



A FAMILY FOR  
EVERY ORPHAN

*Light*  
*in the*  
*Darkness*

**2023**  
Annual Report

# A Letter From the Executive Director

Have you ever felt overwhelming joy from an unexpected act of kindness during a dark season in your life?

The gesture that makes your eyes water as you feel seen? And gives you a feeling of warmth to realize the genuine care from another?

Your generosity this year has touched the lives of thousands of the most vulnerable children and their families during their darkest days. Your gifts have not only lightened their burdens and made them feel seen, but they have also experienced God's warm, tangible love through You.

## To the Ends of the Earth

This past year children and families in Ghana, India, Central Asia, Paraguay, Romania, and Ukraine have continued to experience the devastating and far-reaching impacts of war, global inflation, COVID, and climate change. Parents have struggled to put food on the table and meet their child's basic needs. **And today, there are more orphans in the world than ever before.**

We know from prior crises that when a family is not able to meet their child's needs, they are at an increased risk of separation as children are often sent to an orphanage. However, even with the best of intentions, orphanages simply cannot offer children the consistent love, care, and

permanency that a family provides. **Decades of research note the developmental benefits that show children thrive in families—where they belong!**

As the war in Ukraine enters its third year, poverty has increased from 5% to 25%, 65% of Ukrainian children are displaced, and over 65,000 children have been orphaned by the war. Children may not know or understand these statistics, but they feel the pressures and stress in their families. A recent survey showed 4 out of 5 Ukrainian children fear "family separation" more than anything. More than bombs, losing their home, or even death.

## You and Your Gifts

But you have been a source of hope to these children, letting "light shine out of darkness."

Your gifts have returned children displaced by war to their families, evacuated children and families from combat zones to safety, given families supplies to heat their homes during the winter, and built greenhouses for food security for families. Your generosity has equipped caregivers in trauma-informed care, improved child welfare policies for orphans, and raised up churches, foster families, and adoptive parents to care for children in need. These and many other efforts



share in a common goal in every nation served—to help children **remain in, reunite with, or regain a family.** (Keep an eye out for these themes in the following stories!)

## Thank You!

Thank you for your tremendous support and care for the orphaned and vulnerable child. Thank you for allowing them to be seen during their darkest days. We hope you are encouraged and inspired by the stories you are about to read—none of which would be possible without you!

With joy and gratitude,



Heather Dyer

## 2 Corinthians 4:6

*"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."*

# Table of Contents

Letter from the Executive Director 1

AFFEO Mission & Vision 3

2023 at a Glance 4

### Impact Stories

*Prepare* 5

*Promote* 7

*Protect* 9

*Prevent* 11

*Connect* 13

Why I Give 15

Letter from the Board Chair 16

Looking Ahead & Priorities 17



# Serving Vulnerable Children & Families

A Family for Every Orphan (AFFEO) is a Christian organization committed to advancing family-based care for orphans and vulnerable children.

We achieve this by mobilizing churches, communities, and governments around family strengthening, foster care, and adoption.



## Mission

To create paths for orphans to find care in loving and stable families in their home country.

## Vision

A world without orphans.  
*Because children belong in families.*

## How It's Done

You are helping orphans know the incredible love of a family. With your support, we champion efforts to see children in families through work to:



