

Open Doors

Many readers have been both witnesses and active participants in the gradual yet consistent growth that Kidstown has experienced over the years. Credit for this belongs only to God, for only He can open doors both for orphanages which need help, and generous people in the West who step forward to help the needy children that live there.

After having dialogue with orphanage leaders and conducting on-site visits to determine compatibility, it appears that three more orphanages may become part of the Kidstown family (see summaries below). Two of these are in India, the other in Romania. Each is doing a wonderful job of providing help, hope, and the Gospel to their children, but all suffer due to a lack of resources. Kidstown's job is to partner with orphanages like these and, with the assistance of sponsors and donors, give them a helping hand.

Casa Ioana, Botosani, Romania (right). After viewing heartwrenching media coverage of Romanian orphanages, a lady from Britain left part of her estate for the purpose of caring for Romanian orphans. Thus, in 1994, the Casa Ioana came into being. It is now home to 13 children and teenagers which come from backgrounds that include poverty, abandonment, and alcoholism. At the Casa Ioana their needs are met and they hear about a God who loves them and has plans for their life.



Haamro Gahr Children's Home, Kurseong, India (left). Nestled against the side of a mountain at an altitude of over 4,800 feet, the Haamro Gahr (means "our home") orphanage is a safe haven to 25 children. The leaders have a vision of caring for abandoned children, sharing Christ with them, and helping equip them to be both useful citizens and ambassadors for Christ. Most of the children are semi-orphans, and have been abandoned due to extreme poverty. In addition to the orphanage, an on-site school provides the children an opportunity to have a quality education.



Ambassadors Kids Home, Narayangarah, India (right). Located in a rural area in northeast India, the Ambassadors Kids Home (AKH) is making an effort to reach out with love and the Gospel to tribal children. Additionally, the home hopes that its ministry to children may open doors for the sharing of the Gospel in an adjacent tribal village. Although the facilities at the AKH are very basic, they are clean and neat, and give the children a more stable and safe living environment. Also, the children are enrolled in school and participate in church-related events. Currently nine children live here.



Kidstown team member Deni Starbuck (right) sits with kids at the AKH. These children had never seen Westerners before.

Love in Action



Kidstown's "Team Nepal" journeyed half-way around the world to extend help, hope, and the Gospel to orphan kids.

By Alvin Starkenburg, Team Leader - *On February 7th we left for Nepal to visit three of the orphanages that Kidstown supports. The purpose of our visit was to be Jesus' ambassadors (did you know that less than 1% of Nepali people are Christians?), to encourage the house parents, and to spend time with the children. We feel we accomplished our goals. We spent time at each home with the children and house parents. We also gave small gifts to the children. Lily, my grand-daughter, is an Awana leader and taught them a few Awana games. They, in turn, taught us a couple of games as well! We also sang songs and held hands for prayer.*

At the Praish Home we played Twister. After Lily and I gave a demonstration on how it is done the kids jumped right in and had a great time. We were able to have a meal with each group of kids and our palates were stretched a bit! They loved having us visit and each home organized a program for us. The kids enjoyed getting to know us; they liked sitting on our laps and holding our hands. The individual attention was very important to them. They are happy children, ready with a quick smile! Being able to "play and party" with the children we believe was an encouragement to them.



Teen-agers at the Praise Home got a kick out of Twister.



Lily Kroontje receives a lesson in sewing from one of the Ashish Home girls. Sewing is a practical trade that some orphan girls will use to sustain themselves later on in life.

One day we hired a bus and took all the children from the Ashish Home shopping for shoes and underwear. Because the bus could not make it down the narrow street to our hotel, we hiked out to it and found it sitting on a hill. It would only start by rolling down the hill! It was quite a ride, and taking 36 kids to pick out their own shoes was also quite an experience. To buy a pair of shoes you search through a big pile looking for matching sizes and colors. However, we made it back to the bus without losing anyone. Miracles never cease.

