



AMERICAN FOUNDATION
for CHILDREN *with* AIDS

Vacation with a Purpose

Matopos and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

August 29 – September 5, 2026



Thanks for your interest in our Volunteer with a Purpose trip to support the **American Foundation for Children with AIDS**. This initiative is designed to show you a bit of one of the countries where AFCA works and to help us raise funds for AFCA's programs. Funds are used for life-saving anti-retroviral (ARV) medication, food, livestock and seeds, training, and medical and humanitarian supplies for children affected by HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to increase awareness of the pediatric AIDS pandemic.

For this volunteer vacation, we stay and work in a village in Matopos, Zimbabwe, as well as in Bulawayo. Matopos is a gorgeous area of Zimbabwe, known for breathtaking scenery and rock formations known as kopjes. Morning Star is also the site of AFCA's Matopos Bee, Goat, Tree, and Sewing Projects, all set up with the goal of helping families achieve self-sufficiency through work. Our stay in Bulawayo will be at Bultop, a solar run house and we will travel from there daily to orphanages where we will volunteer.

Getting There

Don't let the length of travel to Zimbabwe discourage you from considering this opportunity. We will try to meet on our way there and will travel together from an airport somewhere in route. Your reward for your efforts will be repaid immeasurably by the spectacular views along the way and amazing experience you will have once you get there!

Matopos is a somewhat far location, but not too remote. The team will meet in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, the second largest city in the country at the airport. From there, a two hour drive by van will start on tarmac roads which lead to unpaved roads, which leads to driving over large rocks until we reach our lodging. It is a beautiful ride and we'll be on the lookout for giraffe on the way.



Accommodations

The team will be staying at Morning Star, a volunteer center in Matopos, Zimbabwe. The rooms are shared, with a men/boys and women/girls dorm and some smaller quarters for married couples or for snorers (☺). There is no electricity, but solar power is used and you can recharge your electronics using solar chargers. Headlamps or flashlights are advisable for walks outdoors. We will be using western-style toilets, even though the system is septic tanks.

Morning Star uses solar water heaters, giving you a warm shower each day (as long as there is no drought happening and the sun is shining) – or you can take a cold shower! Breakfast and dinner are served in the main house (right) and they are western-style and delicious! Fresh fruit and vegetables, pasta, potatoes, meat, eggs, cheese, etc., are all part of the daily fare available to guests. Lunches will be packed for the team on a daily basis and will be eaten on the work site, if needed. Purified water is always available.



In Bulawayo, we will stay at Bultop, a gorgeous home in the second largest city of Zimbabwe. It is all run on solar power! We make our own meals and will eat dinners as a group at Bultop, taking our lunch with us to our work site.

Schedule



For some of us, it will take us two days to get to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, due to long flights and time differences. You might have an overnight layover in Johannesburg, South Africa prior to flying to Bulawayo, or you may arrive via Ethiopia or Qatar. There are new flights all the time! USA citizens and those of some other countries are not required to have a visa while in connecting countries but be sure to check if your country does. USA citizens can purchase their Zimbabwe visas online at <https://www.evisa.gov.zw/>. Please check requirements if you are from another country.

Along with the travel days, the project schedule includes:

- workdays in Matopos, at schools, at Morning Star, at a community center, at our goat multiplication center, or where most needed
- work at Sandra Jones Center, Isaiah Home, or Family Harvest Village – homes for orphaned children
- rest and relaxation day with souvenir shopping and a dinner out

And for those with time either before or after our time in Matopos and Bulawayo, a world of wonders and adventure await you in Zimbabwe including Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park, Antelope Park, Great Zimbabwe, and the Matopos National Park. Of course, you can always add on a visit to Zambia, Namibia, South Africa, Malawi or another country.

