

## **Q & A re Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) Care Point Updated October 2023**

### **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, many of whom are HIV/AIDS orphans. The care points are also designed to minister to a number of other needs of the children. Basic medical care is provided, grief counselling has been initiated and tuition help is given so that promising students can attend middle and/or high school (only elementary school is free in Eswatini.) 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 care points.

### **2. Why is the need so great in Eswatini (Swaziland)?**

The HIV/Aids rate in Eswatini 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 the care point 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) when 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 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 running a Care Point?**

eNlanhleri In that area, 40% of the households are child led (i.e., the adults in the household have died). The unemployment rate is 60% among other households. It is a large care point with over 200 children attending each day.

### **5. Why do we call the relationship between Emmanuel and eNlanhleri a “partnership?”**

It is because *both* parties have significant responsibilities. While our role is crucially important in providing funds for the food, the Swazi staff member and some other costs, 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 includes setting aside land, organizing volunteers to cook the food daily and ensuring the 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 to do as much as they possibly can to help meet the needs of their people.

Our partnership with the community of eNlanhleri formally began in June of 2018. The care point had been operating on a probationary basis for six months before that and the

community proved that it is committed to take its role in the partnership seriously. That has been demonstrated several times since then. For example, when the company that provides cell service in that area donated funds to erect a shelter building and fence for the care point, community members stepped up to provide the labour to build the structure. Also, in October 2022 we received a report and pictures of community members eagerly helping to build the large chicken coop, the funds for which we had provided.

#### **6. Are there other ways that we can might be able to become involved in that community?**

Yes. The Swazi staff, in working with the community, have identified development projects for the care point and/or which will help the community become more sustainable.

- In 2020 we sent funds to build a new cooking shelter for the care point
- in 2021 we sent funds for a chicken coop and a sewing project (for school uniforms). Construction of the chicken coop was reported to be underway in October of 2022 and community members are enthusiastic about the possibilities for food and income that it will provide them.
- Other potential projects include a multipurpose building for the childrens' meetings at the care point, a well, a garden and a playground.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, Eswatini experienced one of the highest death rates in Africa and the already high unemployment rate increased greatly. In response, the mission responded to the need of whole families for food on a temporary basis with a goal to feed 2,500 families. We were able to send approximately \$15,000 above our normal donations to help towards that project.

The mission also encourages churches to send a team to Eswatini to develop relationships with people in their partner communities and, perhaps, work with them on a project. Because of the Covid pandemic, we have not been able to do that but we have been able to begin building a relationship because Peter and Gill Spragg and Dan and Julie Dayton and family have visited the care point.

**We are currently planning a team trip to visit our carepoint in late May/early June of 2024.** If interested in learning about possibly joining that team, please contact Bob Burkinshaw or Peter Spragg.

#### **7. What North American Mission is involved?**

Adventures in Missions (AIM). The mission specializes in organizing short term missions all over the world but it has a well developed ministry in Eswatini with a number of full time missionaries and about 40 care points, a number they are working to increase to 50.

I have been impressed as I have talked with leadership in the Georgia office of AIM and from their website (<https://www.adventures.org/>). They have developed wise policies to work with the Swazi people in meeting needs. It also has 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 missionaries in Eswatini, all of whom raise their own personal support separately. Another

small portion of our donations will pay the salary of the Swazi staff member assigned to oversee our partner care point. The vast majority of the funds go to purchasing the food and transporting it to the community.

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

Thus far we have met our annual commitment of about \$30,000 (CDN) since we started. Despite our being able to keep up with the monthly expenses, it is important to have more supporting partners because it is important to have a hedge against both fluctuating exchange rates and the potential that one or more current supporters will need to miss a few months or to back out altogether. If we have any surpluses, the funds will go towards development projects in partnership with that community.

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 does this project have to Emmanuel?**

In addition to AIM being a responsible organization that is making regular reports to us. Peter and Gill Spragg visited there in August/September of 2019 and reported to us in November of 2019 and Dan and Julie Dayton and family visited in early 2020.

In addition, AIM encourages us to send a team to Eswatini to help us understand our partnership even better and develop personal relationships. We are currently planning for that in late May/early June, 2024.

#### **10. How do I make my monthly donation?**

All gifts should be made out to Emmanuel Church and clearly designated for "Eswatini Care Point."

**NB. It is very important to include the word "CarePoint" in your designation.**

**There are five different ways that people are currently doing this:**

- i. checks in offering envelopes, clearly designated for the eSwatini care point. Some people simply add their care point donation to their regular offering check and designated accordingly on the envelope.
- ii. e-transferred funds to the church, clearly designated "Eswatini care point."
- iii. post-dated checks delivered to the church office and clearly designated
- iv. lump sums, in advance (for a year, or half year or a quarter), clearly designated
- v. automatic monthly withdrawals. To receive forms, please contact Doreen Kuipers in the church office - [office@emmanuelife.com](mailto:office@emmanuelife.com)

In addition to the monthly support partners, a number of people have made one time or occasional donations by some of the above means.

Emmanuel is able to receipt all donations because we send the funds through Community Christian Fellowship Church of Canada, or CCFCC, based in Ottawa, which 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 [343-263-3312](tel:343-263-3312) or [robert.burkinshaw@gmail.com](mailto:robert.burkinshaw@gmail.com) or you can find me at church on Sundays.

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

Bob Burkinshaw