

How to Become an iCARE Sponsor

The fact that you've chosen to come to this page may be ample evidence to you that you are interested in being a part of the iCARE Ministry of the Shenandoah Presbytery and the Illubabor Bethel Synod, in Ethiopia.

Prior to determining if you wish to be a sponsor it is important for you, or your organization, to fully understand the commitment you are making and the guidelines for sponsorship. **Please read carefully this entire document** These guidelines are important and necessary. If you complete an application you will agree that you have read and agree to abide by these guidelines in the interest of all the children at the Gore Home.

Currently we need sponsors for at least 8 new children.

If you or your group is interested in sponsoring a child, please complete the enclosed application and mail it to the address indicated on the application. Your name will be put in a pending list of possible sponsors. When an opportunity for a new sponsorship becomes available and a new sponsor is sought, the steering committee will pull from the list of existing and pending sponsors.

You may also support this ministry in two other important ways:

1. Pray for the children, the sponsors, the leadership and staff of the Gore Home, the iCARE Steering Committee, and the ministry as a whole.
2. You may contribute to the "Gore Home Discretionary Fund." This is a fund maintained in Presbytery that is used for special projects, sponsor information and other special needs of the sponsored children.

Letters to Sponsored Children

The child you sponsor will recognize you as a very important individual, or group, in his or her life. We encourage correspondence between sponsor and sponsored child. It is an important way to let these sponsored children know that they matter. Never underestimate the power of correspondence to the child you sponsor or the power of the correspondence from the child to the sponsoring individual or group.

Below are some important guidelines that we ask sponsors to follow when writing their sponsored child. Many of the ideas below have been gleaned from the work of Compassion International and Christian Children's Fund. These are two organizations with long and successful histories of supporting children through sponsorship programs.

POSITIVE LETTER WRITING IDEAS

1. Keep your letters short and simple; one side of one page is long enough
2. Write about your family and children
3. Describe your work, hobbies or favorite pastimes
4. Write about your relation to Jesus
5. Write about your church, its activities and your involvement
6. Write about special holidays or celebrations

7. Write about where you live, the climate, aspects of nature or weather
8. Ask your sponsored child about his or her life and perhaps the types of things above

Would you like to work some Oromiffa into your letters, the native language of your sponsored child? Oromiffa is the native language of most, but not all of the iCARE children at the Gore Home. Request an instruction sheet of the most common phrases and words.

THINGS TO AVOID

1. Writing about material possessions (for example, the size of your home and kind of car you drive)
2. Avoid discussions about politics
3. Do not ever indicate that you want the sponsored child to visit the US or ultimately immigrate here
4. Use of slang or colloquialisms may be difficult to interpret and understand
5. Avoid discussion of gifts. If you are asked by your sponsored child for something specific, we suggest you explain that when you entered into a sponsorship agreement you were asked not to send gifts to individual children.
6. Unless you have made arrangements to do so, be careful not to indicate to the sponsored child that you are going to visit them or may visit them.

Your letter will probably take 20 - 30 days to reach your sponsored child in Ethiopia. It will then need to be translated. You will want to address letters as follows:

(Name of child)
c/o Kes Ayana Hedu
Gore Bethel Home for Children
PO Box 60
Gore, Ethiopia

Inside the envelope address the letter clearly to your sponsored child. Kes Ayana, the Director of the Gore Home, will translate the letter, or have it translated, and give it to your sponsored child. The average letter will cost about \$1.00 to send.

Sending letters presents a constant challenge for the staff resources of the Gore Home. The actual number of letters each sponsor will receive in a year will fluctuate.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When someone agrees to sponsor a child through iCARE, they sign an application that states they have read, understand and agree to abide by the "recommendations" regarding gifts and letter writing in the interest of all iCARE children.

These guidelines are not in place in an effort to be politically correct, stylish or for any reason other than that they protect the children.

In the past, children in this home have suffered substantially due to well meaning sponsors who did not follow these guidelines. These guidelines were developed based on years of experience. Please follow them in the interest of your sponsored child and all children at the Gore Home or other location of your sponsored child.

Gifts for Children

Gifts of any significant material value can be quite disruptive in the Gore Home. Many sponsors spend more on a single gift for their own child or a loved one than the average annual salary (around \$135 US dollars) of an Ethiopian. iCARE children will have very little in terms of material and monetary possessions. A material or monetary gift would likely create immediate disparity and problems in the community. It is important that sponsors follow the guidelines below for the benefit of their sponsored child and all the children of the home and community where the sponsored child resides.

You can enclose small paper items such as pictures, greeting cards, book marks or pages from a coloring book with your letters.

With your annual sponsorship payment, you may include up to \$50 that will be placed in a gift fund and distributed equitably among all children in the Home. The amount given each child in the distribution will not likely exceed approximately \$10US. The funds are most often used by the children to buy clothing and other practical items. Any excess funds in the gift account will be used to benefit the children of the Home at the discretion of IBS administration

Making Payments

Instructions for making payments (please share with your church treasurer)

Money to sponsor a child through the iCARE project will typically be processed from the sponsoring party, through their church to their church treasurer.

Your treasurer will identify your contribution in the "Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO)" line of the church's monthly remittance form. The treasurer will identify the ECO as "iCARE" and will list the names of individuals or groups whose funding is included from each church. Checks should be made out to Shenandoah Presbytery with "iCARE" written in the memo section. This will insure we know that the funding for your sponsored child has arrived.

If you choose, you may send your funds directly to the Shenandoah Presbytery Office using the following address:

iCARE
Shenandoah Presbytery
1111 North Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

APPLICATION TO SPONSOR A CHILD THROUGH iCARE

Thank you for your decision to sponsor a child through the Illubabor Children Agape REsponse. Your sponsorship will mean a great deal in the life of a child in Ethiopia, and your own. Please send this completed application to the iCARE Recruiter as follows:

Att: iCARE Chairperson
Presbytery of Shenandoah
1111 North Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

(please print neatly or type)

1. Name of individual or group wishing to sponsor child: _____

Address of sponsor: _____

2. Phone/E-mail/fax of sponsor: _____

3. If group, name of contact person: _____

4. Name of sponsor's Church: _____

5. Number of Children in Illubabor you wish to sponsor: _____

_____ (name of sponsor/individual or group) would like to sponsor a child in Illubabor, Ethiopia, through the Illubabor Children Agape REsponse (iCARE). I recognize that as a child's sponsor, I, or we, accept the responsibility to financially support this child at a rate of \$500 per year, payable in October or the first half of November of each year to the Shenandoah Presbytery. This sponsorship *pays for the following calendar year support of the sponsored child.*

If for any reason I am unable to maintain this sponsorship in the future, I will notify iCARE Chairperson, at the name and address stated above, as soon as possible but no later than September 1, of the year I wish to discontinue. This will enable the identification of another sponsor. I have read, understand, and agree to abide by recommendations regarding gifts and letter writing in the interest of all iCARE children.

Sponsor's Signature

Date