

What could **YOU**
give a
family
with
nothing?

Everything...



The Web of Poverty

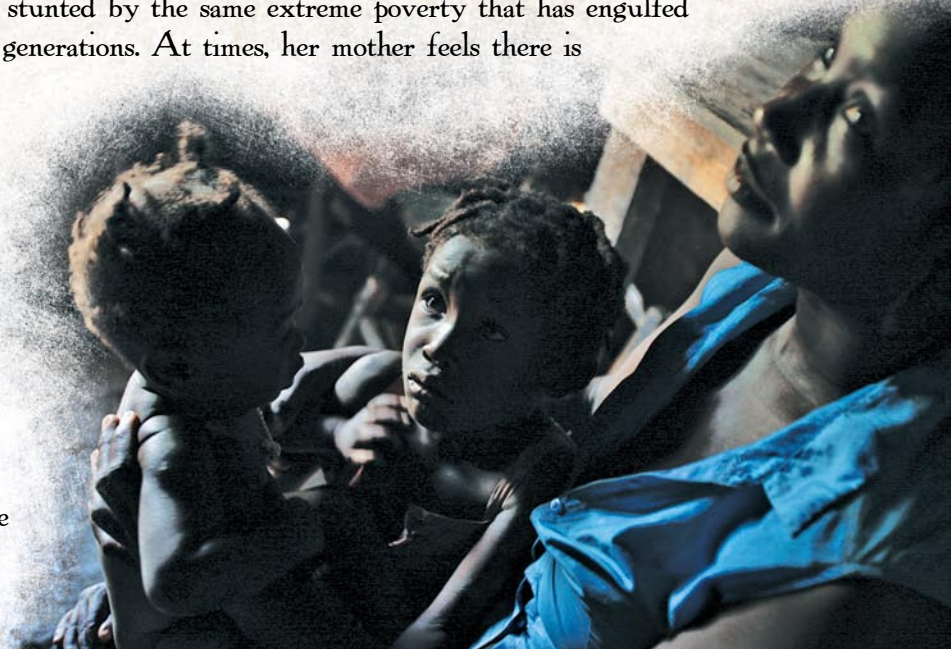
They have absolutely nothing. Lacking food, basic shelter, a source of income and an education, many poor families in the Caribbean and Latin America are so destitute they need everything. Although these families long to become self-sufficient, they are forced to live in hovels and beg for scraps. They pray for the chance to raise their children in a sturdy house and send them to school; they hope for the opportunity to learn a trade that will help them break free from the vicious cycle of poverty forever. All they ask for is a “hand-up” — not a handout.

The cycle of poverty is a dilemma because the resources needed to escape poverty are never available to the poorest families who need them. Inadequate housing and a simple lack of food prevent families from staying healthy and safe, which in turn limits opportunities to find jobs or go to school.

In Haiti, 4-year-old Ojani Desino shares her mother’s name. But her loving mother prays that the child’s life will be nothing like her own. Currently, little Ojani’s development is physically and mentally stunted by the same extreme poverty that has engulfed her mother’s family for generations. At times, her mother feels there is simply no way out.

Lifelong poverty diminishes hope and numbs the spirit. As she listlessly watches her children, Ojani says that her simplest wish is for her young ones to have a better life than hers.

She has yet to realize this dream. †



Housing

Imagine sleeping in a damp bed every time it rains... or being afraid that your roof will cave in at any moment. Thousands of destitute families across Latin America and the Caribbean suffer daily in silent misery because of such poor housing conditions.

For these families, “home, sweet home” is often a fragile tin shack or a mud hut with a dirt floor. These homes are filled with suffocating heat during the day and stinging insects by night. The interior of Ojani’s stick-and-mud hut is in complete darkness, even during the daytime. All five of her children sleep with her in the same rickety bed that is constantly moistened by humidity, rainfall and clay.

Basic housing is crucial to helping a destitute family escape the cycle of poverty. A sturdy new Food For The Poor home does more than physically protect an unsheltered family; it renews hope and restores human dignity.

