



COPTIC
ORPHANS

2002 ANNUAL REPORT

WE WILL SURVIVE

WE WILL SUCCEED





“Remember those who have no one to remember them.” — *from the Midnight Prayer*



H. H. Pope Shenouda (with Nermien Riad) blesses the work of Coptic Orphans.

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

James 1:27

From the **Executive Director**

Dear Friends,

It has been an honor to give glory to God’s name by serving His children. The participation of many people in this blessing has resulted in the great impact we are making on these children. We are happy to share some of the success stories and some of the challenges we have faced in 2002 as we look forward to the work God has in store for us in 2003.

The United Nations Millennium Summit set eight “Millennium Development Goals” for the year 2015. These goals include the eradication of extreme poverty, education for all, and gender equality. Our work with the children this year has focused on literacy, which is an important factor in the eradication of poverty. We are especially concerned with the literacy and education of girls, whose literacy still lags behind that of boys, and who are marginalized even when they pursue their education. Already, with God’s help, we are seeing the impact this focus on literacy has made on the children, especially the girls.

We are thankful for the prayers and support of thousands of people around the world as we work for the survival and success of our children. Most of all, we thank His Holiness Pope Shenouda III for his support and prayers. We were blessed this year with the opportunity to meet with His Holiness and share our service with him. As His Holiness commended our work, he advised us to continue to “remember those who have no one to remember them.”

Almost 4,500 children have been reached by Coptic Orphans. Each of these children have the potential to lift themselves out of poverty and live successful lives. However, we remember that there are still 94,500 orphaned children in Egypt. Join us as we, with God’s help, reach them all.

Sincerely,

Nermien Riad
Executive Director



To survive and succeed, we will learn to read.



Manga (far left) with her friends

“We celebrate literacy as a value in itself that is closely linked to basic human dignity and full citizenship of one’s country and of the world. Literacy is also a vital means for securing other benefits and achieving other goals. Touching every aspect of our lives and also the lives of those around us, literacy is truly transformative.”

— Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

Literacy: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

We asked Manga to read us a story. She picked up her school book and began to read aloud to us fluently in Arabic. We pointed to a word in the middle of the story. She stared at it for a few moments, unable to read it. She started rehearsing the story in her head till she got to that word, and then “read” the word we were pointing to. Finally, we understood the situation. Manga was not reading; she had memorized the story and was reciting it to us. Manga is in third grade. She has passed from grade to grade through memorization, but she has never learned to read.

In a world changing so quickly, it is important that children have the skills necessary to keep up with it. The one skill that is absolutely essential to survival in a swiftly changing world is literacy. The ability to read is the key to accessing information, the prerequisite to any job, and the door to knowledge. Coptic Orphans has always understood that education is what lifts children out of poverty and breaks the cycle. However, ensuring that a child in Egypt is attending school and passing from grade to grade is no longer enough to ensure that he or she knows how to read. We have found that there are even children graduating from high school in Egypt who don’t know how to read Arabic. Statistics on education and literacy in Egypt reflect this trend. While 86% of boys and 81% of girls were enrolled in school from 1995 to 1999¹, the literacy rate in 2000 for youth aged 15-24 was only 69.8%². In other words, there are more youth in Egypt enrolled in high school than there are

youth with the ability to read. This trend does not bode well for a country with an overall adult literacy rate of 55.3%³.

There are numerous reasons for this problem. Research indicates that the quality of public schooling is deteriorating in Egypt. Public schools are increasingly overcrowded, and children receive little attention to their individual learning needs⁴. In addition, teachers, private tutors, and students alike report to us that they use rote memorization to teach and learn reading and writing. Students are not taught to read by learning the letter sounds and combining them into words. Rather, they are taught to memorize the spelling and shape of individual words. This means that the children may never learn the skill of deciphering new words or composing sentences and paragraphs to communicate effectively through writing. Children who do learn to read have figured it out themselves, attend a few exceptional schools, have a good teacher or are receiving help through other channels.

A child that never learns to read will have severely limited opportunities in this quickly changing world. Our goal is to help our children survive and succeed. Manga may pass third grade by memorizing her lessons, but with Coptic Orphans, Manga will learn to read and live a brighter future. We strive to give our children the very best opportunities, and for this reason we have made literacy a priority in all of our programs.