### Prepare

Equip caregivers with training and resources



### Promote

Share the vision of family-based care for children



### Protect

Advocate for improved child welfare systems



### Connect & Prevent

Help meet the direct needs of at-risk children, youth, and families



# 2023

## At A Glance



**428,095**  
Children and  
families helped



**4,728**  
Churches engaged  
to support orphaned  
and vulnerable  
children



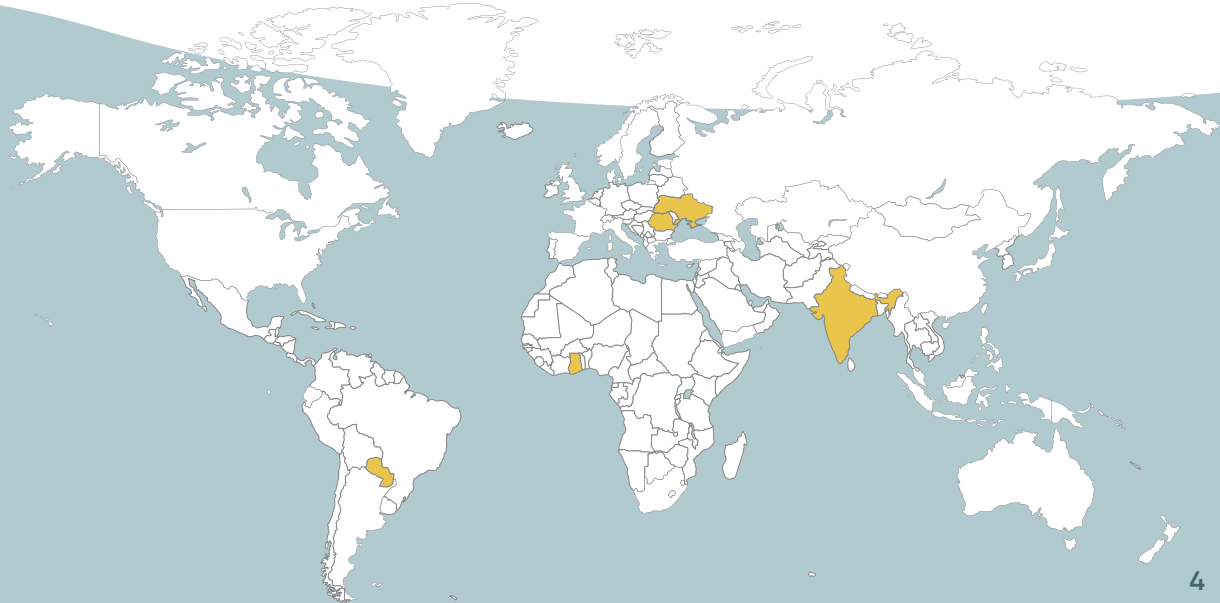
**41,930**  
People encouraged,  
trained, informed



**239**  
Deported Ukrainian  
children reunited  
with their families

### Countries served:

Ukraine  
Romania  
India  
Ghana  
Paraguay



# Prepare

## Hope Restored

### Artem's Path to Healing

Natalia and her husband adopted twins—a boy and a girl—when the children were only 1.5 years old. The children had spent their early years in an orphanage before finding a forever home with Natalia's family in Ukraine.

Natalia absolutely adored her twins but faced great challenges with her adopted son, Artem. The young boy was angry, aggressive, hyperactive and struggled with accepting care and nurturing. This situation took a toll on Natalia, leading to feelings of frustration and depression. With a broken heart, they'd even contemplated "adoption disruption" – a temporary, or sometimes permanent, separation of the adopted children from the adopted family.

### A New Approach

**Thankfully, Natalia found help at a therapy training program that you support.** Through these sessions, Natalia was equipped with a trust-based therapeutic approach to use with her son. She also gained a profound understanding of the impact of trauma on Artem's brain and behavior. This realization brought her a sense of relief, as she now had a tangible reason for her son's challenging behaviors rooted in his difficult past.

A pivotal shift occurred in Natalia's parenting approach as she became more empathetic and nurturing. Guided by the insights gained through the training program, she began implementing engagement strategies such as affectionate gaze, safe touch, and playful interaction.

The transformative results were astounding. **Within just a month, Artem's demeanor completely changed—he allowed himself to be hugged,**



**uttered the words "Mom, I love you" for the first time, displayed increased obedience, and demonstrated a heightened ability to connect with his adoptive parents.** The family's collective anxiety levels significantly decreased, marking a tangible improvement in their overall well-being.

With gratitude in her voice, Natalia expressed her disbelief at the simplicity of the solution—changing herself and her parenting approach.

### Your Support

Thanks to your support, Natalia is now able to look towards her family's future with optimism, and Artem was able to **remain** in his new loving family and is now thriving with them.

Your generosity continues to facilitate programs and initiatives that empower families like Natalia's to navigate the complexities of adoption with resilience, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of the children in their care.

**Because of you, Artem is experiencing safety, love, and stability in his adoptive family and is on a path of healing from his past trauma.** You restored hope and gave his mother the capacity and skills to allow her son (and family!) to thrive.

**Thank you for your dedication to transforming the lives of adoptive families and the precious children who find love and stability within their homes.**



**1,132**

Foster and adoptive families trained in trauma-informed care



**2,511**

Caregivers received counseling services



**1,017**

Social workers trained







# Promote

## Fostering Love & Hope

### Through Church-Based Awareness

Mateo's journey began when a family in Paraguay, inspired by the awareness campaigns within their church community, made the compassionate decision to open their hearts and home to foster a child needing temporary and emergency placement until an adoptive family could be identified. This pivotal moment was made possible by you!

