upon request.

100% of sponsorship donations are sent to Romania and India.

Kidstown International
119 N. Commercial, #165
Bellingham, WA 98225
1-800-328-6939
www.kidstown.org



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*