



## 'Grain Train on the Move

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN, INC. • FALL 2010, VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3

## Orphans Naked and Hungry

Sunlight shines through the window on a bright clear October morning, waking him from the only respite he has ever known from the painful life he leads on many levels. The orphanage in Haiti has been his home for as long as he can remember. Before the quake of January 2010, he had gotten used to feeling hungry as he often felt that way for most of the day. He could count on food at mealtime, but the meager amount did not satisfy his hunger for very long. The orphanage was so remote and destitute that he and the other children did not have clothing or even underwear to help retain their body heat. Often he woke up hungry and cold in the night, with no soft pillow, no sheets, no blankets, and not even a mattress. A harsh, cold, steel bed dissipated any warmth his tiny shivering body was able to produce. He did not



Haitian orphan with no mattress, just cold metal bed frame.  
*Photo courtesy of Sandra Koch*



Haitian orphans waiting for help.

bother to cry out, because there was nobody to cradle him in their arms, no one to comfort him.

After the quake, things got much worse, if that were possible. The steady flow of nourishment came to a screeching halt. For the first few months, nothing came and he nearly starved to death. Gnawing hunger became his constant unwelcome companion. The warmth of the sun comforted his body, so that during the day, at least, life was bearable. As the starvation continued, he no longer felt hungry, but his health began to fail and sickness was a constant state of being. Death was a very real and constant threat that claimed all but the strongest. In time an occasional box of food or supplies made its way to the orphanage, but it was carefully rationed because nobody knew when, or more importantly, if more

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# Orphans Naked and Hungry

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would be coming.

Thanks be to God that, for the love of Jesus, generous donors and volunteers all across this country made it possible for Orphan Grain Train to get supplies to this remote orphanage. Nourishing food, clothing, new underwear and soft, warm blankets were lovingly given to the children in the orphanage. With the help of generous donors, Orphan Grain Train hopes to send more food and supplies to this orphanage and others like it. Across Haiti, countless children receive only the one meal per day provided by Orphan Grain Train. Many are still waiting for help to arrive. Will you help save the life of an orphan?

Jesus said, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:35-36, 40(NIV).

# PET™ Project

Personal Energy Transportation, otherwise known as PET is changing the lives of people the world over, who lack the ability to walk. They are hand powered, three wheeled scooters that can cover most any terrain, depending on the strength of the person pedaling. Orphan Grain Train has sent shipments containing PETs to Tajikistan, Haiti, Nicaragua and other places across the globe. Each of these hand-pedaled carts has a box in the back to carry personal

items. The Missouri Branch recently sent a trailer load of PETs, with shoe-shine kits and "mini-marts" that fit in the back, to the Norfolk warehouse for shipment. People receiving these PETs will have the dignity of being able to move around independently and also earn a living. Orphan Grain Train is drastically changing lives with the help of generous donors willing to help ship PETs and other medical supplies to people who need them.



This man is happy to be mobile again, thanks to Orphan Grain Train and his PET™.  
*Photo courtesy of Sandra Koch*

## I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO ME

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Haiti relief.

*Mail this form with your check marked "Haiti Relief" and payable to:*

**Orphan Grain Train**  
PO Box 1466  
Norfolk, NE 68702-1466

# Driving to defeat poverty

## Hastings couple takes to the road as volunteers for The Orphan Grain Train program

Article by John Huthmacher, [johnh@hastingstribune.com](mailto:johnh@hastingstribune.com)

A cog in the wheel. That's how Mike and Karen Widhalm of Hastings describe their roles as volunteers with The Orphan Grain program.

Founded in 1992 by Clayton Andrews and The Rev. Ray Wilke, the Norfolk-based charitable organization provides food, clothing, and medical supplies to missions around the globe. Operating from 20 branches across the country, the program utilizes more than 2,000 volunteers to accomplish its work around the world.

To Mike, a retired steel worker with nearly 20 years of semitruck driving experience, the opportunity to get back behind the wheel to assist the less fortunate aligns perfectly with the precepts of his own life's journey.

"I have always been challenged by the words of nineteenth century precision micrometer inventor Levi Starrett, who said: 'There is no higher calling than to help a man make a living by giving him good tools with which to work,' " he said. "I've applied that to my own life, first by running a steel mill to keep men working, and now, in my retirement years by helping people to stay alive."