Our Work Projects



Our work in Zimbabwe is very community oriented and we will work side by side with the local people to make our work a success. Some of the projects might include:

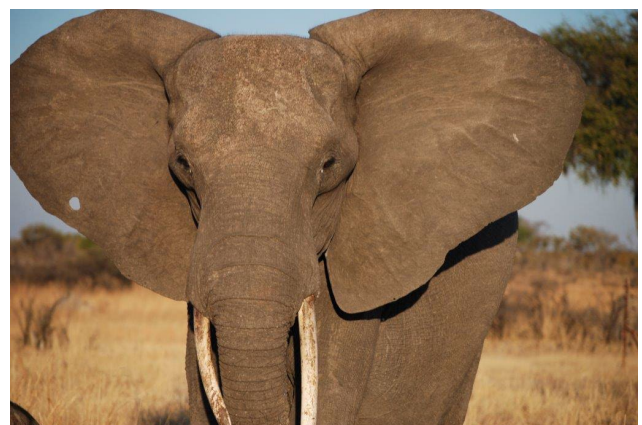
- Minor construction, electrical or plumbing work
- Painting
- Setting up playground equipment
- Sewing projects
- Playing with babies and children
- Teaching English
- Building fences
- Helping with goats or bees or gardens or greenhouses or...

The name of the game is FLEXIBILITY. Go with the flow and help wherever is needed. At this point, our plan is to work as stated above, but if another team comes before us and does what we had planned, we'll change our plans accordingly and we all must be flexible, knowing we are there to help and learn. And, don't worry – there is plenty of time for you to explore, hike, rock climb, play games, take pictures, meditate, read, or relax.

Trip Cost: \$4500

AFCA works diligently with our host country partners to keep your Vacation with a Purpose fees as reasonable as possible while providing a comfortable, safe and interesting volunteer experience. Your fees cover the majority of your expenses while in-country so that there is no burden on the local host partner organization. Included are the following:

- Costs of tools, supplies, local labor for the work project (when applicable)
- Food and drinking water (except alcoholic drinks and personal snacks)
- Sleeping accommodations
- In-country transportation, to and from the airport as well as to the project worksites
- Donation to AFCA and host partner
- Some team leader costs



The trip fees **do not include** airfare from your home to the host country; accommodations outside of the official trip dates; medical / emergency evacuation insurance; trip cancellation insurance; visas; vaccinations; any touristy attractions before or after the official date of the VWP trip is done.

NOTE: A \$500 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is required to hold your spot on the team. All fees must be paid in full 45 days prior to departure.

If you do not have the financial means to pay the whole amount of the trip fees yourself, don't let that discourage you. Many team members raise a portion of their fees through donations from family and friends. Even if you have the financial means to pay the entire cost yourself, we strongly encourage individuals to fundraise for their trips. Any funds raised in excess of the trip fees will go directly to support AFCA programs. Fundraising also helps raise awareness of the mission of AFCA and its partners.

REMEMBER: THIS TRIP IS IN SUPPORT OF AFCA'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to fundraise over and above the stated trip fees. **This is not a requirement.** But what a wonderful gift it is!

About American Foundation for Children with AIDS

AFCA is a non-profit organization providing critical comprehensive services to infected and affected HIV+ children and their caregivers. Our programs are efficient, promoting self-reliance and sustainability. Since 2005, in collaboration with our in-country partners, we have served tens of thousands of families in some of the most underserved and marginalized communities in Africa. Our areas of impact include: medical support, livelihoods, educational support and emergency relief. Currently, AFCA is working in Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The sub-Saharan region of Africa is the worst affected by the AIDS crisis. In the 23 countries most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS, nineteen are in sub-Saharan Africa. Nine out of ten children living with HIV in the world call sub-Saharan Africa home.

Though mostly adults of reproductive age contract HIV, the youngest and oldest generations can be the worst affected by the consequences. The region has two million children younger than 15 years living with HIV and 12 million orphans, having contracted it from their mothers during pregnancy, delivery or through breast milk. The epidemic is creating a generation of children forced to endure the illness as well as the loss of their parents and their own uncertain future.

In African culture, the orphaned children are taken in by their extended families. Three out of every four households in this region take care of one or more orphans. But diminishing economic conditions and high poverty levels have resulted in the abandonment of many of the children. For more information, visit our website at: www.AFCAids.org