

# COPTIC ORPHANS



Transforming generations with Egypt's fatherless



## IT'S MORE THAN MONEY ...

In Egypt, where traditionally it's considered extremely shameful if neighbors find one's name on the charity rolls of a church, one family eagerly fought to become associated with one such service – even though their income isn't low enough to actually become part of it. And Coptic Orphans sponsors are driving this strange new effect.

When twelve-year old Yousef's father ended up in prison a few years ago, his aunt, Nadia, took on the responsibility of raising him and his younger sister. Some time later, Nadia noticed that something was happening with fatherless children in her village.

Fatherless children and their widowed mothers were supposed to stay away from other families, wear dirty old clothes and walk in shame. Now, Nadia saw them in clean, new clothes. They ran and played happily with other children. Nadia noticed that the only way she could tell the fatherless children apart now was that they were the ones that always seemed to have new books and be involved in special activities like organizing community projects or going to tantalizing career and life skill workshops.

Nadia wanted this for Yousef and his sister. With a little research she learned about the program, and tracked down the Rep through her local priest.

She told the Rep: "I don't want any money, I can manage that myself – I just want that same relationship for Yousef that you have with the others."

The Rep agreed to build a personal relationship with Yousef and his sister just like he did with the other children he visited as a volunteer for Coptic Orphans – even if Yousef didn't need the financial benefits of *Not Alone*. Today, Nadia says she has already seen a big difference in the two children. She believes that the Rep's relationship with the children has changed their future.

Child Sponsors support the volunteer work of dedicated Reps who visit fatherless children in their homes every week and become the perceptive, present, and always encouraging mentors that children need.

The *Not Alone* effect that Coptic Orphans sponsors have created is changing the way that ordinary villagers like Nadia think about being a part of such programs. They see the new opportunities *Not Alone* children have despite their obstacles, and know that they have a special dignity. Now Nadia is confident that with the help of the Rep, she can raise Yousef well and ensure he does not follow in his father's footsteps.

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I want to personally thank you for all your sacrifices for the children of Egypt during this past Fast. Stories like this show that every sacrifice yields great returns for the fatherless of Egypt.

As a matter of fact, this past month, one of the bishops in Egypt said that he has been so happy with fruit he has seen over time from the *Not Alone* program, he requested all those involved in church service, whether nuns or laypeople, to apply the approaches and plans of Coptic Orphans to all church services where they are involved.

I pray that God's promise to all who "share your bread" and "break every yoke" during the Fast will be true for you: "Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing will spring up speedily." (Isaiah 58:6-8, ESV) Have a blessed Resurrection, full of the joy and light of our risen Lord.

—*Nermien Riad*

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The names used in this story have been changed in order to protect participant privacy.