



**Shamwari ne Shamwari,
a Project of Dangwa Initiative**

Shamwari ne Shamwari¹ is a pen-pal project that seeks to bridge the communication gap between American and Zimbabwean kids. It is aimed at encouraging dialogue between peers who have been affected and/or infected by AIDS across continents. Our pen-pal program is a vehicle for these children and youth to openly share experiences, provide mutual support, and learn about each others' culture.

This exciting program connects children with their peers and provides them with a safe space to share and hopefully help each other cope with this epidemic that knows no boundaries. AIDS is the common ground that they will meet by but it certainly is not going to be the only connector. We hope to encourage the children to be interested in each other's cultures and share their dreams. *Dangwa Initiative* hopes that this program will also help the children improve other skills such as penmanship, critical thinking & compassion skills. Most children in the USA today have never handwritten written a letter full hand. We hope that this program will help the children to construct

¹ Shamwari ne Shamwari is Shona for "From one friend to another"

proper sentences using the dictionary, pen and paper as their only tools. Our hope and prayer is that with support, love and God's guidance we will be able to provide ways for the children to meet face to face in the future thru the exchange program and/or Youth Revivals hosted at either countries.

RUVA - "IF AIDS DOESN'T KILL ME, I WANT TO BE A TEACHER"



Ruva, shy and unassuming, is 10 years old and in 5th grade at Chamukwenjera Primary School. She is an only child who lives with her grandmother who is in her late 70s. Grandmother is the head of household and only care giver to 5 other children ranging between 10 and 15. Ruva, loves to read but has never owned a book. Her favorite subjects are English, Maths and Content (Social Studies). She is supposed to be on Antiretroviral (ARVs) for her HIV illness but grandmother cannot always afford the \$2 needed to pay the doctor who prescribes the free meds. She is lucky if she gets to see the doctor once a year.

When asked what she wants to be when she grows up, Ruva looks up and says, confidently, "If AIDS doesn't kill me, I want to be a teacher". Ruva has maintained top of her class three years in a row.

If you are interested in becoming a Pen-pal to Ruva or any of our children, please send us an email at info@dangwa.org and we will send you more information.

FAQ

Q: What are the ages of the children in your program?

A: They range from 7 to 19 years old.

Q: Do the children in Zimbabwe have access to the Internet or computers?

A: No. This is why we require the American children to hand-write their letters to level the playing field for the Zimbabwean children until they too have access to technology.

Q: How confidential is the correspondence shared between children.

A: Because the children we work with are very vulnerable, for security and protection, we monitor letters from both ends to make sure information being shared is appropriate. When letters are deemed inappropriate, we will notify the Pen-pals and provide further guidance on what is acceptable.

Q: How often can I write my Pen-pal?

A: Postal services in Zimbabwe are not as reliable as that of the US, therefore we try to get all letters picked up at the same time and mailed in one big envelope then distributed individually when they arrive at both ends. In Zimbabwe children receive them at their respective schools and in the US at the individuals' address unless prior arrangements have been made.

Please Note: All our programs are provided free of charge to the children and with strict confidentiality. Although the programs cater mainly for Black children, no child is discriminated against because of their race, gender or disability.

Our faith-based mission is to restore dignity and empower AIDS orphan girls, women and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. We seek to provide access to quality education and health care while at the same bringing attention of the impact of HIV/AIDS on youth, ages 13-25.
www.dangwa.org