



Coptic Orphans

Protecting our Precious Children

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

# Message from Nermien Riad

## Founder and Executive Director

Dear friends,

Each child is unique and beautiful in his or her own way – a true gift from the Lord – and we are tasked with protecting these precious gifts. That has been the foundation of Coptic Orphans’ mission since 1988, to help the most vulnerable children in Egypt transform into strong, well-rounded adults who will continue in God’s work. We endeavor to protect the rights of each child: to education, to health, and to safety.

**With that in mind, this year we made the decision to invest our time and efforts in child abuse prevention.**

When a child is abused – be it physically, emotionally or sexually – they struggle to understand why this is happening to them. They begin to suspect that, when love is absent from their home, so is God. How can we, as Copts, allow this?

We cannot accept any status quo that denies the reality of Christ’s message: **“Child, I am with you.”**

We are so grateful for how many of you have met our direct call to action. When you write to us and ask “Nermien, what can I do to help?” you have chosen to learn more about this issue. When you call and insist on giving a birthday gift to your child and, most importantly, writing a heartfelt note, you demonstrate that you want to protect what is most precious: the innocence of our Egyptian children.

Now 55,000 children’s lives have been dramatically changed through the programs we have highlighted in this report. Picture it: That’s enough children to fill a soccer stadium.



With your help, these children have rediscovered their dignity and self-worth. Now imagine who these children will grow up to be and the amazing things they will do for other children who come from similar circumstances.

Because of you, they will be hopeful, curious, intelligent, articulate, determined, and most of all compassionate. So thank you for the blessings you have given and most of all, for the faith you have shown in us. I hope this year’s Annual Report brings you joy and confidence that Christ is indeed present, and He will protect every child that trusts in Him.

One Body in Christ,  
Nermien Riad

# Who We Are

The word “orphan” usually calls to mind images of children languishing in institutions without any living relatives. The truth of the matter, however, can sometimes be just as heartbreaking – in countries like Egypt, many orphanages are filled with fatherless children whose widowed mothers cannot afford to feed them. Coptic Orphans seeks to rectify this grave injustice, keeping families together while empowering both mother and child through education. We are an award-winning Christian development organization that has transformed the lives of more than 55,000 children in Egypt since 1988. Coptic Orphans works through grassroots partners and Church-based volunteer networks to strengthen local communities for sustainable impact. By connecting the Coptic Diaspora with Egypt, we leverage professional expertise and global resources for the benefit of the homeland.

### Our Mission:

Coptic Orphans’ mission is to unlock the God-given potential of the most vulnerable children in Egypt through the power of education.

### Our Vision:

A peaceful, prosperous Egypt where children thrive, and a vibrant, engaged Diaspora.



## Board of Directors

### United States

Andrew Abdalla  
Mona Azer  
Hany Kadry Dimian  
Kamal Ibrahim  
Nermien Riad  
Raouf Youssef

### Canada

Amgad Bassili  
Mark Nakhla  
Hani Sharobim

### Australia

Andrew Abdalla  
Rhonda Farag  
Ben Morcos  
Basem Morris

# 2019 Highlights



### Financial Accountability Award

For 9 years in a row, Charity Navigator has awarded us their highest 4-star rating – a feat matched by only 3% of charities in America.



### Future Leaders Scholarship

45 exceptional high school graduates, who have demonstrated advance academic skills and leadership potential, have been awarded Coptic Orphans' Future Leadership Scholarship.



### Fruitful Lent Season

402 children found sponsors during the Lent season, as generous Copts chose to help the neediest of their brothers and sisters during this most sacred time of the year.



### Sponsor Visits in Egypt

150 sponsors visited their children in Egypt, further cementing the bond between sponsor and child while creating memories to last a lifetime.



## Los Angeles Gala

We presented Dr. Raymond Schinazi with the 2019 Coptic Orphans Leading by Example award at our Gala in Los Angeles. Few people have done more for the homeland than the Egyptian-born Dr. Schinazi, who discovered a cure for hepatitis C. Egypt has the highest prevalence of hepatitis C in the world, with an estimated 12 million people infected. Dr. Schinazi also demonstrated a tremendous sense of compassion, offering his drug Sovaldi at just 1% of the cost to Egypt.

