



SOHO

SAVING ORPHANS THROUGH HEALTHCARE AND OUTREACH

2024 First Quarter Newsletter



New Look, Same Mission

Check out the latest at the SOHO website! You'll discover LENTSABA (The Mountain), our 1000+ acre farm where we're growing an agricultural program and a Children's Village. While SOHO remains the 'parent' organization, all sustainably produced goods will be branded under Lentsaba, including macadamia nuts, honey, and handicrafts. Look out for the Lentsaba logo as our new face, while our administrative operations remain under SOHO. It's a fresh look, but our mission remains the same. When you spot LENTSABA, know that it's SOHO hard at work for the children we support.



- The SOHO Team

Beautiful Beginnings for Broken Lives

Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) is one of the most dramatically beautiful countries in southern Africa, a small kingdom almost surrounded by South Africa except to the east, where it borders Mozambique. Behind this beauty lies a harsh reality of grinding poverty, hardship, and abuse among the orphan population, estimated to exceed 100,000 in a total population of just over 1.2 million.

For sixteen years, SOHO has hosted groups of volunteers with varying expertise to heal, educate, and nurture children who live with little hope for the future. The most crucial need they have is a safe home and loving care, allowing them to grow up unbroken and contribute to society. SOHO's ability to provide this was realized with the providential acquisition of an amazing mountain farm two years ago.

Surviving the economic challenges of Covid and a struggling economy, SOHO can now welcome orphaned children to Lentsaba Children's Village on the mountain farm that will be their home. We currently have space for the first sixteen children in two spacious three-bedroom homes, marking a new chapter in their lives and for SOHO. We pause to express gratitude to our donors, volunteer professionals, partner organizations offering valuable expertise, and most importantly, to God.



Above: Girls vulnerable to abuse



Left: Final touches to homes for orphaned children

SOHO STATS

- 400 orphans in the Lentsaba Farm community benefit from produce.
- 200 children at Marekamp and Nhlambeni benefit weekly from Lentsaba vegetables
- 1000 meals weekly are served to vulnerable children

Our New Reality

As the walls of the homes went up, SOHO convened with a team of Advisors to craft our strategic plan. Experts, well-traveled throughout Africa and beyond, offered valuable insights on the optimal age range for children and how to provide them with the best opportunities to heal and thrive. Initial discussions focused on starting with girls under eleven and expanding to include family units as additional homes are built.

During a recent meeting with the leaders of a well-established orphanage, a new perspective emerged. This orphanage boasts homes, agriculture programs, a dairy, small enterprises, and many of the elements envisioned for Lentsaba Farm and Children's Village. Notably, Pasture Valley operates as a Christian ministry, and their insights into working with vulnerable children proved invaluable.

The revelation that "homes will likely be broken up to provide space for girls due to the overwhelming need" was sobering. Having witnessed a family torn apart before our eyes, we knew this was not an acceptable solution. Additionally, we learned that the Social Welfare Department seeks homes for children orphaned and vulnerable due to death, desertion, or other circumstances, whether individual children or small family clusters.

Social Services also reaches out during emergencies. The aftermath of the Covid pandemic, where many children lacked the sanctuary of school, has resulted in a surge of abandoned and abused babies. Emergency calls now include infants and toddlers who require immediate care, including assigning them a birthdate and a name. Such emergency situations could constitute up to 50% of inquiries. The demand for safe homes is urgent. While the existing three homes at Lentsaba are not equipped to accommodate babies, the next cluster of homes, by necessity, will address this need.



Top: Girls learn caregiving while still in need of care

Bottom: Children at risk at The Squatter's Camp

Left: Co-founder Linda Schultz entering a home with Builder Sizo Mamba



What We Need to Open the Homes

The homes of Lentsaba Children's Village require security, staffing, and furnishings. Our goal is \$285,000. Churches, schools, and organizations can all contribute. It will take a village of concerned hearts to change the lives of traumatized children who need hope. Join us to open Lentsaba Children's Village to a whole new life for children in need. Here's what we require:

- A 24-hour security system, with fencing and round-the-clock staffing
- Furnishings for two residences and a multi-purpose facility
- A resident 'Mom and Auntie' for each home, and onsite Social Worker
- A cook
- Staff housing
- A minibus and a service vehicle
- Operational expenses

Trauma-Informed Services

Trauma-informed care recognizes trauma symptoms and acknowledges its impact on individuals' lives. In a country where roughly one-third or more of girls experience sexual abuse, SOHO's approach will address deep-seated hurts that hinder children from blossoming. Transformation will occur from the inside out.



Left: Children traumatized by environment and life experiences
Right: A place children called 'home'

Marekamp Challenge

Every day, over a hundred children gather at Marekamp Outreach Center, where they receive a hot meal and hear entertaining Bible stories from Pastor Nathi. Unfortunately, the shelter, originally built to serve them, is now being used for unsanitary and inappropriate purposes at night, presenting a challenge for SOHO's staff. The shelter is showing signs of unnecessary wear and tear, and volunteers are needed to build a gated fence to protect the children's safety.



Top: Pastor Nathi tells stories at the Feeding Center
Bottom: Children waiting for food

Facelift For Hope Discovery Center

The Hope Discovery Center needs a facelift. The plaster is peeling, and windows are broken. This pre-school serves children for whom school is the only safe place, and it urgently requires a playground for close to sixty children. We need help.

A Volunteer Builders Mission Trip is scheduled for May 1 - 14. Whether you have construction skills or are just handy, join us. Contact info: Kris@savingorphans.com

Farm News

Exciting developments are underway at Lentsaba Farm! Recently, our staff received two new sets of uniforms, meeting legal requirements and replacing worn-out attire. These uniforms, complete with boots for protection against snakes in the woods, ensure safety while working. Additionally, a second rondavel, ideal for volunteer groups and guests, is nearing completion, enhancing our accommodations.

Our macadamia orchard is thriving, yielding small quantities of nuts. However, Carey Carscallen, our COO, is urgently seeking a high-terrain vehicle and trailer to navigate the mountain terrain effectively. Fortunately, he has found one at a reduced cost of \$12,000, available for shipment in a container on the campus of Andrews University. Your support in acquiring this essential vehicle will greatly enhance our operations at Lentsaba Farm.



Classroom in disrepair



Macadamia nut orchard



Heavy duty vehicle needed

YOU CAN HELP, JOIN US!

Current operating fund: \$20,000: Help bridge the current operational cost shortfall for Lentsaba, Nhlambeni, and Marekamp programs, along with home office administration. Your support is crucial and highly appreciated.

Child Sponsorship: Unlike many programs, Lentsaba Children's Village prioritizes holistic child care and fosters a loving family environment.

Operation Open House: Help us open the doors to receive orphans waiting for a home. GOAL: \$285,000 (Security system and service, furnishings, appliances, staffing, staff housing, child sponsorship).

___ Monthly ___ One time ___ Champion Supporter*

___\$50 ___\$250 ___\$500 ___\$1000 ___\$1250 ___Other

*Champions: ___\$5000 ___\$10,000 ___\$15,000 ___Other
(with invitation to join us in Eswatini for the Grand Opening Celebration)

Your contributions are tax deductible.

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SOHO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in the states of Indiana and Washington.



Let's change the future for children in need!

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