



Compassion in Action

COPTIC ORPHANS 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



Compassion in Action

There is a saying, “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” Maybe you’re like me, struggling to keep up with the latest news on the global economic crisis, and wondering how to best secure the future for your family. In my case, it’s the entire Coptic Orphans family. How will we manage if the price of bread, lentils, books, and gasoline continue to go up in Egypt? What happens if our supporters start losing their jobs? Sometimes it seems that we are living in turbulent times, and the world is in danger of turning upside down.

Then I hear about a sponsor, whose story came at just the right time to remind me that God’s Compassion is always the same, and that He provides for all His children. George is from Egypt, and his parents died when he was young. He eventually emigrated to the U.S. and landed his dream job in Manhattan. Within weeks, however, the storm on Wall Street reached his firm, and he was laid off. Despite cutting back his spending in all areas, George was forced to make the difficult decision to stop his sponsorship payments. We let George know that we would be praying for him in our staff prayer meetings, and we did. Meanwhile, George sent out over 200 resumes across four states. The single response he received bore fruit. Three weeks later, we got a call: “Your prayers worked,” said George. “I have a new job.” He immediately renewed his commitment to his sponsored child.

George reflected, “I have experienced on a daily basis that God is walking with me on my journey, rather than walking for me.”

Thank you, George, for reminding me of something very important. Though sometimes we wish He’d carry us, God does walk with us, always: no matter what storms of circumstance surround us. It is this kind of compassion that we strive to build in the Coptic Orphans family. It is the difference between a hand-out and a hand-up: a hand-up requires the joining of hands. It is the start of a compassionate relationship, one marked by a recognition of a shared fate.

No matter what is going on around me, I can take comfort in the steadfastness of God’s love for His children, and in the power of compassion to transform lives in the Coptic Orphans family. This is what I depend on to secure our future.

Nermien Riad
Founder and Executive Director

“Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy’ (Matt. 5:7). The merciful person is he who gives to others what he has himself received from God, whether it be money, or food, or strength, a helpful word, a prayer, or anything else that he has through which he can express his compassion for those in need. At the same time he considers himself a debtor, since he has received more than he is asked to give.” - St. Peter of Damascus



With His Grace Bishop Bakhomious
in July 2008, Egypt.

2008 AT A GLANCE

- Reps: 270
- Active Children: 6,799+ (with their families)
- Sponsored Children: 2000+
- In 2008, Coptic Orphans reached the landmark of 16,000 children reached since 1988
- The Not Alone program accepted 1,094 new participants and their families into our program: an increase of 16% keeping pace with our increased income.
- Coptic Orphans awarded \$20,000 to the Children’s Cancer Hospital in Egypt in honor of philanthropist Ola Ghabbour
- In 2008, 400 Not Alone participants graduated from high school, and 92 graduated from the university.

Who We Are:

COPTIC ORPHANS IS A CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION THAT UNLOCKS THE GOD-GIVEN POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN WHO FACE EXTRAORDINARY CHALLENGES IN EGYPT, AND EQUIPS THEM TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY AND BECOME CHANGE-MAKERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

What We Do through our Main Programs

- In our flagship program, Not Alone, fatherless children are connected to the resources and support they need via one of over 270 volunteer representatives who are appointed through the Church. The representatives serve as advocates and mentors to the children, facilitating families’ access to their basic rights as well as identifying the unique potential of each child in order to link them to resources and programs that will foster their growth and development into empowered adults.

“Now, someone cares about us and asks about us, who I know I can call any time about anything: in any need or for any advice and guidance.”
- Mother from Sohag, Southern Egypt



- In **Serve to Learn**, we connect youth from around the globe to Egypt. Volunteers conduct activities in English and share a journey of self-discovery and transformation with the children and communities they serve.

“The joy we had being with children is unspeakable. We marveled at their beautiful smiles and appreciation of the simplest of things. Spending time with them was a real blessing.”
– 2008 volunteer



- In the **Valuable Girl Project**, girls at risk of dropping out of school are paired with older girls in peer-mentoring relationships that build self-esteem and promote academic retention and access to civil and social rights.



“We say that we are the salt of the earth that gives our village a new vision of life full of encouragement, wellbeing, and a shining future”
– Big Sister from Tahta, Southern Egypt

learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause. (Isaiah 1:17, ESV)

Compassion with Effectiveness

DRIVEN BY COMPASSION, WE ALWAYS LOOK FOR WAYS TO MAKE SURE THAT WE ACT AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS.