Dr. Schinazi was introduced by keynote speaker Dr. Andrew Abraham, Founder of the health supplement company Orgain and one of the most distinguished Coptic physicians in the country. Inspired by both doctors, supporters at the Gala donated a total of \$178,000 for the more than 600 *Not Alone* children who have lost one or both parents due to hepatitis C. Both doctors were impressive examples of the Gala's theme of The Good and Faithful Servant.

*“Learn to do good; Seek justice, rebuke the oppressor. Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17 NKJV)*

# Plight of Children in Egypt



Sadly, corporal punishment remains a standard practice through much of the world, including Egypt. Research confirms that physical punishment is still seen as a legitimate form of discipline by parents, teachers, religious leaders and even by children themselves.

According to a survey by the Egyptian Foundation for Advancement of the Childhood Condition, 93% of children between one and 14 years are exposed to violent disciplinary practices.

Oftentimes parents who admitted to using violence against their children didn't even believe it to be effective; rather, it made the children themselves more violent and aggressive. These parents and children are both trapped in a harmful cycle of traditional practices, and they don't see a way to break free.

Meanwhile, sexual abuse continues to be a critical problem, though given the secrecy and shame around this issue, the children are understandably terrified of speaking about their experiences. The most common forms of sexual violence reported by the girls and boys surveyed were verbal harassment followed by sexual touching.

Egypt also has the highest number of females between the ages of 15-49 who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting: 27 million out of 125 million worldwide. According to a 2015 UNICEF report, the vast majority of girls in Assiut (94%) had been cut, followed by Cairo (65%) and Alexandria (39%), despite the penal code criminalizing the practice.

It is essential that we educate parents in a respectful, culturally-sensitive manner in order to end these horrible practices.

# Results of Child Protection



Coptic Orphans took a comprehensive approach to implementing our child protection initiative.

We began by holding workshops and culturally-appropriate trainings to promote healthy behaviors for widowed mothers in every community where Coptic Orphans is present. In total, 7,088 mothers attended at least one of our 209 workshops.

The mothers who benefited from these workshops told us that the workshops helped them learn how to manage the stress of raising children alone. They adopted child-rearing practices that promote self-esteem and happiness in children.

“What did you do to my mother?” one bewildered child asked. “She’s no longer hitting me!”

We also held a new “Walking with the Wounded Child” training session aimed to equip each Volunteer Representative with counseling skills to serve as an emotional first aid provider to traumatized children.

This training utilized both scientific and spiritual approaches to help families deal with their trauma in a Christian setting; for example, using the story of Jesus and the leper (Mark 1:40-45) to show that Christ accepts even those who have been rejected by society.

Our Volunteer Reps reported that the children who received encouragement at home built confidence and excelled in school. They learned how to make friends and interact with their peers without feeling insecure or inferior to children whose fathers are alive.

# NOT ALONE



**11,180**  
**CHILDREN**  
**IMPACTED**

Through Coptic Orphans' flagship *Not Alone* program, 11,180 children throughout Egypt not only broke through the cycle of poverty, but also flourished.



The *Not Alone* program transforms the lives of orphaned Coptic children by making it possible for them to stay in school, lift themselves out of poverty, and succeed long-term. The goal of *Not Alone* is to provide each child with access to the very best education, nurture the spirit of volunteerism, and develop a well-rounded character.

In 2019, the program assisted thousands of children like Merna, who had struggled to read in primary school. She transformed into an exceptional student who earned a seat in the incoming class of freshman at the British University in Cairo. It granted agency to mothers like Wafaa, who now leads meetings for other women at her church, to impart the knowledge and skills she learned from attending workshops with other widowed mothers through *Not Alone*. It relied on the passion of heroes like Saad, one of the hundreds of volunteer Representatives who committed their lives to the stewardship and mentorship of each child's physical, psychological and spiritual needs.

