

KEEPING YOU IN THE  
LOOP FOR LESS

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# the noows

KEEPING YOU  
CONNECTED TO THE  
LIFE OF OPERATION  
ORPHAN

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**Edition 4**  
Winter 2017



**P.3**  
Devastating  
Disasters

Read more to find out  
how Operation Orphan  
responded to disasters  
in Sierra Leone &  
Barbuda.

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Hope  
Alive Tour

Find out more about  
our Hope Alive Tour  
running challenge.  
Perhaps you can join  
in a future  
team.

**P.6**  
Join Us

Our Keep a Child family  
is growing but we need  
more people to join us,  
enabling us to create  
a brighter future for  
orphans around  
the world.

# Devastating Disasters



In the early hours of the morning on 14th August 2017, Freetown was hit by devastating flooding and mudslides. Our Crisis Response Team deployed to see how we could engage with the relief effort.



We learnt so much on this trip. We felt like we did very little but for those we did help, it was life changing. The gift of a colourful hand knitted blanket does more than you could ever imagine for someone who has lost everything. Thank you to everyone who has knitted and continues to knit us blankets. This is an invaluable resource, one which we could not buy or make ourselves!

**Soon after the team returned to the UK, Hurricane Irma hit and devastated Barbuda. Brad was given the opportunity of a fully funded trip to Antigua, meaning that we were able to get 20 boxes of emergency aid to the affected children, without it costing us a penny!**

Brad and Jess arrived in the capital of Sierra Leone a week after the devastating flooding and mudslide. The purpose was to find children who had been orphaned by the crisis and keep them safe whilst working with Child Welfare to consider the best long term care solution for each individual child. This disaster happened during the summer holidays. Many children were staying with relatives in the city and therefore those who had survived the flooding and mudslides actually had family to go home to in the provinces. Others had no one. These are the children Operation Orphan is offering to care for through our amazing partners at Heaven Homes.

We connected with various government and aid workers ensuring that these affected people got the help that they needed. Over and over again we heard that one of the most important things was their psychosocial needs.

As well as giving beautiful handmade blankets and 100 family water filtration systems, Brad met other first responders and gleaned from their experience.

The children's eyes lit up at the sight of their new blanket and they cuddled into their new gift with such joy. We thankfully had enough blankets with us to give one to every child at both shelters. At night, the temperature drops and the cricket stadium's air conditioning means that it's so cold for them. These blankets are a practical solution as well as providing a psychosocial benefit. Each time we've had the opportunity to respond to a disaster it has given us another layer of essential experience, preparing us for future team deployment.

**"The moment we will never forget was meeting a lady who was 9 months pregnant, her story was heart-breaking and you could see this in her eyes. She had lost her three children in the mudslide. It was such an honour to be part of giving her the gift of a beautiful hand knitted blanket and ensuring that she got the medical attention that she needed."**



FROM START TO FINISH, THE LAUGHING NEVER STOPPED. A TRULY INSPIRING CHALLENGE WITH A GREAT BUNCH OF PEOPLE - LIFE CHANGING!

TOM

# THE HOPE ALIVE TOUR

**It's been incredible seeing a little seed of an idea become an exciting, unique challenge, unlike any other!**

The Hope Alive Tour was developed by Charity Ambassador, Michael Scott, following his Global Expedition to Sierra Leone.

Michael combined his love for running and passion to offer HOPE to children who have lost everything and everyone. He set out to make a difference and developed a running challenge like no other!

The route followed significant moments in the life of William Wilberforce who abolished slavery in Great Britain in 1833. Twelve runners

journeyed through five cities in the UK in continual relay before flying to Sierra Leone. Here they ran their final marathon together from Freetown to Operation Orphan's partner project, Heaven Homes, where the runners were warmly welcomed.

The first Hope Alive Tour was a great success and raised a total of £25,000. Our runners came from all walks of life and faced the challenge of enduring each other and not just the run itself. They worked as a team and felt an incredible sense of achievement from the run and from the relationships which were forged.

\*\*If you would like to be part of a Hope Alive Tour in future, we are currently accepting applications for both 2018 & 2019.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



NATIONAL MOTORHOMES



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# Our Keep A Child Scheme

Our Keep a Child family is growing with more people choosing to give a regular amount each month, helping us to keep children safe, warm, healthy and learning.

This is not a clever marketing scheme. It's an honest way of letting our donors know exactly where their money is going and how it's making a difference. Each child we support benefits from at least one area of Keep a Child and 100% of your donated

money helps us achieve these objectives. Through regular giving we can guarantee our long term support to children who have lost everything and everyone. We realise it costs a lot to raise a child and that our support is needed until they reach a level of independence. We currently have 66 individuals helping us to take parental responsibility of these orphans and vulnerable children, keeping them safe, warm, healthy and learning.

With our UK core admin costs underwritten by corporate sponsors, we mean what we say when we declare that EVERY penny makes a difference.

CORPORATE SPONSOR



If you would like to join the family, we'd love to hear from you.

## SPONSOR OUR KEEP A CHILD SCHEME

Can you pledge just £5 a month?

This will help us to fulfil a wide range of goals in the lives we are caring for by strengthening the care structure around them. That could be providing warm clothes and nappies for a tiny Syrian refugee baby or ensuring that a teenage AIDS orphan in Zimbabwe gets the counselling and support that they need.

