

Dear Friends,

This September, Sierra and I will be traveling to Swaziland, Africa with a group through the partnered organizations Children's Hope Chest and Known To Me. Our intention is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ at the Ludlati Carepoint in Manzini. This will definitely be an adventure for us! We will focus on loving these children and lifting their spirits in spite of their facing the AIDS crisis and wake of death and destruction. Not to mention, the life lesson that God has in store for us along the way. This trip presents a few FIRSTS for our family:

- * Our plane ride
- * Traveling farther than 1,000 miles
- * Missions trip
- * Working with and serving orphans

Sierra has become extremely involved in missions work locally and has had a significant amount of enthusiasm toward serving "outside the box". She is always waiting for the next opportunity to present itself. It is her passion! I can't explain it, but, God is doing something amazing with "His child". On the other hand, I was a bit apprehensive about going on a trip out of the country. I thought of many different reasons why I shouldn't go (ex: fear of getting deathly ill, fear of not being effective, the cost, and I didn't want to go on a Missions Trip for the sake of saying I had been on one).

With that being said, I needed to feel a connection. My heart had to grow soft toward this issue. After constant prayer and seeking God's wisdom and guidance, I have jumped on board! As Isaiah 6:8 says: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here I am, Send Me!" Another driving force that helped me decide to go was researching in depth, these children's stories. My heart continues to ache for them. Most of their parents have died to AIDS; which leaves them to take care of not only themselves, but each other.

My spirit is weakened and my soul mourns for them. I can somewhat relate to these children because I too, at a very young age had to take on the role of being a parent to my two younger sisters. Please do not misconstrued what I am trying to say; I am in no way comparing my childhood to theirs. What I went through as a child and what these children have to face on a daily basis hold no comparison to one another. However, I do remember how hard it was to hold everything together, how badly I wanted and needed relief, always feeling alone, hopeless, scared, overwhelmed and depressed. In Proverbs 31:8 & 9 it says: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...defend the rights of the poor and needy."

It is my prayer that God will use us to be a blessing in the lives of these children. I pray that they will be able to feel God's love and presence through us. I pray that we will be able to encourage them, spread joy, peace and serenity into their hearts and lives. I pray for MANIFESTATION! I ask that you agree with us in prayer for the following as well:

- * Safe travel
- * Good health
- * Cast out any FEAR of inadequacy
- * We would meet our sponsored child Lindokuhle
- * Strength, perseverance and determination to do God's work
- * Resources for the trip

This trip will cost us \$3275 per person (\$1575 CHC and \$1700 airfare). We also need to purchase passports, which is a separate expense. I ask that you not only prayerfully support us, but consider financially sponsoring us as well. Any amount will help! Sierra and I appreciate you being a part of our journey.

- * Monetary donations can be made out to us personally or Children's Hope Chest (CHC) and their fees are tax deductible.

To God be the Glory,

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure & faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress... James 1:27

Dear Friends and Family,

6/19/2010

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to share a call God has placed on my heart.

Over the past two years, God has showed me His heart for orphans in Africa. I have learned about the millions of children orphaned in Africa due to the AIDS pandemic. Swaziland, a country near South Africa, has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world. Life expectancy is only 28 years. Children are losing their parents and relatives to AIDS at an alarming rate. 12% of the total population is considered to be orphans.

Because there are virtually no orphanages or children's homes in Swaziland, these children are literally left to fend for themselves. Young children are caring for their younger siblings and other children who have no family. Ministries in Swaziland are working hard to help the kids survive by developing Carepoints where kids can come for food, education and Christian discipleship.

From September 4th – 15th, I will be traveling to Swaziland to visit the Ludlati Carepoint. I will travel with a group through the partnered organizations Children's HopeChest and Known To Me. We will focus on loving these children and lifting their spirits through gifts of clothing, food, fun games, VBS and home visits. We will also minister to the widows in this area who try their best, with the little they have, to provide for these orphans.