Empowered with the means necessary for success, the children are graduating at higher rates than many of their peers in Egypt and, more importantly, growing into well-rounded adults who are happily giving back to their communities as they learn the importance of volunteerism.

2,081



newly enrolled children

4,370



letters written from  
sponsors to children

333



university graduates

505



high school graduates

# VALUABLE GIRL



**1,800**  
**GIRLS**  
**EMPOWERED**

The *Valuable Girl Project* equipped girls and young women with leadership abilities and study skills to excel in their education, impact their families and influence their societies.



The two-year program empowers girls and young women to break the cycles of poverty and segregation by tackling key problems including early child marriage, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and gender disparity.

We partnered with local Community Development Associations which implemented the program, bringing together Christian and Muslim females in a safe space through a Big Sister/Little Sister mentorship model.

At each session, the girls learned mutual respect for one another, realized their self-worth, developed skills and spearheaded activities to tackle community problems head-on. These girl-led initiatives included building special-needs classes in primary schools, holding anti-harassment workshops and painting local train stations. *The Valuable Girl Project* Big and Little Sisters improved their self-confidence, became cognizant of their rights, and now have a higher chance of remaining in school. Once given the opportunity to value their self-worth, and that of their sisters, the girls gradually diminished the notions that once divided them and their communities.

1,600



mentoring sessions per week

16



Community Development Association partners

14,083



townspeople impacted

63



community initiatives

# SERVE TO LEARN



**1,225**  
**LIVES**  
**TOUCHED**

Volunteers from around the world journeyed to Egypt and spent three amazing weeks teaching and building bonds with 1,225 of the most incredible children on the planet.

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Serve to Learn is a unique experience that gives individuals an opportunity to volunteer in Egypt, and build loving bonds with the children we serve, their families, and communities. Volunteers visit homes just as Christ served, teaching English and a love of education while inspiring children that learning can be fun.

In 2019 we hosted three Serve to Learn trips (called Lammetna in Arabic) where volunteers, mostly Coptic youth from the diaspora, served children in rural communities throughout Egypt. Volunteers taught the children English and health education through engaging activities during their daytime sessions. During the evening, volunteers visited the children and their families in their homes, forming deeper bonds with their students. When they weren't teaching, the volunteers were taken on field trips to see the many wondrous sites of Egypt.

Serve to Learn plays a great part in preserving Coptic identity in younger generations. The program unites them with their brothers and sisters in the motherland, and affirms for Copts all over the world that though we may be scattered among many nations, we remain united through One Body in Christ.

57



overseas volunteers  
this year

18



years of service

382



volunteers since  
inception

11,620



children served since  
inception

# Love is the Best Teacher

Magda, a widow living in Upper Egypt, lost her husband Refaat just three years into their marriage. They had twins and Magda was still pregnant with her youngest girl Lucy at the time. The first two years after Refaat's death were among the most difficult she could remember.



The pressures of raising young children alone were more than she could bear. Not only was she responsible for feeding her children and maintaining the home, she had to do all of the other duties that her husband used to handle. Magda got little sleep and every day brought with it new worries. She prayed to God for help but with little support from her husband's family or her own sister living far away, Magda fell into despair. She constantly worried that something would happen to one of her children, particularly her daughter Lucy.

Four-year-old Lucy loved to play with the older children in the neighborhood. On several occasions, she came home with her clothes stained, muddied, and torn from rough play with other children. Magda chided Lucy again and again, but her youngest proved very stubborn.

**"You have to listen! You cannot play in the street anymore!" Magda yelled.**

Lucy looked at her mother, turned her face and giggled. When Magda tried to spank her, Lucy ran around the house screaming, often lashing out against her brothers.

