

# Bakhita Charities for Southern Africa

www.bakhitacharities.org

*Supporting orphans and vulnerable children*

November 2016



Dear Friends,

Greetings from Bakhita Charities. We are sending this newsletter to update and thank our wonderful donors and supporters and to raise awareness about the young girls who count on us to help them survive and thrive.

Once again, we'll spend the upcoming month of February at Bakhita Village in South Africa. While we're there we invite you to check out the blog that we'll post every couple of days and leave us a comment. We love to hear from you.

Bakhita Charities exists thanks to the generosity of all of you. We pay all our own expenses and all administrative costs so 100% of your donations go directly to helping these girls. As you think about your year-end giving, please consider a donation to Bakhita Charities. We assure you that the need is great, the cause is worthwhile, and your donations are stretched as far as possible.

*Maggie & John Williams*



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## The Girls Give Thanks



A couple of years ago, we committed to pay the school fees for all Bakhita Village residents to attend St. Brendan's Boarding School - a good high school that is located next to the Bakhita girls' home. This was a big commitment but we felt that it would give the girls the best possible chance for a good education that would lead to a brighter future. We asked all of you for help and you responded. This year Bakhita Charities paid for ten girls to attend St. Brendan's and the girls are thriving and very grateful. We have received many heartwarming letters like these:

*"I am so happy to have you as a part of my life. I want to let you know that I am very grateful and you have played a big role in my life and you and your friends are like guardian angels to me. You have been like a mother and father. I never imagined that I would be able to attend St. Brendan's. Thank you and I wish you all the best of blessings." Dipuo, Grade 8*

*"Thank you for paying for me in St. Brendan's. You surprised me as I didn't know I would ever come here. You make me proud and I will make you proud too. I will follow the rules of school, I will pass all the subjects. When you are in your country I will pray for you and your friends. I will pray for God to bless you. Please greet all your family and friends who help support us." Revonia, Grade 8*

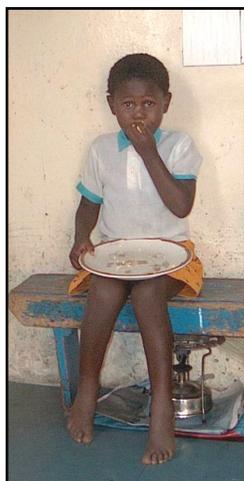


## The Saddest Thing We've Ever Seen

Sixteen years ago, we began a volunteer assignment in South Africa that changed our lives and led us to work towards helping some very vulnerable little girls.

When the Jesuit Volunteer Corps sent us to teach at a mission school in the bush, we expected to encounter extreme poverty. After all, Africa is the poorest continent on earth suffering from famines, diseases and never-ending wars. But we didn't appreciate that the AIDS pandemic would compound this poverty and create a new type of war . . . and that the victims of this war would be the children.

It was the war of the AIDS disease that killed infected adults in their 20's and 30's, creating a generation of orphaned children. Relatives and friends took in these children until there were too many and the result was the saddest thing we've ever seen . . . child-headed households. We witnessed children living on their own trying desperately to feed, clothe and shelter themselves with no way to earn money and no adults to help them. We took food to a child-headed household where the oldest was eight years old and was trying by any way possible to feed her siblings.



It was heartbreaking and something we could not ignore or overlook. After accepting that we couldn't help all 20 million orphans in Africa, we decided to try to do something for the ones that we knew in our area, the ones that God had put in our path.

So began Bakhita Village, a home for girls who were orphaned and living on their own with no one to support or care for them. We, along with Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, opened this small home in 2002 and since then more than 120 girls have been helped, educated and loved. This little girl in the photo begged at the doorstep each day before being welcomed in Bakhita Village where she thrived and ultimately graduated from high school.

### You're Invited!

As we prepare for our visit to Bakhita Village in February 2017, we invite you to a Bakhita Awareness and Appreciation Gathering. We'll share information, show photos, tell stories and discuss your questions and comments. It will be an opportunity to sign up to prepare a gift bag for one of the girls. We will gather on January 9 at 7:15 pm in the Bethany Room at:

Christ the Redeemer Church  
2700 Waldon Road  
Lake Orion

Light snacks will served. All are welcome.

### Donations

Bakhita Charities is the 501(c)(3) charity that we initiated for supporters in the United States to make a tax-deductible donation in US dollars. You can donate by check, credit card, or PayPal through the mail or the website. It's also straightforward to set up a monthly donation. It's guaranteed to bring some great smiles.