This will definitely be out of my comfort zone, but God has been preparing me and I am confident He has work for me to do in Africa. Please pray for our group and how God will use me to minister to these widows and children.

Visit these websites for more information about the sponsoring organizations.

Ludlati sponsorship www.knowntome.net Orphan Ministry www.hopechest.org

Your prayer support is greatly appreciated, especially during the days I will be in Africa. If you wish to help financially, please send me your tax deductible contribution made payable to Children's Hope Chest (CHC). Please add our travel reference number to the memo line: SZ100901T. This trip will cost \$3030 for me to go. Any funds received beyond that amount will be given to the Ludlati Carepoint for food, clothing, supplies, etc.

Thank You!

Hi Friends and Family,

I am so excited about an incredible opportunity that God has called me to participate in with an upcoming mission trip to Swaziland Africa early September. I will be traveling with a local online community (www.Known to Me.net) made of Christians who are passionate about caring for orphans and the oppressed. In September we will be traveling to a Carepoint called Ludlati. In a brief nutshell Ludlati is really just a tree where a few Gogos (grandmas) go daily to feed almost a hundred children in their community. Known to Me has come along side of these Gogos, with the help of Children's Hopechest to provide sponsorship for these kids and for meals but also just as important is for these kids to know they are special, loved, prayed for, and cared about. This is where the mission trip comes in! We have the blessing of getting to love on the neighborhood kids of Ludlati and hopefully give hope through hugs, smiles, and genuine heartfelt love!

What you may not already know is that Swaziland has one of the highest rates of AIDS and HIV. This unfortunately means that many of these children are leading their households of brothers and sisters due to parents passing away OR are living in already overcrowded extended families homes where poverty is ramped. Our trip leader found on his last trip that many of these kids are without shoes (some traveling miles barefoot for their meals), and not many clothes. Many children can't afford a uniform to even go to school.

SO here is where YOU come in! First off please pray!! Pray that these kids will be provided for, loved on, cared for, protected, nurtured, and most of all that they will develop a powerful relationship with God! Pray for our team as we prepare for this trip financially, emotionally and spiritually. Pray we don't get in God's way but that we can clearly discern what He wants to use us for! Also, I ask that you prayerfully consider giving financially towards this trip. Asking for money is never easy AND I don't ask lightly! In fact I have really rustled with the idea of even sending this letter too you, especially since many of you received a similar letter back in March for Todd's trip to Haiti. However, with much prayer and encouragement from others I trust, I decided to oblige. You see, sometimes God stirs us in directions that we don't understand and we can only trust. I believe we are all called to do different things for Him and in His timing. We just have to be willing to listen. I guess you could say that is where I am at...just trying to be still and listen. So as we prepare would you partner with me in prayer?

I want you to know some of the things we plan to do with this money. We want to buy shoes for all the kids, take the gogos out to dinner to show appreciation for them and host a vacation bible school for the kids. We will also be doing home visits for some of the sponsored kids where we will bring food with us to provide for their homesteads for at least a couple of weeks. One more very exciting gift we will be traveling with from home are homemade dresses and shorts that MANY people in my church home of First Christian Church have made as well as many of my family members and folks I don't even know! They are simply precious! We want these kids to feel special and the time and talent put into these clothes show it!

If you feel God is calling you to give to this trip or to the carepoint, here is how you can do that!

You can write a check to: _____ and in the memo line write: **SZ100901T** -

This check can be sent to my trip leader:

Todd and I had great intentions of keeping up with our family blog with his trip and really stunk at it but I plan to do better this go round. In fact, I have already started. So if you are interested in following our family blog as we walk this journey to Africa together, I would love it! Then you can know exactly where we need prayer, encouragement, help, etc! I am hopefully going to get to update it while there!!

So please pray for me as God prepares me, my family and my team for this trip. ALSO if you would prayerfully consider how God could use you that would be awesome!

Blessings to you all,

Family Blog:

Known to Me
www.Knowntome.net

Children's Hopechest
www.hopechest.org