Exasperated, Magda resorted to very harsh disciplinary methods. She would not only beat Lucy, but she would sometimes grab the hose and hit Lucy when the girl's behavior became unmanageable. **This is how Magda's own mother punished her as a child.**

Magda felt Lucy was disobedient and that harsher punishment would be more effective. Magda insisted Lucy had to learn to be afraid of her mother and so with time, Lucy did. Still, the child's behavior did not improve.

Then one afternoon, Lucy's Sunday School teacher, Sarah, introduced Magda to a Coptic Orphans field coordinator, Michael, who encouraged Magda to enroll her children in the *Not Alone* program. By February of the following year, Magda joined the Coptic Orphans workshops for mothers. She was part of a large group of mothers who attended the Child Protection trainings.

Over time, Magda developed a very close relationship with Nabil, Coptic Orphans volunteer Rep, Nabil, who was teaching the workshop. He had four children of his own. Magda confided in Nabil and shared her concerns about her daughter, Lucy.

**"Nabil, I don't know what to do with my daughter. She is more work than the two boys combined! If I don't hit her, how will she learn?" Magda asked.**

Nabil replied, "Magda, I know what I'm about to say will sound strange because it's not how we were taught by our parents in the old days, but I promise you - believe me - the best teacher is love."

Nabil never judged Magda. Instead, he acknowledged that beating children is very common in Egypt, but also described how unnecessarily cruel punishments cause emotional scars and may deform the child's personality. Nabil made it his priority to support Magda in ways that would be helpful, rather than intrusive.

With the support of regular meetings with the other mothers, Magda memorized the new approaches and checked herself anytime she was harsh or cruel. She rewarded each of her little ones, especially Lucy, for good behavior, using a star system and teaching them games that emphasized polite manners.

Within weeks, she noticed something different about her little ones: Lucy and her brothers wanted to be rewarded, and in a short time they learned to play nicely together.

One summer afternoon, Lucy traipsed into the house and then ran to her mother, pointing at her clothes and how she had been careful to keep them clean and without holes. Magda could hardly believe this was the same child.

Lucy lovingly embraced her mother instead of running away from her in fear as she had done so many times before.

The following Sunday, Magda told Nabil, **"I decided that regardless of what my daughter does, I won't use those old ways of discipline anymore."**

Finally receiving the support she had missed in the early years of her widowhood, Magda felt like a new person.

She walked down the street with her head held high and her happy children at her side. She greeted the neighbors without any sense of embarrassment or shame about her children's appearance or behavior.

As Lucy gripped her mother's hand, Magda looked up at the blue sky and gave thanks. **She believed God's hand had touched her and the future now held hope for her little family.**

# Testimonials

"We need more programs like this at the grassroots level; we have forgotten how to love each other."

- His Holiness Pope Tawadros II -

"The topic of sexual abuse and sex education was forbidden in our conservative family. Attending the workshop helped me start a dialogue with my daughter, who opened up to me about an incident of sexual abuse. This conversation helped her feel comfortable to open up to me and trust that I would listen."

- Mother who attended child protection workshop -

"Coptic Orphans' service is holistic and integrated - meaning that their focus isn't just on loving and nurturing the child, but also on education and spirituality. They also do a great job with activities related to the child's development. They are raising children who are well-rounded, unshaken by the world, and firmly rooted in their identities."

- H.E. Metropolitan Benjamin of Monufia -

"They make us feel like we are part of a family: We have people who support us and encourage us when we succeed and people who cheer us on even when we fail. Coptic Orphans is the best family!"

- Girgis, Future Leaders Scholar -

"Coptic Orphans made up for a lot of our losses. They helped build our character. They gave us hope for a better future. They encouraged me to think about my future and what I can become. I want to go to medical school. I want to become an orthopedic surgeon like the one who treats me."

- Mina, Not Alone program participant -

"It seems like a lot to a kid - three weeks of your time when you can be doing anything else. I thought the same. But you get so much more than you give. Honestly, it was the best decision I've made."

