



Frequently Asked Questions about Church/Orphan Home Sponsorship

Answered by: Dr. David Atkins, Executive Director

Q: How does a local church become the sponsor of an Sending Hope orphan home?

A: Once a local church indicates interest in 'adopting' a Sending Hope orphan home project, a Sending Hope representative will meet with the pastor and/or mission committee members or church board members to determine the following:

1. WHEN does the church want to start sponsorship?
2. WHAT COUNTRY would the church like to sponsor in?
3. HOW BIG of an orphan home would the church like to sponsor?
4. HOW MANY CHILDREN would the church like the orphan home to hold?
5. Will the church be sending TEAMS to visit and encourage the orphans and staff at the home?

Once the answers to these questions are discussed, together, we will begin to put together a short-term and a long-term plan to see this orphan home become a reality. Currently, we are sponsoring orphan homes with orphan children from 6 ethnic minority hill tribe groups in northwestern Thailand.

Q: Is there some sort of contract between Sending Hope International and the local church that is drawn up so that everything is clearly stated?

A: Yes. Once the local church has answered ALL the questions above, formulated an orphan home plan and voted to approve a Sending Hope orphan home project, then a working contract, or 'partnership agreement' is drawn up and signed by a representative of the local church and the Executive Director of Sending Hope International.

Q: What is the term of the agreement?

A: In order to ensure that our orphans receive the proper care, we ask for a minimum two-year commitment from the local church to begin the orphan home. If, for some reason, the local church does not want to continue the sponsorship of that home after the two-year commitment has been met, Sending Hope International asks that the local church give us a 6 month notice that they would like to terminate the partnership agreement, in order that Sending Hope International can secure another sponsor for that home. This will ensure continuity in the orphan home for the children and staff who are depending on Sending Hope International for support each month.

Q: What if we are a SMALL church? Can we still sponsor an orphan's home?

A: YES! When small churches approach us about orphan home sponsorship, we can group several small churches together to sponsor one home – together! Once they determine the amount that a local church wants to contribute each month for support, we can put together a recommendation as to how they can become involved in orphan home sponsorship.

Q: Can our local church send teams to visit and work in our orphan home?

A: YES! As a matter of fact, we encourage sponsoring churches to try to send at least one ministry team to their orphan home per year. This is NOT a requirement for sponsorship, but is recommended so that the orphans and staff feel a genuine, ongoing bond with the sponsoring church.

Q: What is the local church expected to do to operate the orphan home – month by month?

A: We ask that the church pay all startup costs, such as deposits on rental of the home, purchase all items needed for the children such as plates, silverware, soap, rice cookers, bed mats, pillows, initial clothing, shoes, school supplies, first aid kit, etc. For the average orphan home we estimate this cost to be from \$5-6,000.

Once the startup money has been received by Sending Hope International, we are able to begin to search for a suitable home, put the staff together and begin our search for orphans who need a home. An itemized accounting of all monies spent for start up is available upon request.

Once the home has been established, the day-to-day operation of the orphan home is paid for by a monthly check from the local church. The local church may institute a child sponsorship program within their own church to raise funds to finance the orphan home OR they may choose to use funds from their church's general fund or missions budget. Some churches do a combination of BOTH. Sending Hope International leaves that decision entirely up to the CHURCH. We simply ask that the church sends one monthly check to cover the cost of the orphan home.

Realizing the importance of PRAYER, Sending Hope International also asks the church to PRAY regularly for each of the orphans – by name. There are a variety of ways that each church accomplishes this goal.

Q: Can church members communicate DIRECTLY with the orphans at the home?

A: YES! Sending Hope International recommends that churches can expect to receive 2 letters per year, per orphan child, to sponsors. Each church will also receive regular reports of the events of the home – including PICTURES. Our Sending Hope teams will visit each church home and teach English to the children, play games with them, and our medical staff will take care of their dental and medical needs. (Occasionally, special medical needs arise that we handle with the church on a case-by-case basis.)

Unfortunately, because of logistics, personal GIFTS to the children are not permitted. Contact by individuals from churches to individual orphans by phone or skype is prohibited. However, each year we encourage each local church sponsor to raise additional funds so that we can have our annual birthday party for all the children and celebrate our annual "Birthday Party for Jesus!". Gifts for these events are given in one lump sum by the local church and Sending Hope International staff ensures that the money is used wisely and fairly – so that each child receives the SAME gifts.

Q: Can the orphans be ADOPTED by church members or others?

A: At this time, Sending Hope International has chosen NOT to make our orphan children available for adoption.

In Thailand, foreign adoption IS open and currently Sending Hope International staff is not involved in adoption.

Q: What does Sending Hope International promise to do to help the church with the orphan home?

A: To a sponsoring local church, Sending Hope International promises the following:

- 1.** Regular communication to and from the children and staff – including pictures of the children and their activities.
- 2.** On site recognition that the local church IS participating in a partnership with Sending Hope International to operate that orphan home.
- 3.** Complete coordination of the day-to-day operation of the home – including hiring of staff, paying off all rent, utilities, purchasing of food, clothing, medical supplies, making repairs, maintenance of the home and caring for the spiritual, medical, physical and educational needs of each orphan and staff member. All orphan home staff are employees of Sending Hope International and are accountable to our country directors.
- 4.** Monthly prayer requests of the home staff and children. Sending Hope International will send those requests on to a designated representative of each sponsoring local church.
- 5.** All licensing and governmental registration requirements are handled by Sending Hope International staff. All of our orphan homes meet ALL the criteria set forth by the federal government agencies in those countries.
- 6.** Sending Hope International will work with the leadership of each local church to make long-range plans for each orphan home – including expansion, buildings, land acquisition, other related projects and new ministries.
- 7.** Each local church will be able to use Sending Hope guest houses for teams (when available) for a nominal fee. We soon will have fully-furnished guest houses in Thailand. Sending Hope makes them available to sponsoring local churches and their teams. We also make our country staff and vehicles available 24/7 for use by each team that travels to visit and minister to Sending Hope projects.
- 8.** Sending Hope International also makes available promotional brochures, DVD's, prayer cards and special speakers available to each of our sponsoring local churches. We will also help you PLAN your mission trip in order to ensure quality, safety and effectiveness. Our Executive Director and team leaders are extremely qualified and are experts on Thailand – including the culture of those countries.