Keys to Our Work

A Strong Relationship with the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt

- We work in 43 dioceses in Egypt: our relationship with the Coptic Church means that we reach even the most remote areas
- Each of our 270 local volunteer Reps in Egypt, the hands and feet of Coptic Orphans on the ground, are nominated and blessed by their local bishops
- We constantly coordinate our work with bishops and priests at every level in Egypt

Global Diaspora Resources

- Being based internationally in the Coptic diaspora gives us an ability to bring a global perspective to our work in Egypt
- As global professionals, we have access to resources around the world



Efficiency: The Charity Navigator says that as a guideline, an organization should dedicate at least 75% directly to its programs. Coptic Orphans has consistently dedicated over 85% of expenses to programs.

Effectiveness: Coptic Orphans takes a development approach to our work. That means that we invest in addressing root causes of issues as well as meeting short-term needs. Investing in knowledge and expertise means that every dollar goes farther in its impact for children in Egypt.

Whoever has earthly possessions and notices a brother in need and yet withholds his compassion from him, how can the love of God be present in him? (1 John 3:17, ISV)

Not Alone

It's a sad fact that in Egypt, the drop-out rate for children from the poorest families is 12.1%. Thanks to your support, almost 100% of high school children in the Not Alone program stay in school.

When children in Egypt lose a father, they often lose more than a loving protector and provider; they may also lose their identities due to deeply-rooted societal attitudes, and their right to grow up in their own homes and families. Many end up in orphanages, their mothers unable to provide for them. The ones lucky enough to stay with family often don't end up staying in school. Boys as young as ten years old drop out to become the breadwinners for their families, and girls are married off at a young age to ease the burden on the household. We developed the *Not Alone* program over twenty years ago to help fatherless children remain at home with their mothers and in school, so they can reach their potential.

Statistics:

- Reps: 270
- Active Children: 6,799+ (with their families)
- In 2008, 400 Not Alone participants graduated from high school, and 92 graduated from the university.
- Sponsored Children: 2000+
- The Not Alone program accepted 1,094 new participants and their families into our program: **an increase of 16% keeping pace with our increased income.**

Our network of over 270 grassroots volunteers, or "Reps" are the heart of the program. Because of them, our children know they are "not alone."



MEET A REP

Both Fady and his wife work as volunteer Reps in the Cairo area. He says "I feel like I am a father to these children," and his children affectionately call him "Baba Fady." Fady says about his goals for the children he works with: "I want to see every one of my children to become a leader. This is how I define leadership: when they have a transformation of heart, they will change the whole community around them."

Coptic Orphans makes a covenant with each family to ensure that every child becomes literate and makes progress in school. Workshops re-enforce each child's dedication by giving them practical skills and resources for success.



At workshops, children not only increase their knowledge with critical information and learn new skills, they gain acceptance and confidence to succeed.

Child Sponsorship

The benefits above those that children receive as part of the *Not Alone* program come from child sponsors around the world, who ensure that children not only have access to worldly resources, but also the intangible growth and support made possible through a compassionate relationship.

The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but reveal to them their own. —Benjamin Disraeli

Not Alone: The Children

The individual relationship that each child has with his or her local volunteer Rep brings access to special opportunities to grow and learn through workshops.

More than Money Can Buy

A charitable association in Egypt approached Hala from Ismailia, a mother of a *Not Alone* program participant, and offered to support the family on condition that they leave the *Not Alone* program. Though the charitable association offered a higher amount of monthly support, the mother refused. **“In the Not Alone program, we get more than money can buy.** There is someone who cares about us, he takes time to visit and talks to us. Also, we can attend workshops, where there is always a useful subject being discussed. **With this, we can face any difficulty.”** She looks forward to helping others just like her with her new skills.

WORKSHOPS, TRAININGS, AND ACTIVITIES, 2008

- For Children: 101
- For Mothers: 80
- For Reps: 36

Mary Chooses Education Over Marriage

When Mary was young, her mother wanted to pull her out of school and marry her to an older man. After the mother attended a seminar on child marriage hosted by Coptic Orphans, she agreed to support her daughter’s decision not to go through with the marriage and continue her education. Now, Mary has graduated from the Faculty of Law.

The Return of a Provider: After Hany’s father died, his mother remembers, “I often stayed awake crying, wondering where I would get the few pounds needed to feed my children.” Any hope seemed to evaporate utterly when her only son dropped out of school. Hany had given up on school because he still couldn’t read or write, despite having been moved up from grade to grade. Hope returned when he agreed to re-enroll in school with the encouragement of his Rep in the *Not Alone* program. Not only did he learn to read, but he was able to start his own business with the support of Coptic Orphans and his sponsor. Today, Hany’s mother doesn’t have



Photo by: Mary Seifrag

to worry so much; Hany earns enough income from his internet café business to put food on the table and ensure that his sisters can stay in school, too.