¹ UNICEF, *State of the World’s Children*, 2003

² UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Indicators*, 2002.

³ UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Indicators*, 2002.

⁴ O’Gara, C., Benoliel, S., Sutton, M., Tietjen, K. (1999). *More, But Not Yet Better: An Evaluation of USAID’s Programs and Policies to Improve Girls’ Education*.



Reading is the key to fulfilling our dreams.



A Rep reads with one of the children.

Our Representatives Make the Difference

Coptic Orphans started to notice this alarming trend in children's education through the monitoring of our Cairo office and the reports of our Representatives (Reps). When we learned that this phenomena was a trend and not just a few exceptions, we made it known to all of our Reps throughout Egypt that this problem could no longer continue in our program. At all of our Rep meetings during 2002, we brought in speakers who are experts in education and child development to further educate the Reps on the learning needs of the children. During the Rep conference in Alexandria, we held a special session for Reps to brainstorm different ways to ensure that all our children are learning to read.

Our Reps all over Egypt have heard the call and are responding. Each of them are monitoring not only the school progress of their children, but the progress of their reading skills. The Reps have found creative ways to strengthen weak reading skills among the children. Some Reps have recruited recent college graduates in their areas, or college students at home for the summer, to tutor the children one-on-one in reading. Others encourage older siblings to help their younger brothers and sisters by reading with them several times a week. Some Reps have found books with accompanying tapes so that the children can listen to the tapes as they read along.

Back to School Campaign

Not only have our Reps responded to the call to solve this problem, but our donors have also responded. Over the summer we started the "Back to School" campaign. Together we raised \$22,500 "back to school" funds for gifts

"Investing in children's abilities to read, write, and do basic math is key to an improved quality of life and to poverty alleviation."

—UK Department for International Development

of books, school supplies, school bags and school clothes for our children at the beginning of the school year.

Celebrating Success

In the towns of Quos and Nagaba, His Grace Bishop Beman and our Reps demonstrated their pride in the orphans by organizing a "success festival." This special event celebrated a successful academic year for each of our children in the village. All the children were taken to the festival in private cars and treated to sandwiches, sweets, and soda. H.G. Bishop Beman gave a motivational speech to the youth to congratulate them on their efforts and to praise God for all His blessings. He then awarded certificates of accomplishment to each of the children and they, in turn, awarded him a medal to remember the occasion.

Encouraging Success

Acceptance into university-level studies is a great success for children in Egypt. However, the costs of books, clothes, and living expenses in college make even a free university education unattainable to young people struggling financially. In 2002, Coptic Orphans almost doubled the number of young adults added to our College Aid program. In this program, college students receive a fixed stipend every three months, which they budget for their academic needs. Twenty-three students have already graduated from college with the help of this program and are now successfully working in professional fields such as medicine, dentistry, engineering, pharmacy and teaching.





We are valuable girls. We will learn. We will change the world.



A typically segregated Egyptian classroom.

Literacy for Girls: **The Valuable Girl Project**

Nargis is seated at the far left side of the room. She is paying close attention to the teacher. The teacher asks a question, and Nargis raises her hand. On the right side of the room, the side the teacher is facing, a boy calls out the answer. “Very good,” the teacher tells him. Nargis raises her hand to answer the next six questions, but each time, the boys on the right side of the room respond before the teacher ever notices Nargis, or any of the girls, who are all seated on the left side of the room. Nargis gives up trying.

In rural Upper Egypt, 30% of girls who are enrolled in school drop out before completing secondary school. These girls not only drop out because of pressures to marry early, to stay home and assist with chores or field work, but because of the negative bias they face in the classroom. Many teachers do not acknowledge girls’ presence in the classroom and even discourage them from continuing their learning. In an educational system that is already graduating illiterate children, the implications for girls are quite serious. Currently, almost 60% of women in Egypt are illiterate, and young women (aged 15-24) are still almost 20% more likely than boys that age to be unable to read¹.

