

Q & A re Swaziland Care Point

September 7, 2017

1. What is a Care Point?

A Care Point is a ministry in a local community (whether in a building or outdoors) which provides a solid meal each day for children who are HIV/AIDS orphans. In addition, the care points are designed to minister to a number of other needs of the children. Basic medical care is provided and often help is given so that promising students can attend middle and/or high school (only elementary schooling is free in Swaziland). In addition, there is also a worship and teaching time with the children. The majority of Swazi's identify themselves as Christian but there is a great need for personal discipleship. The Swazi staff, who themselves are being trained and discipled, lead the children's services at the various care points. Stephen Spragg works with the staff members and helps with their training and discipleship.

2. Why is the need so great in Swaziland?

The HIV/Aids rate in Swaziland is reported to be the highest in the world. The death of so many adults from that epidemic has left a huge number of orphans to be cared for by other family members, most often grandparents. That culture does not have orphanages but, instead, tries to keep the children within the extended family. However, because of very low incomes, many families find it extremely difficult to feed the large numbers of extra children.

3. How long are children at care points each day?

Very young children who are not yet in school are there all day long (from about 9 or 10 AM to about 3 or 4 PM) while the volunteers are working to get the meal ready. Primary/middle school children come when their school lets out at about 12 noon and high school students come about 3 PM. If older children are not in school (there is a tuition fee for middle and high school) they may be at the care point for much of the day.

4. Why do we call the relationship between Emmanuel church and the community in Swaziland a “partnership?”

It is because *both* parties have significant responsibilities and need to work together. While our role is crucially important in providing the food, the local community's role is equally important. They make the initial request to establish a care point and agree to support it in a number of ways. That includes setting aside land for it and organizing volunteers to cook the food daily and ensuring that there is a supply of firewood and water. Wise mission agencies have learned not to come in and do everything for a community but, instead, to recognize the dignity of the local people by having them take the initiative and allowing them to do as much as they possibly can to help meet the needs of their people.

5. Are there other ways that we can get involved in that community?

Potentially, yes. The Swazi staff, in working with the community, may at some point identify a development project that could help the community become more sustainable. In other care points such development projects have included partnering with the local community in digging a well so that a community garden can be developed, fencing a community garden to protect it from animals, building a chicken coop etc. It is also possible

that a team from Emmanuel could go to Swaziland to begin developing relationships with people in our partner community and, perhaps, work with them on a project.

6. What North American Mission is involved?

Adventures in Missions (AIM). The mission specializes in organizing short term missions that take thousands of people all over the world but it also has a well developed ministry in Swaziland with a number of full time missionaries and about 35 care points in the country.

I have been impressed with what I have learned as I have talked with leadership in the Georgia office of AIM and from what I have seen on their website (<https://www.adventures.org/>). They seem to have developed wise policies in working with meeting needs in Swaziland. It also appears to have a good level of financial accountability. A small portion (10%) of what we give will help pay for the administrative costs of the program but it will not go towards paying the salaries of the organization's leaders in the U.S. nor of the North American missionaries in Swaziland who must raise their own personal support. Another small portion of our donations will pay the salary of the Swazi staff member assigned to work with and oversee our partner care point. The majority of the funds go to purchasing the food and bringing it to the community.

7. Has our Care Point been established yet?

No, but the selection process is well underway. Out of the many communities requesting a care point in that part of Swaziland, the staff have narrowed it down to two possible matches for us. When Peter and Gill are in Swaziland in early October of this year, the plan is for them to visit the two communities and talk to the people and staff. They will bring back information to Emmanuel church and we will be given opportunity to provide input into the final selection.

Once a community has been chosen, it and AIM begin a care point which goes through a probationary period of between 3 and 6 months to ensure that the community and its leadership are fully committed to the partnership. Once that has probationary period has been successfully completed, we take up our role of supporting the care point.

8. How are we doing on our end so far?

We are making encouraging progress! As of September 7, approximately \$1,200 per month has been committed by 22 individuals or families and a few other people are still in the decision process. We don't know the exact amount that we will need yet (and that will always be changing because of fluctuating exchange rates), but the \$1,200 committed appears to be approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of what will be needed.

We are still praying for God to call more people to join the team of supporters. If you feel that you might be one of those people God is calling, please contact us (see below) for more information.

9. What level of accountability will this project have to Emmanuel?

In addition to AIM being a responsible organization, we will receive additional information through our connection with Stephen and Charity who plan to visit us every second year. Peter and Gill plan on going there in alternate years and will bring back reports. We will also receive other reports from Stephen and Charity from time to time. In addition, the mission encourages us to send a team to help us understand our partnership even better.

10. When should I start my monthly giving?

Even though the partnership will likely not begin until later in the year or even early in 2018, some people have started giving already. That will help us develop a fund that can cushion against fluctuating exchange rates and, perhaps, provide seed money for a development project. However, you do not need to start giving until we have the official word that the partnership is underway.

11. How do I actually make my monthly donation?

All gifts can be made out to Emmanuel Church and clearly designated for "Swaziland Care Point."

There are three possible ways to do this:

- i. regular offering envelopes, clearly designated for the care point
- ii. post dated checks delivered to the church office and clearly designated.
- iii. automatic monthly withdrawals. Please contact Gerri (Mannix) Boyce for the forms.

Emmanuel is able to receipt all donations because a Canadian organization has developed a relationship with AIM that meets CRA regulations.

12. What if I have other questions?

Please call or email Peter Spragg or Bob Burkinshaw. Bob is Emmanuel's coordinator for this partnership, at [343-600-4225](tel:343-600-4225) or Robert.burkinshaw@gmail.com or find him at church between services (we are usually at the 9 a.m. service)

Thank you and blessings as we partner together in this exciting project!

Bob Burkinshaw