...That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (1 Corinthians 12:25-26, ESV)

Not Alone: The Mothers

The family is the most important part of a child’s world. A supportive and dedicated family can help a child overcome any obstacle. So when a child becomes a participant in our program, we develop a widowed mother’s ability to become the support that her child needs.

To preserve the dignity of the orphans and widows, our volunteer Reps visit them in their own homes, to listen and attend to the family’s unique needs. In this way, we protect them from the destructive stigma associated with receiving assistance that persists in Egypt, while empowering them step-by-step to make smart choices with their own budgets.

Through workshops, Coptic Orphans trained mothers in 2008 to start their own businesses and money-making projects to aid their efforts at self-sufficiency.

Mother Gains Income, Starts Village Trend



Iman is just one of many widowed mothers who refuse helpless dependency on the Church or charity, but struggle in the face of illness, social pressure, and poverty to make a better life for their children. Iman defied village customs that placed women firmly in the home, and started a successful business selling vegetables door-to-door, thanks to a wheelbarrow purchased with the support of Coptic Orphans. Today, she makes more than her entire monthly widow pension in a single week. She not only survives, she also supports her daughter’s education from her income. And, she has noticed a few more women vendors around town who seem to have followed her courageous lead.

Mother Turns Down Charity after Gaining Means of Provision

Tawhida is industrious with the sewing machine we provided. She diligently saves money from the simple clothing items she sews and sells, using the proceeds to support her two children. When she found out she needed surgery on her eyes, she refused the money we offered, telling her Rep, “I don’t need help. I have become more independent since God provided the sewing machine for me.”



WORKSHOPS FOR MOTHERS IN 2008:

- Effective communication with your children
- Dealing with puberty and adolescence
- Effective parenting
- Project management for productive families
- Home economics
- Entrepreneurship

“Do not say that you are collecting money for the poor; with two mites the Kingdom was purchased.” -St. John Climacus

The Valuable Girl Project

Two years ago, Marianna was not allowed to walk across the street by herself to buy a coke because she is a girl. Her mother was reluctant to let her join the Valuable Girl Project because she would need to walk twice a week through the village to the program site. Within days after starting, however, Marianna showed a dramatic improvement in her school performance. Her mother joined in the discussions when Marianna’s “big sister” came to visit them in their home, and soon, Marianna’s mother was encouraging her journeys.

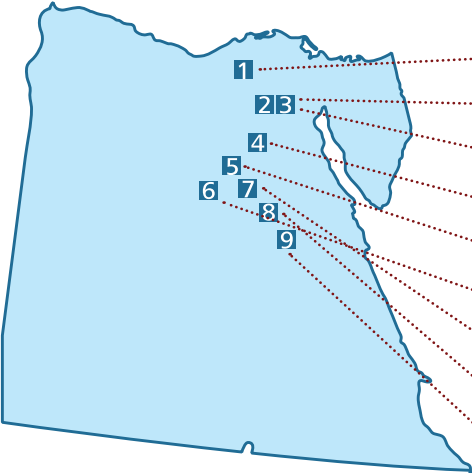
Marianna is one of 45 girls in her village who come together twice a week in a clean, well-equipped center to do homework, learn new skills, and share critical knowledge about health and civil rights.

Together, the girls have become role models for other girls in the village. They have taken a stance against the practice of Female Genital Cutting, holding workshops for other young women and mothers. Today, girls are clamoring to join the Valuable Girl Project, and project leaders are struggling to meet the demand. In Marianna’s eyes, and in the eyes of her community, she is not just a participant in the Valuable Girl Project, she is a valuable girl.

Manal Mousa Speaking at Gala “It is like a dream to be here today. Never did I imagine that I would one day be in New York, speaking to an audience like this!” Manal, a Big Sister in the Valuable Girl Project, became the first girl in her family to stay in school and graduated this year from Assuit University. She presented the “Leading by Example” award to an entrepreneur from her own governorate, Naguib Sawiris, and received a scholarship to the American University of Cairo.



