



CLASSY AWARDS WEEKEND

ABOUT

STORIES

CATEGORIES & PROCESS

## Transforming Generations with Egypt's Fatherless



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### THE PROBLEM

In Egypt, fatherless children are stigmatized. When the father dies or abandons the house, the family is left with no means. Fatherless children may have to look for work and girls are given into marriage at a young age. All these factors hinder children from realizing their full potential.

In 1988, Egyptian-American Nermien Riad, the founder of Coptic Orphans returned to Egypt, her childhood home, while on a tour of duty with the US government. When she saw the dire circumstances in which fatherless children live, she decided to start an organization to improve the lives of vulnerable children by providing for their basic needs, education and mentoring. This dictated the strategy of Coptic Orphans' flagship program, Not Alone. The structure of Not Alone was built to make use of grassroots efforts of 400 locally-based Volunteer Reps.

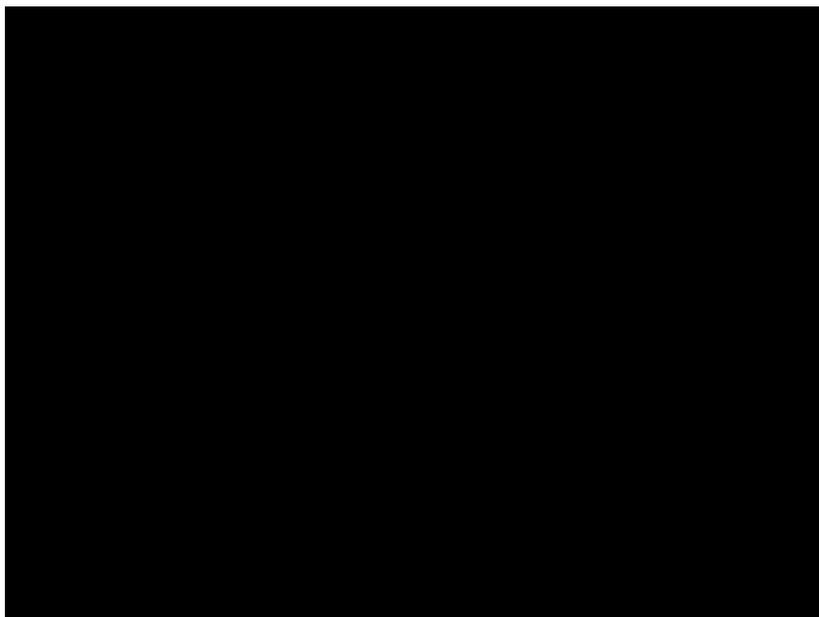
Volunteer Reps visit the children in their homes to assess their needs and to provide necessary assistance to them. They start by evaluating children's basic needs from food and proper clothing to a healthy and comfortable environment at home. They then provide the children with assistance to excel in school and improve their skills.

In addition, Volunteer Reps arrange for workshops that discuss values and health awareness, as well as exploring talents to equip the children with necessary life skills and the means to unlock their God-given potential.

A story written by Nadia, a Not Alone participant, highlights the work of Coptic Orphans in transforming the lives of fatherless children for the better. "My dad died when I was in grade 3 and I was very weak at school. I also had a lisp and all my relatives used to laugh when I talked. My mother wanted to make me drop out of school. However, when Miss Mervat came, she started taking care of me. She took me to a speech therapist and arranged for a tutor. Miss Mervat told me that my strong will to learn and to overcome my weaknesses was the true source of my success. Now in all subjects I am at the top of my class. My mother is also very proud of me and says that it was the best decision to let me continue in school." Nadia is just one of thousands whose lives went from despair to success after joining Not Alone.

Coptic Orphans has also succeeded in creating a sustainable bridge to connect Diaspora Egyptians to Egypt. Riad traveled around the world to raise awareness about the condition of fatherless children in Egypt. She rallied Egyptians living abroad to contribute to the work of Coptic Orphans both financially and by volunteering in Egypt. Throughout the years, Coptic Orphans recruited a broad base of more than 1,500 donors and sponsors throughout the world and opened offices in 4 countries (USA, Canada, Australia and United Kingdom).

Since 1988, Coptic Orphans has transformed the lives of more than 27,000 children in Egypt. Fatherless children who used to be at a disadvantage due to the low income of their family now receive nutritious food, school lessons and other necessities on a monthly basis. Those who were at risk of dropping out of school to support their families now stay in school and excel tremendously. Those same fatherless children have gone on to become change-makers in their community.



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## THE CLASSY AWARDS

The CLASSY Awards is the largest philanthropic awards ceremony in the country, celebrating the greatest charitable achievements by nonprofit organizations, socially conscious businesses, and individuals worldwide. In 2011, nearly 2,000 organizations and volunteers were nominated for a CLASSY Award, and their collective efforts impacted the lives of more than 200,000,000 people in 71 countries worldwide.

" Hollywood has Oscar, Broadway has Tony, and now Philanthropy has the CLASSYs! **"Aol.**

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