**Your support equips churches and organizations in Paraguay to share messages of adoption, provide training and resources to help support foster and adoptive families, and bring awareness to specific children in need of adoption.** Mateo was one of those children.

### Mateo and His Forever Family

6-month-old Mateo became a cherished member of this foster family, bringing joy and love into their home, but this was not his forever home as the family was not equipped for his long-term care. Several health challenges plagued the little baby, leading his foster family on a quest for a diagnosis and the best treatment options. During this challenging period, another woman from the church, Celia, came alongside the foster family to help.

Celia was captivated by Mateo's beautiful spirit and undeniable charm, and she quickly fell in love with him. This genuine connection sparked her interest in adopting Mateo. The foster parents and Celia worked together with proper child welfare authorities who, acting in the best interest of the

child, allowed Mateo to stay with his foster family until the adoption process could be finalized.

The culmination of this beautiful journey saw Mateo **regain** his forever family with Celia – a steadfast companion throughout Mateo's challenging yet transformative experience – and the church continuing to provide wrap-around care to Celia and Mateo.

### Your Impact

The impact of your generous support is evident in the lives touched throughout Mateo's journey. **His story is a testament to the power of raising awareness in churches for local orphans and the positive impact of community involvement in caring for orphans.**

Your contributions make stories like Mateo's possible, shaping brighter futures and fostering love, hope, and stability for vulnerable children.



**28,201**

People attended motivational & educational events



**4,728**

Churches engaged in family-based care programs



**>700,000**

People reached with the message of adoption

# Protect

## Timur's Triumph

### A Journey to Belonging

**Timur, a resilient 6-year-old in Kyrgyzstan, is now in a safe and loving home!** His remarkable journey was made possible thanks to the compassion and investment of supporters like you.

Timur was placed in an orphanage at the tender age of 4 after spending earlier years with his father and stepmother. Their home became unsafe for Timur, and with his biological mother's whereabouts unknown he was placed in a private orphanage. Timur languished in the orphanage for years. He became trapped in bureaucratic limbo as child welfare workers neglected to manage his case properly. Parental rights were not being terminated, even though both of Timur's parents were out of the picture. This kept Timur ineligible for adoption and stuck in the orphanage.

### Hope's Trajectory

**However, because of you, the trajectory of Timur's life is forever changed.**

A few years after Timur was placed in the orphanage, AFFEO partners in Kyrgyzstan established a relationship with the orphanage staff. This was part of advocacy efforts to raise awareness amongst prospective foster and adoptive parents of orphans in the community.

Once the orphanage staff saw our partner's depth of expertise and experience with the child welfare and protection system, they shared about Timur's situation and how it pained them to see him stuck in the orphanage.

### Reunited

**AFFEO's partner went to work immediately to get Timur's case managed properly.** This included a social investigation by child welfare authorities to locate any relatives and determine what type of placement would be in Timur's best interest. After thorough assessments by child welfare authorities, Timur's father relinquished his parental rights and the search for Timur's biological mother began. Against seemingly high odds, Timur's mother, Irina, was successfully located! She had lost contact with her son when he was just 2 years old as she escaped domestic violence, shedding light on the complex set of circumstances that led to their separation. **The child welfare authorities completed their social investigation and made the decision to reunite Irina with her son!**

### Your Help

Today, with your help, Timur and Irina receive ongoing financial and emotional support, ensuring a stable and nurturing environment for their family. **Timur loves being with his mom and enjoys playing games and reading with her.**

**Your support played a pivotal role in protecting Timur and reuniting this family.** With your help, improvements are made to child welfare laws and policies, and measures are taken to ensure existing ones are applied properly. **This protects children and ensures every child has a path to a family in a timely manner.**

Thank you for helping [reunite](#) Timur and his mom!



7

Children registered  
for adoption



1

Child welfare  
process improved  
in Paraguay



## Ukraine

**You helped reunite 239 deported  
Ukrainian children!**

Diana was one of these children. She was loaded onto a bus while at school and taken to Russian territory. There, she was told she was Russian and that Ukraine did not exist. Thanks to your support, Diana has been rescued and **reunited** with her family in Ukraine. After receiving trauma therapy, Diana says, "I want the other children to have an opportunity to return home and be with their families."







3,222

Families received  
daycare services



28

Women received  
vocational training





# Prevent

## Providing a Brighter Future for Maxwell

Maxwell is a spirited 3-year-old boy in Ghana facing the challenges of living with sickle cell disease. Maxwell's mother struggled to find enough consistent income to provide for her family's basic needs, much less to cover Maxwell's medical bills. Maxwell was at risk of being sent to an orphanage and separated from his loving mother.