NINE PARTNERS AT 11 VALUABLE GIRL PROJECT SITES REACHED 840 GIRLS AND THEIR FAMILIES ALL OVER EGYPT



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Friends of the Holy Bible Association, Shebeen El Kom – Beheira |
| 2 | The Caritas Center – Ezbet El Hagana – Cairo |
| 3 | Abu Sefein Association, Ezbet Khairallah – Cairo |
| 4 | El Ekhlās Association, Beni Suef – Beni Suef |
| 5 | Archangel Michael Church, Matay – Minya |
| 6 | The Coptic Orthodox School, Dar El Barsha – Minya |
| 7 | The Peace Coptic Association, Mallawi – Minya |
| 8 | Three Schools of AUEED, Assuit – Assuit |
| 9 | The Caritas Library, Nazlet Emara – Sohag |

Serve to Learn

2008 STATISTICS:

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5 sites, 31 volunteers.

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Countries of origin: Australia, Canada, Finland, UAE/India, the UK, USA

IN 2008, volunteers came to Egypt from around the world. After intensive preparation and an orientation in Cairo, they traveled to mostly rural sites throughout Egypt. There, they spent three weeks conducting a program of activities for children in English and visiting the families of children they taught during the day. Both fatherless children and children from the local community benefited from learning in a fun way, and the volunteers told us they found themselves changed by the great love of children whose spirits are never dampened by difficult circumstances.



“In Matay, I saw another side of life that I never came across. Regardless of how little they had, I encountered abundant humility, love, and thanksgiving among people. Serve to Learn has been one of the most memorable, if not the best experience in my life.” **Joyce, USA**

“I learned more in the classroom, more than I could teach. I learned that the most important thing was not to get the children to learn as much English as they could, but to give them encouraging experiences of learning and going to school....On my first home visit, I heard people welcoming us into their homes (Itfaddalu!) at nearly every corner. I met humble-hearted people who experienced great losses in their lives yet are still hospitable and kind.”

Laura, Finland



“There are some moments in life which stick with you forever... For me, one of these moments lasted for three weeks when I took part in the Serve to Learn program. You get the opportunity to play a part in children’s lives. You play such a small part, but you put huge smiles on the kids’ faces, and more importantly, you give them hope. The program is called Serve to Learn but by embracing this truly special experience you actually Learn to Serve...and it’s some of the best fun you’ll ever have.”

Ben, Australia



‘Believe me, he who does not think of the wants of the poor is not a member of the Body of Christ. For if one member suffers, all suffer.’ - **Alphege of Canterbury**

1988 – 2008: 20 Years of Coptic Orphans Around the World

USA



20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA



Coptic Orphans Executive Director Nermien Riad presented philanthropist Ms. Ola Ghabbour with the Coptic Orphans “Leading by Example” award.



Mr. and Mrs. Naguib and Ghada Sawris with Mimi Gerges and Nermien Riad after Mr. Sawris was presented with the “Leading by Example” award for his extensive efforts towards the development of Egypt.



In January, Coptic Orphans and His Excellency Egyptian Ambassador Nabil Fahmy co-sponsored a lecture and multimedia presentation by Dr. Ebaid from Cairo on “The Holy Family in Egypt.”

Australia



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2008:



The Rev. Hon. Fred Nile, Australian pastor, politician, and social activist, was a special guest at the Australia 20th Anniversary Dinner.”



Fifty volunteers made the Contigo Challenge a great success, attracting a fun-loving crowd of over 300 people, all to raise awareness and funds for Coptic Orphans.

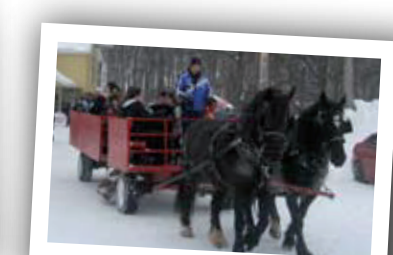


The Honorable Rev. Dr. Gordon Moyes welcomed Coptic Orphans to speak on the role of Diasporas in Development at a public forum at the New South Wales Parliament.

Canada



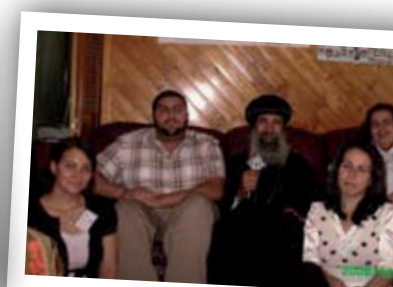
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2008:



The Family Celebration at Cabane a Sucre drew more than 100, and drew attention to the successes of the children in the Not Alone program.



More than 150 supporters turned out for food, fun, and fellowship at “Grillin for a Cause.”



