

He Shoots, Africa Scores:

A kid from Arizona brings hope to orphans in Zambia.

By Claudia Atticot

Time for Kids

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In 2004, AFTER WATCHING A VIDEO about the millions of African children who had lost their parents to AIDS, Austin Gutwein, then 10, vowed to bring them hope. “I didn’t know what AIDS was,” he told TFK. “I just knew that I had to do something.” HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. People get HIV through bodily fluids, including blood. AIDS destroys the immune system, which helps the body fight off illness. There is no cure for HIV or AIDS, but there is medication that can help people live longer.

On World AIDS Day 2004, Austin did something for the young victims of HIV/AIDS. He spent seven hours shooting 2,057 free throws, one for each child who would be orphaned that day. He signed up sponsors and raised \$3,000. With the help of the relief organization World Vision, the money went to support eight orphans. The next year, 1,000 kids in five states joined Austin. This year, kids in at least 26 states and four European countries have signed up to take part in Austin’s Hoops of Hope campaign.

In 2006, the program raised \$85,000 to help build a school in a small town in Zambia. The Johnathan Sim Legacy School will educate 1,000 students this year. Austin visited the school last month. “It was amazing to actually feel the hands of the people you’ve helped,” he says. “It is something I cannot even describe.” This year, Austin hopes to raise \$150,000 to build a medical lab in the town.

Austin is calling on kids to take part on December 1. “You don’t have to be an adult to make a difference,” he says. “You don’t even have to be a great basketball player.” To help, go to hoopsofhope.org.