

Q & A re Swaziland Care Point December 2, 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 orphans because of HIV/AIDS. 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 a worship and teaching time with the children. The majority of Swazi's identify as Christians 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 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, but sometimes by older siblings or other family members. 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 numbers of extra children.

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

Very young children who are not yet in school are at the care point all day long (from about 9 or 10 AM to about 3 or 4 PM) during the time that 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. Older children who are not in school (the tuition fee for middle and high school prevents some from attending school) may be at the care point for much of the day.

4. What Swazi community are we partnering with in forming a Care Point?

Sinyamantulwa (it is not too difficult to pronounce! Just say it slowly, just as it is written, making sure you stretch out the "u.") When Peter & Gill Spragg were in Swaziland this October, they visited several communities requesting a care point but they and the Swazi staff felt quite strongly that the greatest need is in Sinyamantulwa. Peter and Gill reported to us about that community on Sunday evening, November 19, and we heard that 40% of the households there are child led (i.e., the adults have all died). The unemployment rate is 60% among other households. It looks like it will be a large care point with an estimated 250-300 children attending.

The mission has agreed with the recommendation of Sinyamantulwa as our partner community and is working on getting a probationary period of 2 - 3 months underway there soon. It is the mission's policy to use probationary periods (funded from seed money provided by other donors) to ensure that the community and its leadership are fully committed to the partnership. Once that probationary period has been successfully completed, we take up our role of partnering with the community in operating the care point.

5. 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 every way possible for them. That generally 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.

6. Are there other ways that we can might be able to become 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 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.

7. 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, a number they hope to increase to 50.

I have been impressed with what I have learned as I have talked with leadership in the Georgia office of AIM and from their website (<https://www.adventures.org/>). They seem to have developed wise policies to work with the Swazi people in meeting needs. 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, all of whom 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 vast majority of the funds go to purchasing the food and bringing it to the community.

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

We are making encouraging progress! As of December 2, approximately \$1,750 per month has been committed by 27 households. Several other people are still in the decision process. We don't know the precise amount that we will need yet, but it has been projected to be in the range of \$2,000 to \$2,300 CDN per month, depending on the actual number of children who are regularly fed and that number won't be known for certain until the probationary period is over. Early indications are that between 250 and 300 children will come to the care point.

Based on the above information, the \$1,750 committed is in the range of approximately **75-88%** of what will be needed. We are encouraged but are still praying for God to call more people to join the team of supporting partners. If you feel that you might be one of those people who God is calling to join us, please contact us. (See below for contact information.)

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

In addition to AIM being a responsible organization that will make regular reports to us, 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. In addition, AIM encourages us to send a team to Swaziland to help us understand our partnership even better.

10. When should I start my monthly giving?

Even though the partnership will likely not begin formally until a few months into 2018, a number of people have started giving already. That is important because it is helpful for AIM to have several months' worth of funds in advance because it takes quite a while for our donations to go from Emmanuel to a Canadian organization then to Georgia and then to the purchasing and transporting of food to Sinyamantulwa. In addition, it is important for us to develop a fund that can cushion against fluctuating exchange rates. If our fund is strong in future years, it might 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 should be made out to Emmanuel Church and **clearly designated for "Sinyamantulwa Care Point."**

There are four different ways that people are currently doing this:

- i. regular monthly offering envelopes, clearly designated for the Sinyamantulwa care point
- ii. post dated checks delivered to the church office and clearly designated.
- iii. a single donation for the year, in advance, in an offering envelope, clearly designated.
- iii. automatic monthly withdrawals. To receive forms, please contact Lucy Myderwyk in the church office - office@emmanuelife.com

Emmanuel is able to receipt all donations because a Canadian organization (Community Christian Fellowship Church of Canada or CCFCC) 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. I (Bob) am Emmanuel's coordinator of this ministry and can be reached at [343-600-4225](tel:343-600-4225) or Robert.burkinshaw@gmail.com or you can find me at church between services (we are usually at the 9 a.m. service and stay awhile afterwards)

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

Bob Burkinshaw