That people so badly off can be found right here in the land of plenty surprised him. That the solution to their plight could be as



Mike and Karen Widhalm have been volunteers with the Orphan Grain Train program for about a year. The couple delivers food, clothing, and medical supplies to missions across the midwest and southwest, including Texas, South Dakota, and North Dakota.

*Photo courtesy of John Huthmacher/Hastings Tribune*

simple as meeting their basic needs was even more eye-opening.

"We in the Midwest don't realize the extent of deep-seeded poverty here in our own country," he said. "One of the keys to ending the poverty cycle is education. If we can help feed the families so they have to spend less time looking for work, then they can spend more time keeping their kids in school."

For Karen, who rides along on most of the trips, the experience has given her an opportunity to spend quality time on the road to charitable works with the man she loves.

"It's very gratifying work," she said. "It's just unbelievable the feeling you get when you deliver those goods to people who need it badly. They're just so grateful when

they see that truck coming.

"We had both just retired and were looking for something to do and this just really seemed to fit what we thought we would enjoy doing. We get to travel all over the country to meet very interesting people and serve a need that's difficult to fill."

Indeed, finding a semitruck driver with enough free time in his or her schedule to volunteer two to three weeks at the wheel each month is no easy task.

"They're always hard up for drivers," Mike said. "The driver they had was past his 80th birthday and ready to retire. I called them and described my background - I have over 2 million miles of accident-free over the road driving - and it turned out to be a perfect fit."

In addition to their food and supply deliveries, the Widhalm's have also made runs to retrieve equipment loaned by The Orphan Grain Train, including portable shower and kitchen units used by volunteers in the trenches assisting victims of natural disasters.

One perk the couple enjoys as volunteers is the opportunity to travel frugally. Their meals, hotel and fuel bills are paid by the organization. Both church-going Christians, they believe their time and effort is also compensated, but not by way of monetary gain.

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## Driving to defeat poverty

*(continued from page 3)*

“We’ll pull in someplace to get fuel and people will ask, ‘What’s the Orphan Grain Train?’” Tom said. “When we tell them we’re volunteers, they are always incredulous. ‘You drive for nothing?’ My response is, ‘Pay day is coming, and hopefully it’s a long ways off!’”

“From a purely emotional standpoint, it’s like being on vacation. We get to travel to interesting destinations. But there’s another level - and I think it’s a higher level - and that’s the spiritual satisfaction we receive from helping play a very small part in helping people who desperately need assistance.”

## Help Desperately Wanted: Quilters

Orphan Grain Train is seeking people to fill the need for blankets and quilts. It is a well-known fact, that in church circles, there are many delightful ladies who are experts at turning out quilts and blankets in great number. We have never made this request in the newsletter before, but our supply is running dangerously low. We need your help right now to replenish our supply. Any size blanket or quilt, new or used, handmade, or bought, beautiful or ugly, will be appreciated. From the little naked orphans in Haiti to hospitals and orphanages in Kyrgyzstan, blankets are sorely needed. Please help. Blankets and quilts can be taken to your local Orphan Grain Train branch, or shipped to: Orphan

Grain Train Warehouse, 601 W. Phillip Ave., Norfolk, NE 68701.



This elderly patient is happy to have a blanket in this chilly Kyrgyzstan hospital.

## Shunts for Kyrgyzstan

Children with hydrocephalus have excess fluid build up around the brain, which causes pressure, brain damage and often death. Surgically implanted medical shunts drain excess fluid from the brain and reduce pressure, so that the patient can lead a normal life. In many countries around the world, shunt technology is simply not available, and many die needlessly.

The shunt program was begun back in 1997 to try to meet this need. Brand new, first quality shunts are either donated by hospitals or medical companies, or purchased at a substantial discount. Orphan Grain Train then ships them to doctors and hospitals where they can be used. The Maryland Branch just sent word that 50 more medical

shunts were donated, shipped, and, in the past few weeks, have saved the lives of eleven tiny patients in Kyrgyzstan. All eleven children who received these shunts were from poor families in remote villages and would likely have died without this life-giving gift. Because of many generous donors, Orphan Grain



Recent recipient of a medical shunt from Orphan Grain Train.

Train has been able to give the gift of life to thousands of children since the program began.



A medical shunt will drain fluid from this baby's brain.

**\$140 will purchase a shunt and save a life.**

# The Papua New Guinea Miracle

The Highlands of Papua New Guinea are characterized by a stone-age culture, with people living much the same way as their ancestors did thousands of years ago. There are over 800 different tribal dialects, but the official language, though seldom spoken or understood, is English.

