

Faces of Peace

Saving a War-Torn Childhood

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Tsunami Orphans Reach Project Life's Shores

Two little boys from Sri Lanka who lost their mothers in the Asian Tsunami at Christmas 2004 arrived in western New York just after Labor Day to join Project Life. They spent a full three months in the program, returning home in early December.

Kaleef, 12, and Irshad, 9, live with their fathers and siblings in Trincomalee District on the coast of the island nation. The tidal wave took their mothers and destroyed their village while their fathers were out at sea fishing. Project Life began working in January 2005 to bring Tsunami orphans to the program. "We broadened our mandate to include orphans of natural disaster," says Director Linda Redfield.

The boys speak Tamil and Kaleef was quite familiar with English too. They bonded quickly with the Afghan boys. All four saw snow for the first time during the infamous October blizzard. Their chaperone Ishan Rasheed was

struck by the physical and psychological gains Kaleef and Irshad made during their stay. He noted that Sri Lanka's coastal areas are still in economic trouble, due to the Tsunami and years of ethnic conflict.

The boys left their warm parkas behind in Albion with host Hajara Huzair and son Humza Quinn. Hajara reported that she been in touch with the children by telephone since they returned to Sri Lanka and all is well.



Kaleef and Irshad show off pottery in the Waterport studio.

2006 season included ten children from three countries



This year's July arrivals were four children from Chechnya. Eight-year-old Iman traveled with Zalina, Larisa, and Islam who visited the Strong Museum. August saw the arrival of two eleven-year-old Afghan boys, Hayat and Najeem



(center with volunteer Mirjam), along with Fauzia (smiling with Larisa) who re-joined brother Sabir. Sabir's treatment for hemophilia continues. In September we welcomed Sri Lankans Kaleef and Irshad (featured in article above).

Generosity Takes Many Forms, Makes 2006 Another Fruitful Year

As many of our regular readers heard, we faced a financial crisis last spring and wondered if we would be able to pay the costs of bringing a new group of orphans to western New York. A multitude of generous friends of Project Life heard our call! Our heartfelt thanks to all who contributed in our time of need. *Faces of Peace* will publish a full list of donors and contributors in the Winter 2007 edition. Here, we would like to make a special mention of the generous (\$30,000) contribution received in June from a German philanthropist who prefers to remain anonymous.

Here are some of the many ways our friends supported us....



Dr. Tingey rebuilt Hayat's damaged front teeth at UB Pediatric Dental clinic in October; Najeem and Hayat sit atop their fully packed duffels and sport bags donated by Mary Wolfe of Venice, Florida; Denise Thomas and daughter take time for a hayride with Chechens Larisa and Zalina at Brown's Berry Patch in September.

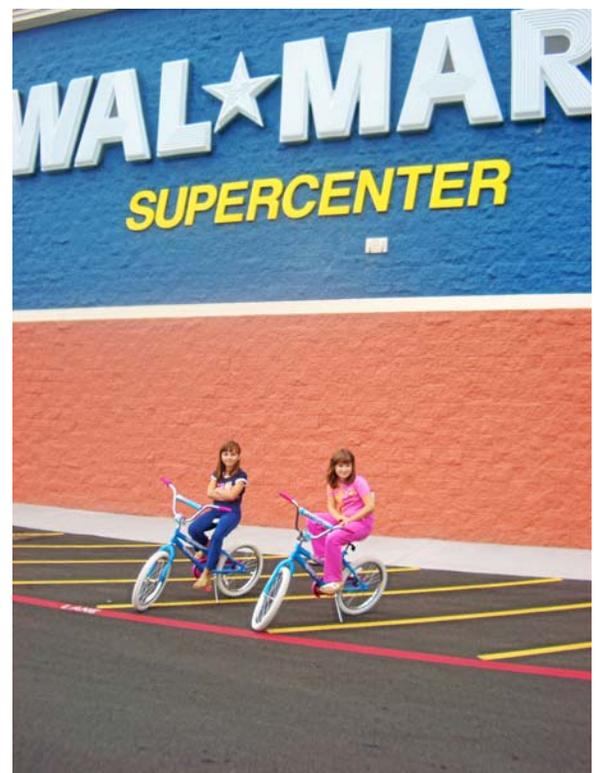
Orphans enjoy summer cycling fun thanks to Carlton United Methodist congregation

Project Life enjoyed support from Carlton United Methodist Church once again this year. Church members lovingly restored and then donated several previously enjoyed bicycles for the children to use this summer.