### A Sustainable Income in Ghana

**Last year, your gifts helped launch a project to strengthen vulnerable, disenfranchised families like Maxwell's.** The project provides seed money for a family's small business and funds for school fees and supplies while that family business grows. The goal is to see families gain a sustainable source of income so that their children remain in school and in their families. Far too often children in vulnerable families are forced to drop out of school to work or are placed in an orphanage. These are both outcomes that tragically fuel the cycle of orphanhood.

**However, because of you, dozens of families in Ghana have been strengthened and remain together. The trajectory of children's lives have been forever changed through the education you have provided.** In addition, many more children have been **reunited** with their families as their parents gain a steady income to care for them.

Strong families are less likely to be separated allowing children to safely **remain** in their family. Often, struggling families need someone to come alongside them to help start or grow a business of their own to support their families. Thanks to your generosity, the family-strengthening project in Ghana provided this need for its participants, creating a clear path to help families build a sustainable business and stable future.

### Grain Business

Maxwell's mother received funds to kickstart her grain-selling business. This support gave her a lifeline when she needed it most. Today, her business generates enough income for Maxwell to receive critical care essential for his well-being and meet her family's basic needs. **This prevented separation and ensured that Maxwell and his family could thrive together.**

**Your support is a beacon of hope, enabling families like Maxwell's to overcome challenges and build a promising tomorrow.**



1,865

Biological families strengthened to reunite or remain together



# Connect

## Rohan's Story From Boys Home to Upscale Chef

Rohan's story of determination begins at the delicate age of only six years old when he and his three younger brothers were left to be cared for by his grandparents. Providing for all four boys was a struggle for the grandparents and one day, without warning, they informed Rohan that he would be moving to a local boys' home in India. Rohan was shocked and confused but accepted his fate.

### Aftercare Program

He worked diligently to complete his schooling but didn't know what to expect or dream for his future once he turned 18. Thankfully, Rohan was not left to figure it out all alone. **Your gifts help sustain a wonderful "aftercare" program for teens like Rohan who do not have a strong family foundation.** The aftercare program provides teens with life skills training, including financial management and social skills, along with college and career guidance.

As part of the aftercare program, Rohan explored job opportunities with the help of a mentor who encouraged him to identify his skills and talents that bring him joy. Rohan recalled how much he loved cooking for his friends in the boys' home and the many compliments he would receive. He had never thought of cooking professionally nor knew how to pursue it as a career. But he knew he was a good cook and enjoyed the work, so he decided to become a chef.



Rohan's aftercare program mentor helped him identify and apply to a university. Rohan's hard work and determination paid off! After completing his education and receiving his university certificate, he quickly secured an apprenticeship with a prestigious hotel. Rohan is now a chef in an upscale restaurant.

### Your Gift of Guidance

**Your support allowed Rohan to receive invaluable guidance, the opportunity to acquire a certificate through a prominent university, secure a stable job—and reach independence!**

It is estimated that around 50,000 youth in India leave institutional care annually, facing challenges upon reaching adulthood. Rohan found himself among the fortunate few who received the necessary support for higher education and vocational training after turning 18.

**By providing opportunities for aged-out teens to break free from the challenges associated with leaving institutional care, you are equipping the next generation and breaking the cycle of orphanhood.**

Thank you for empowering Rohan, and others like him, enabling teens to build a brighter future!



63

Children placed  
in a foster family



517

Children  
adopted



1,370

Aged-out teens educated  
and supported toward  
independence

## From A Child's Heart

*"For me, having a family means feeling safe. I feel happy! It's so fulfilling to have someone to call Mom and Dad. My mother has a smile...that makes my day. I love her a lot."*

-Luisa, age 13

*"I wish every child would have a loving family like I do now. We are three brothers, there is a lot of fun and joy in our family. We are happy. This is what I wish for all children: to have a forever family."*

-Florin, age 11



# Why I Give



## It Takes a Village

"An orphan who has lost their parents, their home, their siblings does so much better in a home with a loving family supporting them. Every child deserves to be in a family where they have an opportunity to grow and flourish. I joyfully support A Family for Every Orphan and hope many will join me in caring for orphans worldwide."

- Janice L.

## Creating Sustainable Solutions & Lasting Improvements

"I support AFFEO, because I know the integrity and intentionality that goes into the use of every dollar given to the organization. The stories and updates throughout the years have given me a glimpse into the hearts touched by the gifts – the impact made in the lives of vulnerable children and families. I can see my gifts working in both the day to day and the bigger picture, and I've learned so much about how my donations are impacting generations to come in a positive way. I am thankful to know my support is helping image-bearers know God and his deep love for them through the work of AFFEO.