By providing a safe and dry environment, these new homes afford poor children the rest needed to thrive and have a brighter future. The family’s overall health may improve because of reduced exposure to dampness and unsanitary living conditions. A house furnished with a latrine helps to further reduce the occurrence of life-threatening disease. †

“I would soon find a shelter from the raging wind and storm.” (Psalm 55:9)



Self-Help Programs

“Give a man a fish and feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime.”

This common saying is at the heart of Food For The Poor’s self-help programs, which offer destitute families the means of escaping the cycle of poverty.

Our small-business projects offer poor families self-sustainable sources of income that can help a downtrodden family thrive and become self-supporting. These skills-training programs, such as sewing, instill participants with hope for the future and the ability to become self-sufficient.

For families who are accustomed to waking each day not knowing where their next meal will come from, a self-sustainable source of income is a true blessing. Imagine how the pain of not being able to support your children can be transformed into the joy of knowing that you now have the opportunity to earn a regular income.

Sometimes all that the poorest of the poor need is a simple chance to break the chains of poverty that bind them. Small-business projects provide such an opportunity by offering a poor family a practical method of supporting itself. †

“Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Education

While the immediate needs for shelter, food and clothing might be more pressing initially, education is key to overcoming poverty. Without a proper education, destitute children are unlikely to break free from their families’ cycle of poverty. Without schooling and the opportunity to develop their skills, children will most likely be forced to live a life of poverty similar to their parents’.

Education offers possibilities for the future.

Imagine how different your life would be if you never had the chance to attend school. Poor children throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are often forced to grow up too quickly, with many searching for food or work at an early age. The innocence and carefree experience we often associate with childhood are quickly torn away from the young lives that carry such burdensome responsibilities.

“I feel sad and unhappy because there’s nothing I can do for them,” notes Ojani, knowing that without schooling, her children will most likely endure the same lifelong poverty she experiences daily. For children like Ojani’s, a lack of education means a lack of change. †

“And whoever receives one child such as this in My name receives Me.”
(Matthew 18:5)



Food & Clothing

Hungry children throughout the Caribbean and Latin America must often endure consecutive days without food. The effects of severe malnutrition are not only heard in their desperate cries; they can also be seen in their distended bellies, symptoms of illness and stunted growth. Desperately poor mothers frequently pray for the relief of their children's suffering.

"There are days when we have nothing to eat," says Ojani, as her 3-year-old son, Robert, wails from severe hunger. Robert's future is held captive by a lack of food. Without basic nutrition, the little boy's health will continue to deteriorate, and his future remains in jeopardy.

When we first met him, Robert was completely naked. If Ojani's children are fortunate enough to find discarded articles of clothing, they wear these items, which are usually tattered and full of holes, offering little protection.

For desperately malnourished and naked children, gifts for food and clothing are truly gifts of life. Supplies of rice and beans, for example, can offer hungry children relief today and strength for a brighter tomorrow. Without such basic necessities, existing cycles of poverty continue to consume entire families. †

"... Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You or... naked and clothe You?" (Matthew 25:37b-38b)



† Everything for a Family with Nothing



When asked to name the one thing her family needs the most, Ojani responded simply, "Everything."

Food For The Poor's "Everything for a Family with Nothing" package relieves the suffering of poor families through a combination of solutions that address both short-term and long-term needs. Such a tremendous gift is relatively inexpensive, considering the remarkable impact it can have on a family for generations to come. The package includes*:

- † A sturdy new Food For The Poor home. This home also includes a latrine for additional sanitation and dignity.
- † Educational supplies (including books and uniforms) for two children.
- † Participation in a self-help program that offers skills training.
- † A one-year supply of food that will help a hungry family.
- † A gift of clothing and shoes for destitute children.

Each element in this all-inclusive package is closely connected to the others. Without basic shelter, for example, a family is unprotected. Without protection, children are unable to rest. Without adequate rest, efforts to learn in a classroom will be unsuccessful. And without education, there is little hope for the future.

A family with nothing needs each of these essential elements to break the cycle of poverty that has plagued families for generations. †

* In cases where a family may not be in need of a particular element in the package, that element will be applied to another family who can benefit from it.



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