Clothing choice for men is a strange combination of a traditional woven grass loin-cloth with leaves tucked in the back, which covers the bare minimum, and/or t-shirts or pants (not necessarily both at the same time). Women can often be seen topless, and the young children naked and shivering in the rain. Driving along the winding, rocky, narrow mountain roads, fun-loving groups of children can be seen sliding down the muddy side of a hill on their bare bottoms, which is a favorite pastime.

Their diet consists of sweet potatoes, ferns and sometimes, for special occasions, pork.

Leprosy is still common, as well as many other diseases easily cured by antibiotics and basic sanitation. Since medical care is not readily available, rare is the person who reaches fifty years of age.

Tribal wars abound, still fought with spears, arrows and axes. These tribal wars, in a peculiar way, parallel our need as a society to watch or participate in physical contact sports like football or hockey.

Some people have been heard to say, "If they were Christian, they would not be in this predicament." How far those people are from the truth. The people living in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea have been served by Christian missionaries for well over a century. Though there is still some influence by traditional tribal religion, the vast majority of the people have close ties to a Christian church. Hundreds of Lutheran



Lutheran school children in this Papua New Guinea classroom are excited to hear that they are going to have schoolbooks.

congregations with faithful members dot the Highlands. Walls woven of a grass similar to bamboo and a tin roof characterize most of these churches. A simple wooden altar is reverently adorned with jars or cans of orchids and other wild flowers. Dozens of worshipers eagerly gather on a Sunday morning, along with at least a few dogs and maybe a pig. They sit on rustic, hand crafted, wooden benches, to hear God's Word and to sing praises.

Twenty-four Lutheran schools

in the Highlands serve over 7000 children. With no books or libraries, and a chalkboard as the only visual aid, the teachers struggle to meet the learning needs of the children.

Orphan Grain Train learned of this need, and recently sent its very first memorial container, filled with schoolbooks of all kinds, to the children of Papua New Guinea. The Gail Otten Memorial Container arrived at the port city of Lae just this week. Soon, the school books will be distributed to the 24, dirt floor, grass walled, Lutheran schools which are filled to capacity with students. English language textbooks and library books will assist teachers all over the Highlands trying desperately to teach English to children whose native language is a tribal dialect. We thank God for this gift, such a wonderful tribute

to Gail, who was a librarian, and who dedicated her life to children. Not only will children be aided in their studies, they will be better able to read the Bible, which may never be translated into their own tribal dialect. Most children living in the Highlands, will not likely travel outside their local province, but through these books, they can travel real and imaginary worlds, and have adventures beyond their wildest imagination. Thank you, Otten Family, for this beautiful tribute to one of God's beautiful people.

# Learning to Walk Again

Amputees in Nicaragua have been fitted with new prosthetic legs and are now learning to walk again with the help of walkers sent by Orphan Grain Train.



Walkers provided by Orphan Grain Train help amputees learn to walk.

# Summary Financial Report

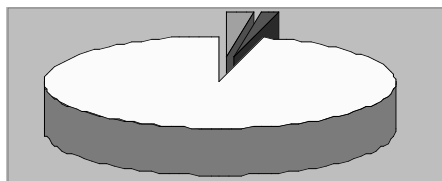
## From Orphan Grain Train, Inc.

### Audited Financial Statements

### Fiscal Year Ended May 31, 2010

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Total support, revenues: ..... | \$10,664,509     |
| And gains (losses)             |                  |
| Expenses Mission: .....        | 9,703,190        |
| (Program Services).....        | (95.8% of Total) |
| Administration: .....          | 250,696          |
|                                | (2.5% of Total)  |
| Fund Raising: .....            | 170,396          |
|                                | (1.7% of Total)  |
| Total for Fiscal 09-10: .....  | \$10,124,282     |

Ratio of expenses reported in Orphan Grain Train, Inc.,  
Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended May 31, 2010.



|                  |
|------------------|
| ■ Administration |
| ■ Fund Raising   |
| □ Mission        |

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Net assets, end of fiscal year: |             |
| Unrestricted: .....             | \$2,600,099 |
| Temporarily Restricted: .....   | 768,125     |
| Permanently Restricted:.....    | 20,000      |
| Total Net Assets:.....          | \$3,388,224 |

## Visit [www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org)

There is a wealth of information available on our website, which is [www.ogt.org](http://www.ogt.org). If you enjoy our newsletter, you will love our website. There is information about how the organization was founded, latest news, shipment information, photos and even videos of how Orphan Grain Train is bringing relief for human need worldwide.