The year 2002 saw the beginning of Coptic Orphan’s new program, the Valuable Girl Project. This program supports the education and literacy of girls by training girls in high school and college to be academic mentors to girls in primary school. Through one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, the “big sisters” read stories and do homework and other academic activities with their “little sis-

On November 21, 2002, the Society for International Development-Washington recognized the Valuable Girl Project by awarding its program manager the Truman Award of Leadership and Innovation for Young Professionals in International Development.

ters.” Through this program, the “big sisters” realize the value of their education through the responsibility of assisting a younger girl in her schoolwork. The “little sisters” receive positive role models in their “big sisters.” They receive academic support in an environment that recognizes their immense value as girls.

The project began in full effect with the training of the “big sisters” in July 2002, and a kick-off celebration for all participants at the end of the training. Tutoring sessions began the week after the celebration. Before their participation in the program, many of the “little sisters” being tutored were slated to repeat their previous year’s grade. Thanks to the help of their “big sisters,” 85% have passed the end-of-summer exam that moves them up to their next grade level. The parents of one “little sister” intended to pull their daughter out of school for the 2002-2003 academic year. The girl’s “big sister” and the local program coordinator met with the parents and convinced them to allow their daughter to continue school. The Valuable Girl Project has given the “big sisters” confidence to advocate for their “little sisters”. They are not just tutors, but they are becoming leaders in their community.

The benefits to educating girls are immense. Educating girls and women reduces poverty and increases child survival. Girls who are educated and literate show increased self-esteem and increase their participation in family and community decision-making. Education gives girls the tools to benefit themselves and everyone around them.



¹ UNDP, *Egypt Human Development Indicators, 2002.*



Through service, we will learn from each other.



Nadia, a Serve to Learn volunteer, assists children in her class.

English Literacy: Serve to Learn

"I was so impressed with how happy they were regardless of their circumstances," Monica said. "It taught me a powerful lesson."

Monica was one of the first Serve to Learn volunteers. Serve to Learn, another new Coptic Orphans literacy program, started in the summer of 2002. It gives young people living in English-speaking countries the opportunity to serve our children in Egypt by teaching them the most marketable skill in the Egyptian job market: speaking English. Yet Monica and her fellow volunteers realized very quickly that they were serving to learn—the children and the experience taught them more than they imagined they could learn in three weeks.

Participants in the Serve to Learn program spend three weeks in Upper Egypt teaching a special English summer program to children at a school run by the Coptic Church. Volunteers are provided with accomo-



dations near the school. English classes are open to the community, but the orphans have their own special class with the volunteers. After class, volunteers have the opportunity to visit the children in their homes, and free time can be spent visiting churches and historic Christian sites.

Proficiency in more than one language, and particularly English, is becoming more and more important in an increasingly global world. Despite the fact that children in Egypt begin to learn English in fourth grade, many of them, especially in Upper Egypt, never have exposure to a native speaker of English. Serve to Learn gives our children in Egypt the chance to learn some English from a native English speaker, and gives

the volunteers the opportunity to learn valuable lessons from the children themselves.

Hi Nermien and Phoebe,

I hope this emails finds both of you in peace. Wow this trip sounds amazing!!! I'm even more psyched about it now then before, believe it or not. God has such perfect planning for everything in our life ...Thanks so much for providing this oppportunity to serve the most precious of His creation.

In Christ,
Martha





We will not give up hope.



Iriny: her eyes tell her story

“When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.”

Deuteronomy 24:19

Iriny's Story: A Ray of Light in a Sea of Despair

If you only saw her eyes, you would think she was a hundred years old. In her short six years, Iriny had seen more than many of us see in a lifetime. When Iriny was five, her father killed himself.

He sold chickens for a living to support his family of seven, but he could not make ends meet and fell into debt. Perhaps it was the debt that drove him to despair. Perhaps it was seeing Iriny suffer from a skin disease that he could not afford to have treated. His neighbors said he was depressed. We cannot imagine how difficult life must have been to drive this father of five to suicide.

But we do know what happened to his family. Iriny's father left behind not only the debt he incurred, but his funeral costs which plunged the family into more debt. Iriny's mother, uneducated, could find no way to support the children. Their only source of income was from Shenouda, the oldest brother, who followed in his father's footsteps and also sold poultry. Iriny's other brothers and sisters, who were all enrolled in school, started looking for work and planned on dropping out before the winter holidays were over. No relief was in sight for this family. They struggled to make ends meet even as they tried to recover from the shock of their father's death.

