

Coptic Orphans

...empowering children, transforming generations.

Combating Illiteracy: Saving Children from the Streets



March/April 2007



Abuse is rampant on the streets.

and Human Rights Watch surveys back up what we know from experience: lack of education is a major cause most of the time. When children are not in school, they are also vulnerable to arrest and police abuse, locking them into a cycle of poverty, illiteracy, hopelessness, and despair (*Human Rights Watch Report on Egypt, Vol. 15, No. 1 (E) - February 2003*).

Coptic Orphans focuses on literacy and education as the key to empowering children. Child sponsorship provides a child with the material support, love, and encouragement that he or she lost with the death of a father. Moreover sponsor support enables the child to learn how to read and succeed in school so that he or she has hope for a bright and secure future. This is a far cry from the prospect of a tattered life in the dead-end alleys of Cairo and other cities, where all roads lead to nowhere for children.

On a road that leads to a train station in Egypt, I met a group of street children. First, a little boy approached me in ripped, dirty clothing asking for change. The children were standing at an outdoor café at the station that had many police officers sitting around having coffee. One of the officers got up, cursing at the child and waving his fist. The child ran off, avoiding a strike from the officer as the other policemen sat and laughed. Despite this, I called the boy back and gave him a little bit of money. Word spread quickly among other street children and soon crowds of other children appeared asking for money. It was not long before I noticed that when each small child received a bit of money, they would wander across the tracks and hand the money to an older boy, who would in turn take it to a man standing in the shadows. As the crowds of children slowly thinned, a little girl approached me for some change. One of the people I was standing with told her to get away. She started to turn around and I put my hand on her shoulder to stop her. She stopped

and turned, wide-eyed, asking if I was going to strike her. I gave her a hug, and assured her that I was not going to hit her. I slipped her some money and whispered that she should keep it for herself.

Street children in Egypt face poor prospects on the street. They are commonly arrested for being "vulnerable to delinquency." Being in need makes them criminals under Egyptian law. For children on the streets of Alexandria and Cairo, there is no protection by the enforcers of law, and worse still, no protection from the enforcers of law. Police routinely beat, rape, extort, and steal from such children. Children are thrown into overcrowded cells with adult criminals who also abuse them sexually and physically, and are then thrown back onto the streets to be arrested again.

According to a UN report, 62% come to the city for family reasons including "the death of one or more parents." Coptic Orphans has found that illiteracy and lack of education often are the direct results of the death or abandonment of a parent,

Christ is Risen!

Truly He is Risen!

Coptic Orphans would like to wish you and your loved ones a very blessed Feast of the

Resurrection.

See Reverse Page

----- "So that in this and in all things Your great and holy name may be glorified ..." -----

I would like to set up a recurring donation of:

03/07

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 Other \$ _____

Please debit my checking account on the 15th of every month (attach VOID check)

OR

Please charge to my credit card on the 1st of every month

credit card number: _____ exp date ____/____

Enclosed is my check for a one time donation

I would love to sponsor a child. Please consider the above information my monthly sponsorship donation. I understand that the **minimum to sponsor a child is \$50 per month.**

Please send me more information about Serve to Learn

Coptic Orphans

P.O. Box 2881

Merrifield, VA 22116

Coptic Orphans 4th Annual Awards Ceremony and Gala

Keynote Speaker: internationally acclaimed Egyptian actress and UNDP goodwill ambassador Yousra.

The gala will be held on April 28, 2007 at the William F. Bolger Center in Potomac, MD and tickets are on sale for \$125/person. The event will feature dinner, an awards ceremony, a silent auction and live entertainment.

Six Flags America Fundraiser—TICKETS ONLY \$21.15

Coptic Orphans has been selected to be one of several groups participating in the sale of admission tickets to the fundraiser Spring Spin: One Good Turn to Benefit Another™

*A full day of unlimited coaster and family rides, your favorite costume characters, and endless memories – there's something for the whole family!

*A FREE return ticket to visit the park any operating day between October 6 and 14, 2007 – during Fright Fest!

*The opportunity to upgrade to a Season Pass for only \$29.99! **A \$109.98 value for just \$21.15!**

Tickets are valid only for April 14 or 15, 2007 from 10:30am to 6pm at the Six Flags America Maryland location.

For more information and to purchase tickets contact Tamara Martin at 703.641.8910 ext. 207 or tmartin@copticorphans.org. Final day to purchase tickets is **Monday, April 19, 2007**.

Coptic Orphans 2007 Internship

Coptic Orphans is pleased to announce an **eight-week paid summer internship for college students** in the DC office in the field of international development. Contact us at 1.800.499.2989 for more information.

Serve to Learn 2007

Sign up now for a summer of volunteering in Egypt. Spots are filling up fast! Contact Doris Abdel Messieh at 1.800.499.2989 ext. 202 for more information or download application from www.copticorphans.org.

Coptic Orphans

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All donations are tax exempt: 54-1637257

A financial statement is available from the Virginia State Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services upon request. Information filed with the attorney general concerning this charitable solicitation may be obtained from the Attorney of the State of New Jersey by calling 973.504.6215. Registration with the attorney general does not imply endorsement.