We took an interest in the goals of each home realizing that each is handled a little differently just as the homes of American children are not all the same. We were

shown where kids are learning job skills such as computers, sewing, writing, music, and drama.

It was great to get to know each house-parent on a personal level as it makes us all closer! We trust that we were an encouragement to the house parents as they are assured of Kidstown's commitment to love, pray, and support them.

Would we go again? It is probably too soon to make that decision but as ambassadors for Jesus, Romans 10:14 says "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone telling them?"

(Right) After a big party with the Ashish Home kids, team members and children posed together for a photo.



Ways you can help

Operational funding - Kidstown is in need of donors who will partner with us in the area of operational funding. Although not glamorous, it is a crucial element. Operational funding allows Kidstown to sustain current efforts and is fuel for growth and expansion. Here are a few examples of expenses incurred by Kidstown on the "operational" front:

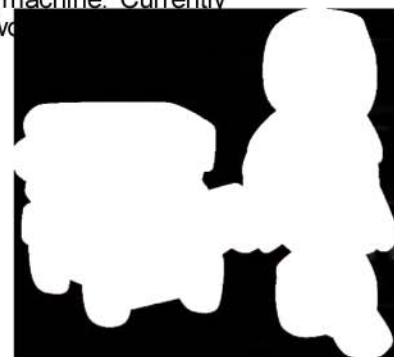


- locating, screening, and bringing new orphans into the sponsorship program
- maintaining communication with current sponsors/donors and searching for new sponsors/donors via presentations, website, newsletters, brochures, and videos.
- there is an administrative cost to Kidstown for each child sponsorship (for items such as bank and credit card fees, postal fees, and stationary). Many organizations deduct a percentage from sponsorship donations to cover these fees. Kidstown, however, does not. 100% of sponsorship donations are sent overseas in an effort to maximize the help given to the orphanages.

There are many children, such as these little ones in India (above), awaiting support from Kidstown. Operational funding helps Kidstown find orphanages such as these and raise support for them.

Washing machine - The Joy Home orphanage in South India is in need of a washing machine. Currently clothes are washed by hand. With 29 children, you can imagine how much work this work machine would be a great blessing to them. Cost: \$300

Educational expenses - Each orphanage faces stress each year as they must pay for books, uniforms, and school admission fees for the children in their care. If you have a heart for education, and would like to help to ease this pressure, gifts of any size would be appreciated. If you sponsor a child at a particular home, and would like your gift to benefit the kids at that particular home, please indicate as such on your donation.



Scholarship fund - A devoted Kidstown supporter has given \$1,000 to start a scholarship fund for orphans so that they can pursue higher education (such as university or vocational training). Kidstown has about 75 children which are in the 17-20 age range which could apply for tuition assistance from such a scholarship fund. Helping the children with day-to-day needs is important; so is helping them to obtain a skill which will enable them to support themselves in adult life. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please indicate "scholarship fund" on your donation.

Pradip (left) is 17 years old and lives in the Praise Home orphanage in Nepal. According to the leaders of the home, he is very bright and has real potential in the area of math and technology. With the right training, he could go far.

Supporter Spotlight

Jeri Ferguson has been a dedicated supporter of Kidstown for many years. She has a heart for orphans and has wholeheartedly poured herself into helping children in many ways. Her signature effort, which has impacted orphans around the world, is teddy bears that she personally makes. Kidstown has sent countless numbers of these bears to orphans in Romania, India, and Nepal. They give their recipients a simple message: "I love you".

In addition to making bears, Jeri sponsors five children in India & Nepal, and has given funds for an orphanage water project and for orphan educational costs. In addition to these efforts, she is also a consistent advocate for Kidstown, sharing with others about this outreach to orphans. Kidstown is blessed by Jeri's involvement, and is challenged by her level of service to the poor and needy. Thank you Jeri!

Eniko Kovacs (right), who lives at the Bethesda Home orphanage in Romania, lovingly holds a bear made by Jeri Ferguson.