But their Heavenly Father did not forget the misery of His children. Coptic Orphans learned of this family in January and assigned them a Rep to care for their needs. The Rep first showed the family God's comfort by reassuring them that God will take care of them in their time of need.

Coptic Orphans paid off the late father's debt and relieved the family of this financial burden. The children no longer had to drop out of school, and were even

provided with tutoring to help them catch up after the tragedy. Their Rep purchased food, clothes, school books, and supplies for Iriny and her family. He encouraged them to attend church. They started to attend regularly, and Iriny's oldest sister Randa even joined the church choir.

The Rep took Iriny for a medical examination and finally treated her skin disease. Because of Coptic Orphan's care and attention, Iriny and her sisters and brothers succeeded in school. Each one successfully passed on to the next grade. The church showed its pride in their accomplishments by throwing Iriny's family a party. “These are the golden days,” Iriny's mother said when they came home with all their presents. With the gifts of school books, spiritual books, and tapes, the family started a small library at home.

By God's grace and through Coptic Orphans, Iriny and her family went from a sea of despair to a life of hope. Thanks to the support of Coptic Orphans' donors, now Iriny can say “I feel like God is beside us, helping us again.”

Iriny is one example of the thousands of children that Coptic Orphans supports. Children all over Egypt suffer in dire circumstances with no end in sight. Yet every day, children living in this sea of despair are given a ray of hope through the grace of God and the work of Coptic Orphans.





Thank you for your prayers and support.



Voices of the Children

Dear Samy,

I'm so happy that I learned reading and writing and that I entered school. I'm 10 years old and I now know the English letters. I'm also happy with my new suit.

Your sister,
Sabreen

To my friend Rodolf,

Greetings and peace. How are you doing, my friend Rodolf? How is everything? I would like to let you know that I am in good health. I broke my leg during the school year, but God was with me and helped me and I was studying at home just as if I was in school. Thank God I recovered and also succeeded. All this is because of your prayers and your concern for me.

Good bye,
Shenouda

Dear Gina,

Peace from Jesus Christ. I would like to tell you that I can't write well so I had my sister write this letter for me. I would like to tell you about myself. I'm entering second grade and I go to church and to the Sunday School. Please send me a letter telling me about yourself. I love you so much. Thank you so much. I give you this flower as a gift.

Yours,
Mariam

To mother Sylvia,

I'm Hany ... I'm going into the 1st year of preparatory school (7th grade). I study and go to church, serve at the altar, respond after Abouna (the priest) in the Liturgy, serve God and take communion. I'm sending you a photo to introduce myself and I want a photo from you. I love to draw and I'm sending you my drawings because I love the pictures of the saints. I promise you that I'll study well and enter the college of art. I would like to tell you that I pray for you in front of the picture of St. Samuel the Confessor. I hope you will always be well.

Hany

Dear Coptic Orphans,

I am one of the lucky ones to get the blessing of your services while in college. You took care of my family with even the simplest of needs, providing rice, sugar, eggs, meat, and chicken for them to eat. I also can't thank you enough for providing for my college's monetary demands and supporting me with my grades and motivating me to finish my term. God reward you for your effort.

Thank you for all your love and care,
Milad, Pharmacist in training

Thank you for sending me a card from Ebtesam, my sponsored child. Her words were very nice and thoughtful. May the Lord bless her and her family. I pray that she becomes a successful young lady. May God watch over her and her family and help them always. Thank you for your assistance to get in touch with our people and help them.

Sonia

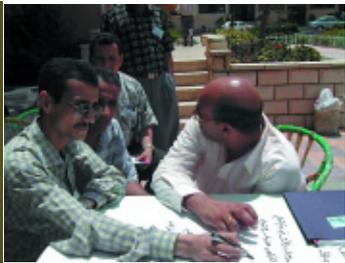
To my merciful mother Mary,

Thank the Lord for sending you as a loving mother and dear friend to me after my father and mother left us to our grandmother. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you. Because of your love and care, I am graduating high school. May God reward you.