For more information:  
[www.operation-orphan.org](http://www.operation-orphan.org)  
 Phone: 084321 63838  
 Local: 0115 896 9942



# Keep a Child Warm



Once again our Keep a Child Warm project brought in heaps of aid which we were able to direct towards children who are living in extreme poverty.

It is exciting to watch as this project develops as more and more UK schools and businesses support this worthy cause.

When you consider the wages of a teacher in Moldova are around £120 per month, a school cleaner earns around £60 per month and the cost of a coat is £35 you can see why purchasing this essential item might be simply out of reach for so many. The sub-zero temperatures most of the winter and lack of heating just makes the situation even worse for children living in Eastern European countries.

**This year our coats, hats, scarves, gloves & blankets ended up helping more than 2000 children in Moldova, Romania & Ukraine. Every year, the feedback is overwhelming that this is a much-needed injection of support for families.**



The Global Expedition team had a cultural experience in Moldova. Distributions took place in rural village schools where the social services help us to meet the needs of children who seriously need our help.

In addition to our Moldova consignment, hundreds more children in Romania and Ukraine will also be wearing a new winter coat and a smile as they get to wrap up warm this winter.

As a result of Keep a Child Warm in Moldova, we have begun finding the most vulnerable children living in obscurity and offering bespoke, targeted support. Our first intervention has been with Natalie who was disabled from birth. Her mother is her sole carer. Operation Orphan paid for an access door to be installed in her bedroom which now means her mother no longer has to lift her to take her out of the house. Her mum had been warned that if she continues to lift Natalie, she would permanently damage her back and

therefore be in a wheelchair herself. This small intervention, that cost just under £300, has secured the long-term care for Natalie. This project also served to establish a trustworthy working relationship with a local building contractor.

During our recent distribution expedition, a strategic conversation was held with the director of Cahul Social Services. The services primary aim is, as far as it is possible, to keep vulnerable children with their families. Sadly however in many cases, due to economic reasons, children are found living in dire conditions and therefore need to be taken into care. Because of the years of our investment in the region they have asked if we could work together to assess all the cases across the region and consider if there is any intervention we could provide that will ensure the children are able to remain in their parents' care. We will share this information as it becomes available and together we can reduce the number of children being taken into care.




We have been working with local social workers who are helping us to identify the needs of many 'at risk' children from around the East Midlands. Referrals are coming in thick and fast since government funding cuts.

We are pleased to be able to match surplus to need by simply getting the message out to people who want to help. Our Facebook group is currently our only way of asking for help in real time. We make a request for a needed item and the goods come flooding in. We recently set up an Amazon wish list, which people can browse through and purchase an item they can personally afford. It really inspires people to see exactly what their donation is helping with. Although we can't ever show pictures of the children we are providing for, we can certainly let you know that this is having a huge impact and empowering social workers to make a difference.

*"The support received from Forget-Me-Notts has been invaluable to the vulnerable adults and children that we support, it has helped the parents to provide the basic needs for their children in times of hardship. The parents I've personally worked with have been overwhelmed with the kindness of others who have given donations."*

Family Support Assistant, Derbyshire

We meet many of our referral requests by using donations from the general public. Our Forget-Me-Notts Facebook page contains referrals detailing what is needed. Many generous people have already chosen to donate items, buy items from our Amazon wish list or simply donate money. Don't forget to like the Forget-Me-Notts Facebook page, or email: [forget-me-notts@operation-orphan.org](mailto:forget-me-notts@operation-orphan.org) to be included in the weekly FMN update email.




## Get involved!

The charity wouldn't be a success if it weren't for our amazing volunteers. Teams of 6th form students helping with sorting and packing, retired folk who drive and collect from around the UK, crafters, blanket packers, clothes and blanket sorters and admin supporters - we have the most amazing bunch of volunteers! We are always grateful for extra help. An occasional lorry pack or more regular support, every bit helps us become more efficient in delivering help to children who need it most.

### Could you be our next Ambassador?

**Our entire organisation has been built on the foundation of good relationships.** volunteer and requires people to learn all about us to represent us wherever possible.

The way people find out about us is generally because of someone who knows us and is helping us to spread the word. We have recently formed an official Ambassador role for individuals who strongly believe in our vision and want to help us within their own community. This is a bit more of a commitment than a

These individuals currently live in various parts of the UK but we are looking for more people to join the team.

If you'd be interested in promoting the work of Operation Orphan in your community please get in touch to find out more.



# Global Expeditions



There are plenty of opportunities to travel with purpose. Global Expedition teams visit our projects each year. During the trip people experience the lifestyle and culture of the place they visit as well as having the opportunity to get stuck in to something

that needs doing. This could be painting a classroom, teaching a class or distributing coats and winter woollies.

Visit the website to see our up and coming expeditions.



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143 Attenborough Lane, Attenborough, Nottingham, NG9 6AA  
T: 08432 163 838 | Local: 0115 896 9942 | F: 084321 63848 | E: [info@operation-orphan.org](mailto:info@operation-orphan.org)  
Charity Registration Number: 1136170 Company Registration Number: 7148510