- Robert Gorgy, UK, Serve to Learn Volunteer -



"Only 3% of charities evaluated by Charity Navigator have received at least nine consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Coptic Orphans outperforms most other charities in America," - Charity Navigator CEO Michael Thatcher



"Congratulations on achieving a Platinum level GuideStar Nonprofit Profile. This is the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar and is a testament to your organization's commitment to transparency." - Team GuideStar



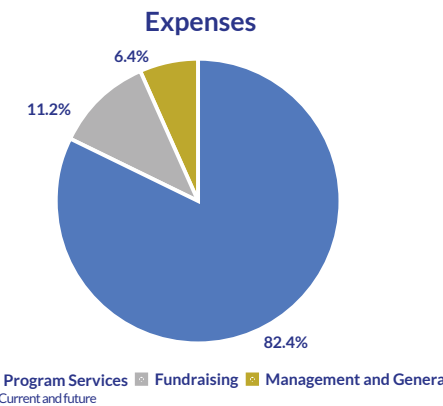
"This badge allows you to share with the world that your organization has been vetted as one of the Top-Ranked organizations on GlobalGiving." - GlobalGiving Team

# Statement of Activities

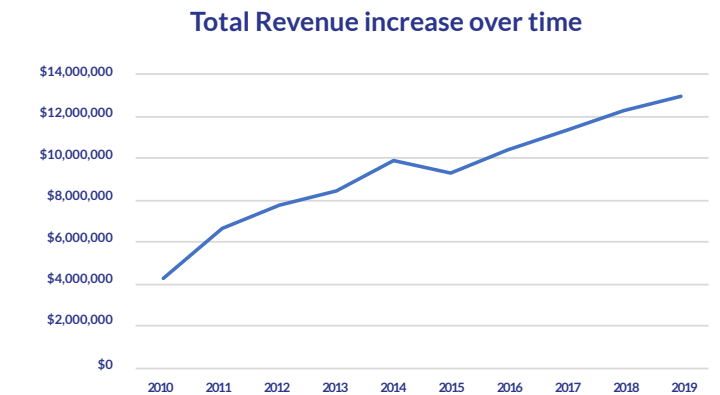
For the years ended December 31, 2019 and 2018

	2019	2018
<b>Revenue and Support</b>		
Contribution	\$ 12,395,062	\$ 11,830,841
Net Investment Income	517,218	439,888
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>12,912,280</b>	<b>12,270,729</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Program services</b>		
Not Alone	7,455,111	6,218,382
Community development and other	456,076	373,336
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>7,911,187</b>	<b>6,591,718</b>
<b>Support services</b>		
Management and general	800,168	667,231
Fundraising	1,390,485	1,155,514
<b>Total support services</b>	<b>2,190,653</b>	<b>1,822,745</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>10,101,840</b>	<b>8,414,463</b>
<b>Other Non-Operating Income</b>		
Net unrealized and realized gains on investments	2,652,888	(844,171)
Change on foreign currency valuation and other gains	287,286	(457,430)
<b>Total other non-operating income</b>	<b>2,940,174</b>	<b>(1,301,601)</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Change in Net Assets	5,750,614	2,554,665
Net Assets, Beginning Of Year	24,837,672	22,283,007
<b>Net Assets, End Of Year*</b>	<b>\$ 30,588,286</b>	<b>\$ 24,837,672</b>

\* Because Coptic Orphans places the highest value on serving the children despite any crisis that may strike Egypt or the Coptic diaspora, we maintain a nearly 12-month reserve of operating expenses (included in "Net Assets"). This ensures we will be there for the children no matter what.



For every dollar you donate, more than 82 cents goes to the children of Egypt. We use only 11.2% of the money for fundraising and 6.4% for management and administration.



While Coptic Orphans' revenue has shown tremendous growth, we have never lost focus on maintaining responsible stewardship over the resources entrusted to us. Our financial accountability and reporting processes have been praised consistently over the years.

Audited by UHY, LLP Certified Public Accountants. Audited financial statements are public and available upon request.





# Coptic Orphans

Impacting hundreds and hundreds of villages



*From all of us at Coptic Orphans, we thank you very much  
May God bless you!*

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