Your daughter,
Amira



We will work together for the glory of God's Name.



Coptic Orphans Reps working together at our Rep Conference, which is held every two years.

Working Together

The year 2002 was a year of collaboration for Coptic Orphans. All over the world, we have been working together for the children of Egypt. Coptic Orphans opened two new branches—one in Australia and one in Canada—in addition to our Washington, DC headquarters. In Egypt, we gathered over 130 Reps for our conference, held every two years, and brought three volunteers from Detroit, Michigan, to Upper Egypt for the Serve to Learn program. Our first annual Coptic Orphans Gala in Washington, DC brought together over 200 supporters of our cause. Rutgers-Newark's Coptic Society in New Jersey gathered over 50 people for another fundraising dinner on behalf of Coptic Orphans. Twenty aspiring athletes gathered around Lake Accotink, Virginia, for our second annual 5K run. In Australia, Coptic Orphans has been featured on three radio shows and a television show. Australia's volunteers have been setting up a Coptic Orphans stall and selling Egyptian papyrus at local markets to benefit the children. Individuals everywhere are spreading the word about our service for God's children.



Over 200 Coptic Orphans supporters attended our gala at the Austrian Embassy in Washington, DC on October 11, 2002. The gala included a silent auction and opportunities to sponsor children. Together, we raised over \$20,000 and increased awareness of the children and their plight.

It was wonderful to meet you ... and to know that the young like you care about the bigger issues in life. May Christ bless your youthful dedication.

Dr. Almez Zewde
Howard University

In our new Coptic Orphans t-shirts we ran (or walked) 5K to tell the world about Coptic Orphans and get a little exercise in the process.



Coptic Orphans Australia meets with H. G. Bishop Daniel of Sydney in November 2002. Left to right Sophie Georgy, Richard Hazzaz, H. G. Bishop Daniel, Said Morcos, Ben Morcos and Joe Georgy.



Coptic Orphans up North: Alex Sidhom (second to last standing on the left), the manager of the new Coptic Orphans Canada branch, poses for a group picture with St. Bishoy's undergraduate and graduate youth in Ontario, Canada.





Your donations make a great impact on the lives of the children.



The smile of a grateful child: priceless reward for doing God's work

Wow, you really keep a great tracking of costs. I am happy to see that my donations are well accounted for. You just never know these days with all the charities out there, and where they are really spending our money. I see our donations, interests, and the Coptic orphans are in very good hands. Keep up the great work!

- Maha Meleika
Associate Director
Channel Manager for PB Services and Health Care

Financial Information

Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2002

Total Revenue:.....	\$1,015,798
Total Expense:.....	\$715,096
Increase in Net Assets:.....	\$300,702

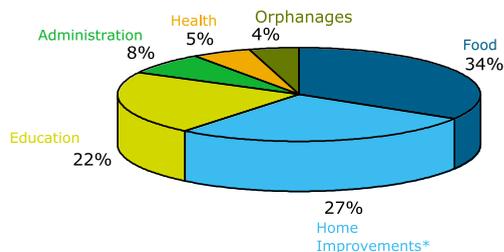
*Audited Financial statement available upon request
Audited by Napoleon Toma, Certified Public Accountant*

Sources of Income

Cash Contributions.....	\$1,010,945
Other Income.....	\$4,853

Funds Spent

Child Assistance Programs.....	\$659,969
Administration & Fundraising.....	\$55,125
Total Funds Spent.....	\$715,096



* household goods, housing and clothing

Board Members

Nermien Riad, Executive Director
Nesrien Geerges, Chairman
Robie Samanta-Roy, PhD
Sawsan Said-Hanna, MD

2002

ANNUAL REPORT



In the U.S.

Coptic Orphans
P.O. Box 2881
Merrifield, VA 22116
703.641.8910
800.499.2989

In Australia

Coptic Orphans Australia
P.O. Box 1003
St. Mary's, NSW 2760
02 9833 9033

In Canada

Coptic Orphans Canada
P.O. Box 92242
2900 Warden Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M1W-3W9
(416) 756-3568

In Egypt

Coptic Orphans
Heliopolis, Cairo
02-415-9467
02-310-7417

info@copticorphans.org

www.copticorphans.org