

# Wisconsin State Journal

## THESE KIDS, LIKE, HELPED THESE OTHER KIDS WITH AIDS?

Date: Thursday, June 10, 2004

Section: LOCAL/WISCONSIN

Edition: ALL

Page: B1

Type: Column

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You think your child brought a lot of stuff home from school?

Sadie Bazur-Leidy and her girlfriends brought home 58 backpacks from O'Keeffe Middle School, 510 South Thornton Ave., this week. And the supplies to fill them.

Not only that, this week, as school gets out, they are looking forward to when the backpacks are in use in the fall.

Sadie, 13, is a volleyball nut and eighth-grader. Her mom, Betsy, is a nurse. One day her mom ...

"She read an article in the newspaper about this orphanage with AIDS kids who weren't allowed by the government to go to school? But the law changed and now they are allowed? And so, wouldn't it be really cool if we asked a couple of my friends to help?" said Sadie, almost in one breath.

Sadie recruited her friend Abbie Marie Hill, and they were joined by Nev Dzamonja.

Next breath.

"First we talked to the principal at school. Pat Delmore? He said OK and we would get him the times and stuff. We e-mailed the orphanage to see if it was OK and they said it would be great? So then Abbie and I planned how we would put posters and stuff around the school and make announcements on the morning announcements. And we went and talked to all the homerooms in the sixth and seventh and eighth grades? Then Abbie made these lists of what we needed, notebooks and folders and calculators and rulers, and put them on boxes, and we put a box in each home room.

"At first we checked every day and then we checked once a week, for about three weeks-ish?"

"And we took it all to the science lab and stored it there. And Mr. Morgan helped a lot. And now it's almost all at my friend Abbie's house? On the back porch?" (That would be Arthur Morgan, the youth resource director at O'Keeffe and all-around nice guy.)

For backpacks, the girls contacted Lands' End and JanSport, "to see if they had anything, you know, second-hand? Not perfect? And Lands' End said they would be happy to donate and they gave us 56 backpacks. New. And JanSport donated two. They just kind of like showed up as a random package in the mail at school?"

Then they got stuck. How to get all the stuff to Nyumbani Orphanage, Karen, Kenya? ([www.nyumbani.org](http://www.nyumbani.org)).

With help from orphanage sponsors and contacts in the United States, the girls found the best bet is to pack everything and send it by regular mail to New York, where it will be sent by ship with other materials in a container headed for the orphanage. The girls only have to come up with the postage money from Madison to New York. (A couple of groups have promised to defray some of the mailing costs, though that is still uncertain.)

Sadie said she and her friends and their parents will fill each pack with the required supplies, based on the ages of the children in the orphanage.

"We will count up the stuff we have and divide that, and we got the names and grades of the kids at the orphanage, so we have to figure out stuff like that, who gets the crayons and things."

Right now, Sadie is filled with the sort of bubbling, honest goodwill you wish you could bottle.

"It was just so cool, to be helping an orphanage in Africa. So many of the kids actually donated stuff," she said.

The story does not end on Abbie's back porch, where this weekend the group will be packing the school materials. The orphanage in Kenya is a lot closer to Madison than the group first thought.

Last week Sadie's mom, Betsy, was reading her nursing magazine and there was a photo of one of her friends, Susan Dillon Gold, a registered nurse at the UW Hospital Adolescent Clinic. Gold had just returned from a couple of months working at, of all places, the Nyumbani orphanage for HIV-positive children.

Gold went there last fall.

"There are 93 children there, from infant to about 19 or 20 years old. I was based in the orphanage, and two weeks at a mission hospital, and three weeks in the slums of Nairobi. These kids have nothing, their parents are dead. They sleep in their clothes," she said.

"Since I got back, I have been spreading the word. It is a sort of obligation, if you have seen that, to come back and share your story. It is so easy to think this is not connected to us, that it is not real because it is on the other side of the world.

Sadie and her friends recently received a PRIDE award -- "Pediatricians Recognizing Individuals Demonstrating Excellence" -- a fact she neglected to include in three conversations about the project.

"Right now I feel so good that we, these little kids, actually got this to happen," Sadie said.

"I feel like I want to do it again."

Funny, how when someone says you can't forget the children, it also means that the children won't forget, either?

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