

Thank you for being a part of this Pen Pal Project!

Pen Pal Instructions:

Step #1: Friend me ([Lori Raupe](#)) and [Hastings Kajomba Bwanali](#), to make it easier to link to you on the page when we match your kids.

Step #2 Start a new post on Pen Pal Project group page, with your request to have your children matched with one of the kids from Malawi Africa, Helping Hands Orphanage (HHO). Post their name and age.

Note: When we started I was very concerned with matching the same gender and age. I have been trying to match similar ages, but didn't always have the same gender to match as Hastings adds the pictures of the kids. I asked a few Moms if they thought it would be an issue for their child to be matched with the opposite sex. The census was no it didn't matter to them. However, if you think it will matter to your little one, put that preference in the post as well and I will honor it. Just let me know.

Step #3 Lori Raupe, and [Hastings Kajomba Bwanali](#), who oversees the orphanage will look for matches.

Step #4 When Lori and Hastings have found a match, Lori will post their match on your original post, and also on with the post showing a picture of the matched kiddo from HHO.

Step #5 If you haven't heard about your match(s) message me (Lori Raupe) to give me a heads up that you want to be matched.

Step #6 Have your child write a letter to their matched pen pal, send it to:

HELPING HANDS ORPHANAGE-MALAWI, POST OFFICE BOX 50, KHONJENI, THYOLO. AFRICA. (no zip code)

I believe it takes about \$1.20 to mail a letter to Malawi. If the letter is over 1oz, it would take more postage. My best guesstimate is 3 Forever Stamps.

Put your address on the letter, as the return address. Then Hastings can make sure your child get's a return letter addressed to your child at your address.

Step #7 Wait for a return letter. As we know our world is fast paced, the mail not so much. LOL. There are valuable lessons this will teach the kids, patience is one of them. I know, when you child get's a letter in return it will be a great experience, it helps their writing skills, it fills a little but of time, good stuff for sure.

## Step #8 Do it again!

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NOTE: I found this information about COVID-19 Precautions. I'm no expert about this, but here is what I found:

### **How To Disinfect Your Mail**

Experts understand that mail disinfections can do more for your mental health than your physical health during this pandemic.

"I think if you start thinking about money and mail and things like that, you can almost sort of immobilize yourself, which I don't think is a good idea," Anthony Fauci, Director of NIAID, said in a [CNN town hall](#).

Dr. Elizabeth Scott, Co-Director of the Undergraduate Public Health program and Simmons Center for Hygiene and Health in Home and Community at Simmons College, points to the study in the New England Journal of Medicine as a cause of concern, citing the virus does appear to have a lifespan of 24 hours on cardboard.

"I am opening the packages on the floor and quickly putting the cardboard in the recycling/trash and then immediately washing my hands very thoroughly. Leaving the package on the porch or on the floor for 24h is also an option, followed by the routine I described," Scott said in an email interview.

Here's what experts recommend to kill off any traces of the coronavirus on your mail and packages:

- Set aside mail for 24 hours. Designate a corner or room for new packages and leave them isolated for at least 24 hours.
- Always wash your hands and refrain from touching your face after opening packages.
- Wait for packages/mail to be left a safe distance away before collecting them.

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Regardless of disinfecting your mail, the CDC and WHO recommends washing your hands for at least 20 seconds, refrain from touching your face, keep informed of shelter in place and social distancing protocols, and stay at home for 14 days if you experience any flu-like symptoms or have come in contact with anyone with these symptoms.

**About Helping Hands Orphanage:** It was 2014, and a group of my high school girl friends decided to get together in Old Town Temecula (Southern California) for lunch. It was a very long enjoyable lunch. Each of us sharing what we have been doing for the last 42 years, well we hit a few high points. Dawn Elders (Strickland) had shared about her work around the world helping people as a Nurse Practitioner. She spoke about a trip she was going to make to Helping Hands Orphanage, in Malawi Africa. Her passion for this place in Africa was evident that day, she had made many trips before, maybe 14 or 15 at that time. Something about that day, I knew I would be connected somehow. Although the timing was not right for me to go on the next trip, my heart had been drawn to the possibility of going in the future.

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After our lunch I “met” Hastings Kajomba Bwanali, through Dawn, on Facebook. He is an amazing family man, he and his wife Simona, have two beautiful daughters, Hope and Grace. They live in Blantyre, Malawi. I later discovered that HHO has 4 feeding sights for about 500 kids, most of which are orphaned. In addition to the kids, there are about 300 elderly folks that HHO helps by feeding them.

Timing is everything when it comes to projects, connections, and things that I believe God designs for us. At that time I was grieving the loss of my dad, and my heart was open to helping people. This is what I had learned to do when I am hurting, help someone and then it takes the focus off you and what you are going through.

Years earlier I lost my 16 year old daughter Jennifer (Jenna) in a car accident. In that dark and difficult place of grief and despair, God showed me how to share hope. It's curious to think about it now because at that time I really had lost almost all of my mine. My pain was so immense. But through helping other parents who had lost their kids, meeting them online on a grief website and with Compassionate Friends, I started to see a ray of hope that I would heal my broken heart. It took a long time to emerge from that place, but seeds were planted, and somehow God causes them to be nurtured along the way. I was a changed person, and since then I have looked for ways to help others.

What Dawn did that day was plant a seed and it landed in my heart. I recall her telling me that on the first trip she took to Malawi, as her plane left, she knew she would be back because she had left a piece of her heart there. I wanted to experience something like that in my lifetime, she inspired me. Since that day, having lunch, I have supported HHO. I haven't always had money to send, but I have a voice to share, and I know my daily prayers have helped. I made a sign that says, “I work for food.” I speak at events, and often I hold up my sign, it get's attention. No, I'm good and I don't need food, but these kids do. So I tell people how they can help them as I go about spreading the word.

A few weeks back, I woke up at about 2am thinking what could I do to help the kids at home due to COVID-19. I believe God prompted me to do a pen pal project with the kids that might be connected to me on Facebook and HHO kids. I didn't know how it would work, never did something like that before. But I know, when God gives you an idea, you should act on it.

Thanks Moms for having your kiddos write letters! I can't wait for them to receive responses from their pen pals. When I was a kid, like 100 years ago now (ok I'm 66 so not 100 years) I had a pen pal. I loved writing my little heart out, and getting letters back. My hope this is an amazing experience for your kids, and also the kids at HHO, it is a blessing to me, to see good come out of that little idea. <3

I know you will want to know, it takes only about \$15-18 dollars (US) to feed one of the kids in Malawi for a month. Every penny helps them, through many people, prayers and

Dated 4-21-2020

encouragement, and the donations, HHO does a beautiful work to show support and love for these kids who are so needy.

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