### I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO ME

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ where it is most needed.

Mail this form with your check payable to: **Orphan Grain Train**  
PO Box 1466  
Norfolk, NE 68702-1466

# 2010 Convention Highlights

Orphan Grain Train's 12th annual international convention was held Friday and Saturday, September 17th and 18th at Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk, Nebraska with nearly three hundred attendees.

Mr. Gary Thies, of LCMS World Mission, kicked off this year's convention with "The Papua New Guinea Miracle". His dynamic presentation focused on Orphan Grain Train's very first memorial shipment, sent in memory of Gail Otten, for the 7000 Lutheran school children in need of schoolbooks. Gary challenged the audience to "Wake Up!" Now is the time to share the Gospel with people God has put in our lives. There were also presentations on Sudan and Haiti. Following the Haiti presentation, there was not a dry eye in the convention hall. Also on the list of presentations were Russian and Latvian orphanages, hospitals and prisons.

Breakout sessions included special presentations on the

medical shunt program, Kyrgyzstan, and Nicaragua, and a "How To" session on making pillowcase dresses, mercy kits, and sleeping mats from plastic grocery bags. The "How To" session was a big hit with many convention attendees.

Twenty beautiful quilts were auctioned, and brought over \$4300 for Haiti relief shipments.

The 2011 convention will be the 16th and 17th of September, at Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk, Nebraska. Make plans now to attend.



Two future Orphan Grain Train volunteers enjoy the convention.

## Thrivent Choice Dollars

.... Thrivent's charitable gift program, THRIVENT CHOICE, has an easy way to find out if you have Choice Dollars, and to direct those dollars to ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN, INC.

### 1. CALL 1-800-847-4836

....An automated system will answer the phone with a message that ends with the words, "Briefly, how can I help you today?"

### 2. Speak the Words: "CHOICE DOLLARS"

....The receptionist will come on the line and ask a few questions to verify your account information.

### 3. Please select ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN, INC.

....As your charitable organization

*Thank you for your past and present support.  
God Bless You.*

# Orphan Grain Train

P.O. Box 1466  
Norfolk, NE 68702-1466

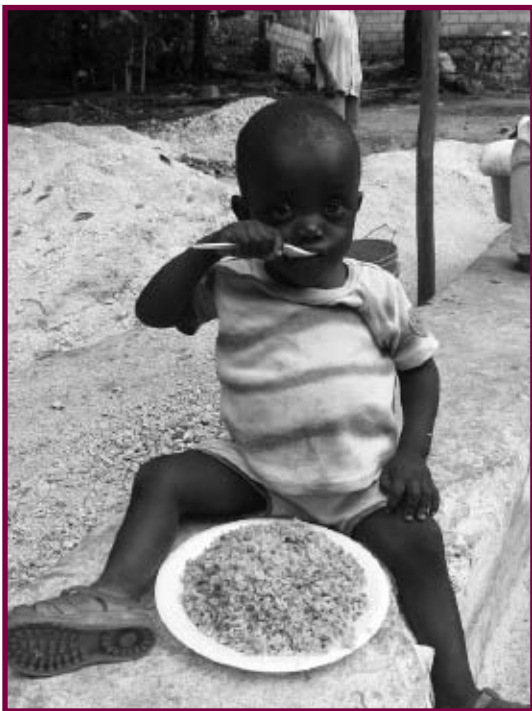
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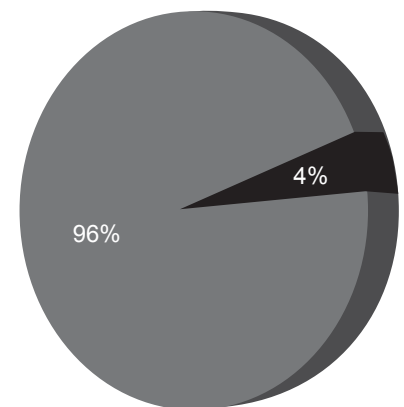
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## Thousands Waiting



Orphan Grain Train daily provides meals to thousands of starving children in Haiti and other countries around the world. Many thousands are still waiting for help. Your gift of just \$10 will ship food for over 300 children.



■ Administration and Fundraising  
■ Mission

96¢ of every dollar given to Orphan Grain Train is used for the mission of getting food, medical supplies and other necessities to people in need, around the world.

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