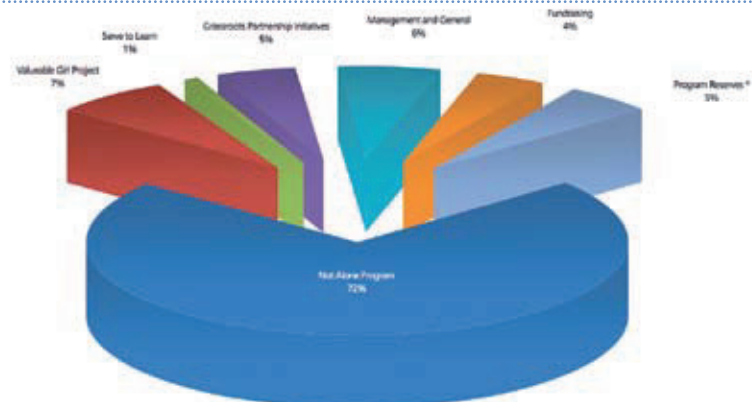
Bishop Picenty of Helwan and The 15th of May City honored the Coptic Orphans Canada office with a surprise visit.

Financials

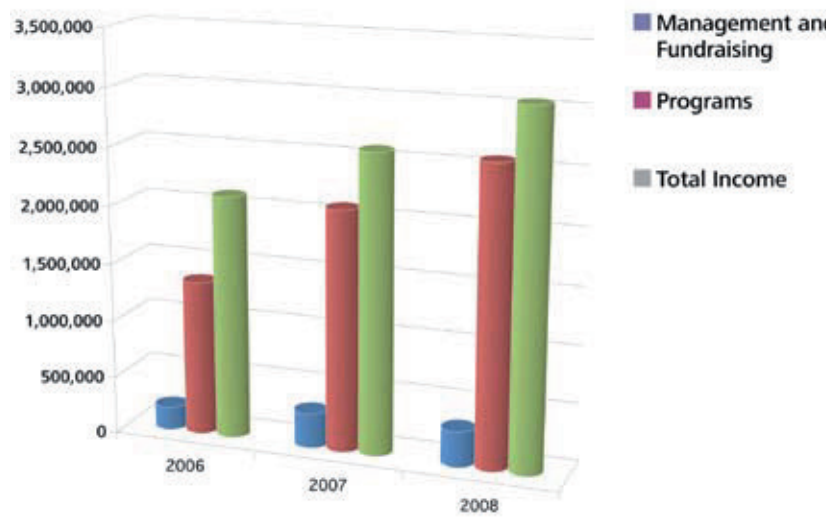
Accountability & Stewardship Pledge

Coptic Orphans maintains the highest standards of good stewardship and accountability. In accordance with best practices in non-profit management, an independent certified public accounting firm conducts an annual audit of all Coptic Orphans financial records. Funds received by Coptic Orphans are carefully monitored and directed to optimize the benefits to the children in Egypt.

In 2008, Coptic Orphans was awarded the highest rating by Charity Navigator, the largest independent evaluator of charities and non-profits in the U.S. Our four-star rating of “Exceptional” means that we exceed industry standards and outperform most charities in our cause.



* This money is set aside to ensure that children will continue to receive support for a minimum of six months in case of a sudden decline in the income and revenues of Coptic Orphans



Coptic Orphans continues to be committed to maintaining a low overhead. As in prior years, the amount spent in management and fundraising combined hovers at around 10% of total expenses, ensuring that 90 cents of every dollar is spent on programs to help children overcome obstacles and grow to their God-given potentials.

As part of a fiscally conservative approach to protect the well-being of the children from global economic forces, Coptic Orphans maintains a minimum of six months worth of operating expenses in reserves. In addition, net assets ensure organizational stability and sustainability.

A copy of our 2008 tax form is available on our website www.copticorphans.org, or by request.

2008	
Individual Contributions:	\$ 2,875,493
Corporate & Other Contributions:	\$ 149,947
Interest and Investment Income:	\$ 23,204
TOTAL INCOME:	\$ 3,048,644
Programs:	\$ 2,574,195
Management & General:	\$ 188,189
Fundraising:	\$ 122,660
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,885,044
NET ASSETS:	\$ 3,117,144

The Stewards of Coptic Orphans

Executive Director Nermien Riad	
Board of Directors Nermien Riad Chrisine Sedky Dr. Amira Roess Dr. Ashraf Rofail Emile Beshai	Advisory Council Julie Meawad Dr. Robie I. Samanta Roy

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then
your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10, ESV



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