

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

MATTHEW 19:14

Let the Children Come

Un the Village of Kanye, Botswana, church members were concerned about the escalating number of orphans in the community. Most of these children are victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has hit Botswana hard. According to the United Nations, almost 24% of the adult population of Botswana is affected by HIV/AIDS. Seeing the toll this was taking on the village children, a local congregation of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), one of our partner denominations, decided to take action. In 2001, they founded the Kgodisong Centre, a preschool/daycare for orphans and vulnerable children between 2 and 6 years old.

Today the center serves more than 50 children, who are transported on a daily basis to the center and returned at the end of the day to their homes. While at the center, they are given opportunities for learning, fed nutritious meals, and provided with encouragement and spiritual support. Many of these children find themselves in difficult and stressful circumstances. There is a stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS in the wider community, which leads to isolation for affected families. Children must also witness the long-term decline in their parent's health. They must live with reduced family income and all the consequences of illness and poverty. However, at the Kgodisong Centre, they have the chance to be children again and build skills for the future. At the Kgodisong Centre they can find support, understanding, and hope.

James & Jayanthi Wilson are missionaries with the Kgolagano Theological College in Gaborone, Botswana. Jim serves as a teacher of theology at Kgolagano Theological College. Jayanthi serves at Kgolagano Theological College as a librarian assistant.



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