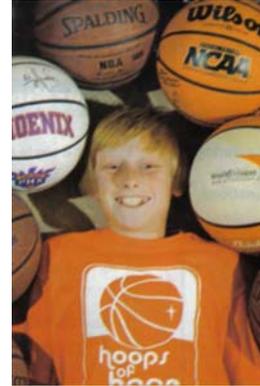


Slam Dunk: Teen shoots hoops to raise money for orphans in Africa.

Weekly Reader News, Senior Edition
May 2, 2008, Issue 27, Volume 86

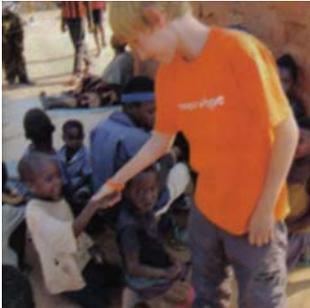


Austin Gutwein once spent six hours shooting 2,057 free throws. The marathon effort did more than just make his arms tired—it raised about \$3,000 to help kids in Africa.

Four years later, Austin, 13, has turned his one-kid effort into Hoops of Hope, a growing nonprofit group with thousands of participants in six countries. A nonprofit group is one that does not make money for itself.

Each Hoops of Hope member aims to shoot 500 to 2,057 free throws. Austin chose the number 2,057 because that is about the number of kids in Africa who are orphaned by AIDS during the length of a typical school day, based on United Nations data. AIDS is a disease transmitted by body fluids. The disease is the number-one cause of death in Africa. It kills an estimated 6,000 people on the continent each day.

Free-throw participants collect donations from their friends and families. So far, Austin and Hoops of Hope have raised more than \$300,000. That money has gone toward building a new school and a medical center in Zambia, a country in southern Africa.



Austin Gutwein greets orphans whom Hoops of Hope has helped in Zambia.

Austin visited Zambia last fall to see the difference he has made firsthand. “The kids are just like me, and they have goals, and they have dreams, and they have a purpose,” he told *WR News*. “They were happy even though they were living in poverty.”

This year, Austin hopes to raise enough money to build a second medical center in Zambia. He and other Hoops of Hope participants will hit the courts on May 16. “You don’t need to wait to be an adult to make a difference,” Austin says.