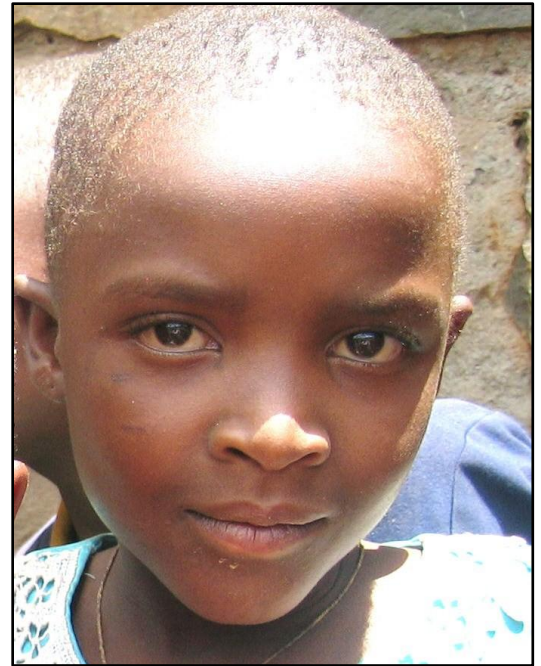


## Help Lesotho Child Sponsorship Program Overview

The Help Lesotho Child Sponsorship Program is now in its fifth year. Thanks to our dedicated sponsors, currently over 250 children benefit from this life-changing program.

### The Benefits of Sponsorship for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

In many remote areas where Help Lesotho is working, over 40% of children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Most live with grandmothers, relatives and neighbours who struggle daily to provide food and shelter. Continuing their education after Grade 7 is not an option for many of these children. They sit at home day after day with no hope, wondering what the future will bring. They feel they are a burden to those who care for them. Already vulnerable, these children have no means of providing for themselves, and in some cases, feelings of hopelessness and hunger lead them to lives of crime or prostitution or despair. When asked how we can help them the most, they say "I want to go to school". When we ask these grandmothers who are grieving the loss of their own children how we can best help them, they say "please help me keep this child in school".



Sponsored children become members of Help Lesotho HIV/AIDS Clubs at school. These clubs provides a safe environment to discuss openly issues surrounding HIV/AIDS such as, gender inequity, sexual violence and ways to deal with the numerous challenges facing them and their peers.

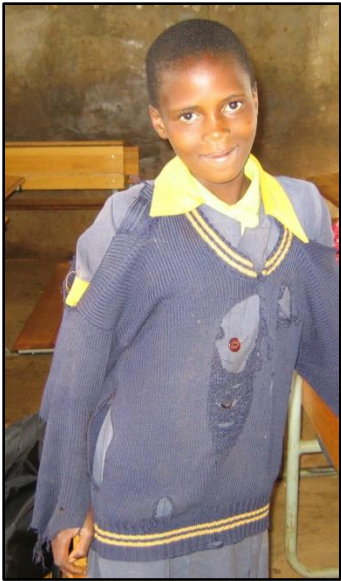
Sponsors may choose to add Help Lesotho's annual six day Leadership Camp to their sponsorship. Every January, the camp offers healthy meals, fun and education on topics such as gender equity, alcohol and drug abuse, dealing with grief and loss, sexual violence and healthy relationships. Such discussions are critical opportunities for the children and youth to explore their fears, insecurities and ask questions in a safe and open environment, a rare experience in Basotho society. Afternoons are spent in sports or drama. Every evening the talent shows give the children opportunities to perform skits, dance, poetry or song to a most appreciative audience. The children return to their villages and schools forever changed.

### The Roles and Expectations of Sponsors

Sponsors provide these children such benefits as school fees, books and school supplies, and a new uniform including a winter tracksuit, shoes and socks. Help Lesotho hopes sponsors will continue their support throughout the five years their children is in high school in Lesotho to enable them to become a-contributing members of a society devastated by HIV/AIDS.

Sponsorship also allows a meaningful degree of emotional support for the children so that these young ones know they are not alone and that someone cares what happens to them. Help Lesotho encourages sponsors to write to their sponsored children with messages of support and encouragement. Many strong bonds develop. Four times a year the Help Lesotho in-country Orphan and Vulnerable Children Support Officer (OSO) visits your child's school to determine their needs and progress. During these visits, the OSO staff brings them greetings and love from their sponsors and offer them a chance to communicate with the sponsors through us. For many, our quarterly visits are perhaps the only times that they have someone who expresses a deep concern for them and asks them about their welfare and their feelings. Help Lesotho provides continuity throughout their childhood that is kind and consistent.

As the number of orphans increase, so have the deaths of relatives and grandmothers. Orphans and vulnerable children who have been living with close relatives are sometimes sent off to live with less close relatives and they literally disappear from school. It is not unusual that a child moves several times and is less wanted each time by the host family. There are times when children just disappear and we never know why. Some drop out of school or get married. In these instances, we make every effort to locate the child and inform the sponsor. If a sponsored child moves outside the areas Help Lesotho supports, we urge sponsors to continue their support by allowing Help Lesotho to transfer their sponsorship to another child on the almost endless list of waiting children.



In the best interests of the child, Help Lesotho facilitates and monitors communication between sponsors and children for the protection of both. We insist that sponsors limit any gifts to small, light, non-monetary items such as stickers, family photos or appropriate small books enclosed with their letters and avoid gifts that would cause a child to stand out in the family or peer group. This often causes jealousy and discrimination and can lend the child vulnerable to theft. This is not what sponsors would want for their child. For this reason cash is never to be sent to a child. The most important impact is the caring expressed in regular letters. These are the real and valued treasures.

Given the small staff and large caseload of the children Help Lesotho supports, unfortunately it is not possible for us to manage special requests for the sponsored children. Although your generosity is most appreciated, we cannot manage special Christmas, birthday or other gifts for your child. This means, unfortunately that we ask you to refrain from sending extra funds for us to administer for your child. As you can appreciate, this takes a great deal of time and the distances are difficult between villages. Getting the correct shoe size, uniform, relevant text books for each subject is as much as we can manage for hundreds of children. There are times when we receive funds for food vouchers when children are starving, but that is the only extra advantage we can offer. The best extra thing you can do it to send them to camp or support our other leadership programs. If you would like to donate extra funds to the Orphan Relief Fund so that some child benefits, this is wonderful.

#### **To Sponsor a Child**

Please complete the sponsorship form on the site [www.helplesotho.ca](http://www.helplesotho.ca).

#### **By Cheque to:**

Help Lesotho  
610 Bronson Avenue  
Ottawa, ON, K1S 4E6

For monthly bank withdrawals, include the completed preauthorization form found on [www.helplesotho.ca](http://www.helplesotho.ca) and a VOID cheque

- For a monthly amount of \$38.75 (or \$44.15/month including Leadership Camp);
- For an annual amount is \$465.00 (or \$530 including Leadership Camp).



Monthly or annual payments may be made by credit card on <http://helplesotho.ca/waystohelp.html> .