



## **Soweto Orphanage Project**

### **About the Project**

Soweto is a sprawling community under the municipality of Johannesburg. With the drastic rise in HIV and AIDS related deaths amongst young parents, and the prevalence of poverty within Soweto, children's projects in the community are under a lot of strain: thousands of children to care for and too few services available. One unofficial report says that almost half a million children in Soweto live below the poverty line and are in need of social service support.

This orphanage can house up to 90 children at a time, many of whom have been abandoned, neglected or abused. Volunteers are crucial to efforts here, as the orphanage does not have the funding to fully staff the project. Your efforts make all the difference in the day-to-day lives of the children here, and while it can be a very emotional experience, it's one we continue to find incredibly fulfilling.

The orphanage project is quite special in that it puts you directly into the lives of local South Africans. Volunteers are responsible for purchasing groceries (funds provided in program fee) and caring for themselves in the cottage for the duration of their volunteer stay, giving the project a feeling of independent-living. Here you get to see first-hand the struggles faced by many South Africans living in impoverished areas, and learn about the efforts being made in communities to overcome these struggles.

### **Necessary Experience**

While you do not need extensive experience working with or teaching kids, we do look for volunteers with some relevant background – this could be as simple as caring for younger siblings or cousins in years past, baby-sitting, or teaching and caring for children in formal institutions. Most important is for our volunteers to have an open heart and desire to help. Please note that we do require all orphanage volunteers to undergo background checks prior to application approval.

### **Activities & Typical Day**

Volunteers begin their mornings with breakfast in the volunteer cottage (self-serve) and work in the nursery feeding and bathing the youngest children. Lunch is taken according to the children's schedule and when they take their afternoon nap. You'll be in continual communication with the orphanage staff to see where you're most needed throughout the day, and when you are done each afternoon. Duties each day may include but are not limited to:

- Food preparation
- General care & personal interaction to aid in social development
- Homework assistance
- Basic building and maintenance work (general repairs and upkeep as needed)
- Playing games and offering fun programs for the children
- Help with hygiene & health education



### **Accommodation & Food**

Volunteers stay on orphanage grounds in the volunteer cottage set aside for them. The volunteer cottage has three shared bedrooms with nine beds total in addition to the self-service kitchen and full bathroom. Volunteers are provided a preloaded card each month in order to purchase food from the local grocery store. Anything over and above this is paid by volunteers directly.

***\*\*The legal drinking age in South Africa is 18. If you choose to drink, please do so responsibly and in moderation. Alcohol is not permitted on orphanage grounds.***