I also appreciate that AFFEO is working towards a sustainable solution in the countries where they work, making lasting improvements and changes at all levels. Knowing my gifts are not just a band-aid, but part of a country-wide solution, encourages me to continue giving and telling others about AFFEO.

AFFEO is the gospel in action, and I am grateful to be a small part of this important work."

-Kathy T.





# A Letter From the Board Chair



Greetings from our team here at A Family for Every Orphan. We extend our deepest gratitude for your generous support of these efforts. Your partnership and investment bring hope and light into the lives of those often overshadowed by darkness and adversity.

**As 2 Corinthians 4:6 reminds us, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."**

Your contribution brings promise, illuminating the path toward a brighter future for orphans and vulnerable children. Your compassion reflects the divine light of love, transforming lives and nurturing a sense of belonging. With your continued help, we will be instruments of God's grace, providing comfort, education, and loving homes for those in need. Your generosity is a great encouragement to us and a vital part of the work we participate in through our partners. We are profoundly grateful for your partnership in this vital mission.

May the hope and light you've created with your support continue to radiate through the lives of the orphans and vulnerable children we serve together.

In gratitude,

**David Melilli**

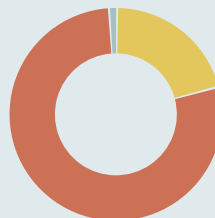
## 2023 Fiscal Year Financial Overview

**\$1,219,334**

Revenue

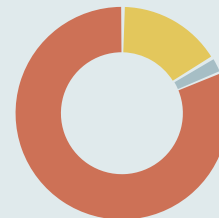
**\$1,172,894**

Expenses



### Source of Funding

- Individuals 78%
- Grants 21%
- Other 1%



### Use of Funding

- Ministry to Orphans 81%
- Supporting Services 16%
- Fundraising 3%

### Board

David Melilli, J.D., LL.M., Chair  
Melinda Mandell, Vice-Chair  
Paul Zhdan, Treasurer  
Taylor Brudos  
Anita Deyneka  
Anthony Ritchie  
Dr. Richard Scheuerman

### Advisory Council

Dr. Natalya Ageyeva  
Chelsea Elizabeth  
Karmen Friesen  
Richard T. Moore, Esq.  
Allison Pinkham  
Karl Scheuerman  
Elena G. Shipina

# Looking Ahead

*Psalm 119:105*

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path."*

This verse has resonated greatly with us and teams on the ground over the past year. While the volume of need and gravity of the situation for children can be overwhelming, The Lord continues to provide His strength, wisdom, and hope—His light—to persevere and guide each day.

While we prudently lay out plans for the next several years, we do so in a spirit of humility and obedience, with faith that He will continue to "light our path." By working closely with teams on the ground, we have strategically identified key focus areas for the next three years to address the most pressing needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

As we look forward, AFFEO will continue to focus on programs that help children remain in, reunite with, or regain a family.

## Our Priorities Over the Next Three Years:

- **Raise up** the local church and NGOs in family strengthening (*prevent*) efforts for biological, foster, and adoptive families. With this support, parents and caregivers can receive parenting resources, childcare programs, trauma training, and support services within their communities.
- **Advocate** for improved child welfare policies and systems (*protect*) to reduce the time a child languishes in an institution and improve foster care systems.
- **Equip** caregivers and child welfare leaders in trauma-informed care (*prepare*) to improve the quality of care for children with a history of trauma, destigmatize and grow hearts for an orphaned or abandoned child, and highlight the value and treasure of a child.
- **Connect** children without parental care and aged-out teens with safe and caring adults (*promote, connect*) through mentorship programs, orphan awareness campaigns and events, and support for parents navigating complex foster and adoption processes.

**With your support, we can see more children thrive in safe and loving families in 2024 and impact future generations!**



**Thank  
You!**

**"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: *to care for orphans and widows in their affliction.*" James 1:27**

Because  
Children  
Belong in  
Families



## Contact

info@afamilyforeveryorphan.org  
(360) 358-3293

## Social Media

**Facebook**  
afamilyforeveryorphan

**Instagram**  
@afamilyforeveryorphan

## Give

**A Family for Every Orphan**  
113 Cherry St #37939  
Seattle, WA 98104  
afamilyforeveryorphan.org



*All gifts are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.*

*Names and photos have been replaced for children's privacy.*