When it was discovered that our youngest children required smaller bicycles, Roy and Dorothy Follman contacted the General Manager of Wal-Mart in Albion. Wal-Mart immediately offered to donate two bicycles just the right size for little Iman and Larisa. Carlton United Methodist Women's Committee also raised \$100 to purchase helmets for each child.

As a result of this team effort, the orphans were able to enjoy what our own children take for granted—hours of carefree fun cycling along peaceful country roads.

Iman and Larisa try out their new pink and blue bicycles in the parking lot of the new Wal-Mart store, Albion.



Continuing Charity of Lodge Creates Great Time in D.C.

The beginning of August heralds the annual trip to see the Nation's capital, thanks to the generosity of the Benjamin B. French Lodge, #15. Although the East coast was in the grip of a heat wave, we still were able to enjoy the hospitality of our hosts at places like Six Flags America, The National Aquarium in Baltimore and The National Zoo.

Karel Eekels, Roman Volsky, John Vergalla, Ted Berry, Ken Insley, and Todd Kissam all played major roles in providing the children with wonderful memories. Whether it was riding the Metro or "riding the waves"; watching in awe as the dolphins performed for us and "awe-ing" over the baby Panda, children and volunteers alike had a wonderful time.

This trip marked the ninth consecutive year the Lodge has provided the orphans with a fully sponsored week in the D. C. area. Many thanks from us all!



Todd Kissam smiles as the Chechen children drape themselves around stone statue of an eagle at the Washington Zoo.

Q & A about Project Life

WHOM DO WE SERVE? Orphaned children of war and natural disaster. Our current focus is on orphans of Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Sri Lanka. Children are 9 to 12-year-olds with high socio-economic, psychological, and emotional needs. All children live with family members in their home countries. We do not select children from orphanages or seek permanent fostering or adoption for them in the United States.

WHY? We aim to provide peace and support for each child's rest and recuperation from trauma. Our program improves physical and psychological health, builds trust and confidence, and inspires new hope for the future. Project Life also gives orphans a chance to "just be kids" again.

HOW? A three-month program of education, recreation and health care, along with hosting by volunteer American families in the western New York region. All children return to their families overseas at the completion of the program period.

ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION: Project Life is an entirely volunteer-run program of World Life Institute, a registered 501(c)3 organization based in Waterport, N.Y. Project Life is supported wholly by private donations from individuals, businesses, service clubs, and congregations.

OUR RECORD: From 1997 to 2006 Project Life has sponsored more than 90 international orphans to its program in western New York State.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Project Life needs the support of concerned individuals and organizations to help young victims of war and natural disaster. We invite you to make a donation, host a child, act as a mentor, help teach English or crafts, or offer other goods or services.

CONTACT US at 585-682-0730, or via our website at projectlife@worldlifeinstitute.org

Anniversary celebration

Project Receives Grant to Present Reminiscences of Past 10 Years

The Genesee Orleans Regional Arts Council (GoArt!) approved grant funds for 2007 to help Project Life present a collection of written reminiscences by volunteers and orphans. The book will be launched at a reception celebrating the tenth anniversary of the program in late summer 2007.

Project Life requested funds to select material and prepare it for presentation at a public reading. Over the years, many volunteers have been inspired to write about their experience with young children who suffered the loss of their parents in Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and the Asian Tsunami.

We are asking former and current hosts and volunteers to submit their written reflections, impressions, and memories by April 30, 2007.

Letters written to us by the children once they have returned to their homes overseas will be included. A voluntary editor will select material to be used at the public presentation.

Highlights of Our Busy Season 2006



Host dad Khalid took Hayat and Najeem for a tour of Rochester fire station where he works; Grace Kent of Swan Library, Albion gave story readings and craft lessons to Hayat, Kaleef and the rest of the orphans.



YES youth group from Albion visited for arts, crafts, and outdoor games in August; Jean Barlow and assistant, of Braddock's Bay sanctuary, offered raptor education program on front lawn of World Life Institute, Waterport.



Kaleef and Najeem enjoyed crafts, lunch, and Eid gifts with students of Universal School, Amherst, N.Y. At right, Zalina and Director Linda Redfield cut cake with Fauzia (at far right) during graduation ceremonies in October.



WORLD LIFE INSTITUTE is a 501(c)3 organization which founded Project Life War Orphans Rehabilitation Program.
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Telephone: 585-682-0730 Website www.worldlifeinstitute.org ❖❖❖ *In our tenth year of service to international war orphans.*