



A CHILD'S
HOPE
FOUNDATION

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Introduction



Kinsie Robbins

Welcome to A Child's Hope Foundation! My name is Kinsie Robbins and right now, in the spring of 2020, I'm the Service Trip Coordinator. Though it goes beyond my normal role, I volunteered to draft this handbook to share my perspective of what it's like to work for our organization. As someone who has been employed here for less than a year, I'm excited to share what it's like to come into A Child's Hope and what I find special about working here. We are a people-focused organization, seeking to improve the lives of those we serve as well as our fellow team members. You are important to us and we want you to succeed here!

This handbook will help you understand the foundation's history and mission, our team's culture, how we work together, and our plan for growth and results. You will see that A Child's Hope is likely a different workplace than what you may be used to. In fact, it's a place that will shape your life as you improve yourself as a person and participate fully as a team member.

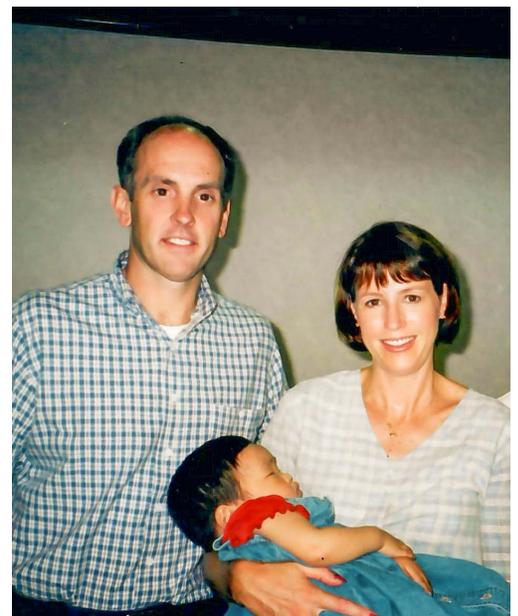
Section 1: The History & Mission of A Child's Hope Foundation

How We Began

A Child's Hope Foundation was started in 2002 by Paul and Carolene Cook a few years after adopting their daughter Megan from China. The adoption agency they had worked with asked the Cooks to donate funds to help an orphanage where 30 kids were living in an 800 sq. ft. room. So Paul wrote a check and donated. A few months later, Paul and his son visited the orphanage in Haiti to see how their donation would help.

Paul said, "It was only then, when I saw the desperate plight of orphans in Haiti, that I knew that I needed to do more than just donate money. I needed to personally get to work on this problem and help save the lives of these kids. We named our charity A Child's Hope Foundation because we believe it is every orphan's hope to belong to a loving family."

Paul and Carolene and some volunteers went to work organizing groups of American volunteers to build an adoption orphanage in Haiti. This would be a temporary home for children while they waited to be adopted into families in the U.S. or other countries. A Child's Hope helped to directly facilitate about 50 such adoptions from Haiti. (The orphanage eventually became independent, and has had over 1,000 children come through its doors and into adoptive families.) We were excited to create an adoption orphanage model that could be taken to other countries.



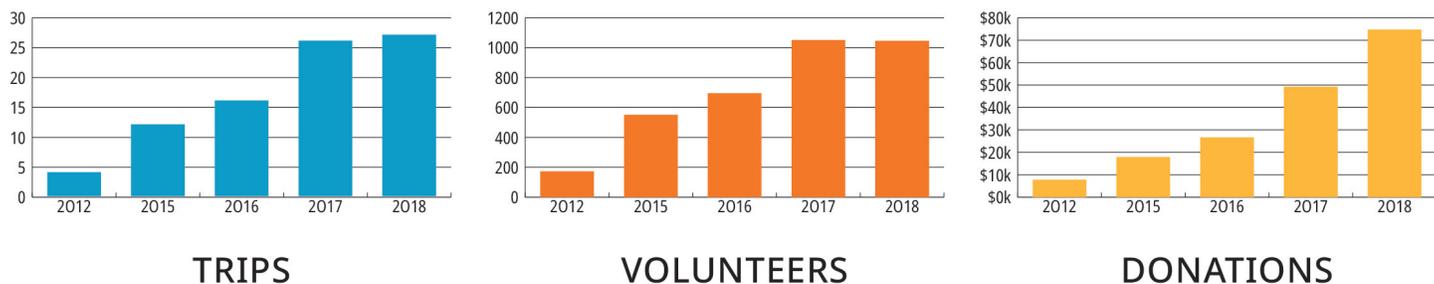
Paul & Carolene Cook adopting their daughter Megan, China.

However, a few years into this work, three factors changed our direction. Haiti’s government became unstable, and it was no longer safe to take volunteers there. A second factor was the ratification of the 2004 Hague Convention on International Adoption, which had the unintended consequence of making international adoption much more expensive and time consuming. The third reason is that because of the 2008 recession we had a much harder time fundraising and needed less expensive opportunities to help orphans.

Perhaps it shouldn’t be surprising, but we saw that the blessings of service go both ways. As volunteers worked to build a safe home for orphans, they would often say that they received more than they gave. We knew we had to keep a successful volunteer program going.

Baja, Mexico became a good option for service trips. Even though Mexican children couldn’t be adopted into the United States, Mexico had two adoptive families for every available infant, and we saw an opportunity to build orphanage facilities for babies while their adoptions were processed. Additionally, driving an hour into Mexico to spend a week doing orphanage construction was more doable for U.S. families.

Starting in 2007, A Child’s Hope Foundation led about four volunteer trips to Mexico each year. Many of these volunteers came more than once, and then brought their friends. As the U.S. recovered from its recession, demand for more family and school-group volunteer trips increased. Awareness of our work grew, and generous donors began to step in. Here’s a snapshot of the years when we began to see rapid growth:



2012 is representative of the years surrounding it in which growth was static.

In addition to learning how to run great Service Trips, we also realized that A Child’s Hope Foundation didn’t have to build orphanages from scratch. As we got to visit and work with many different orphanage directors over more than a decade, we realized we could make a bigger difference by instead focusing on working with existing orphanages that had good leadership. In 2018 we connected with Miracle Foundation who had created a “Thrive Assessment” for the orphanages they supported in India. We partnered with them and adapted it for Mexico. Today, developing and certifying the leadership of orphanages is one of our major programs.

The reason we decided on certification as our main approach was due to our many conversations with potential donors over the years. Donors need the confidence that their donations are actually helping the kids and not just the staff of orphanages. As we worked with “wealthy”, “poor”, and “aspiring” orphanages, we realized that even wealthy orphanages sometimes struggle to provide an adequate education to their kids. Let me explain more about those different types of orphanages.

“Wealthy” orphanages are often built from scratch in partnership with a private American church or organization who funds them. For the most part the children are well cared for, but there are very few of these types of orphanages.

“Poor” orphanages are the ones in dire condition. Sometimes their director is not there for the right reasons, but usually they are just too overwhelmed to give adequate care. Donors have few assurances that their funds will help the children in the long run, and the children are often starved for love and attention. As we worked with these orphanages, even with ongoing donations, we found that things didn’t improve much due to poor leadership.

Then there are “aspiring” orphanages. These orphanages have directors who desire to create a positive, sustaining, and loving home for their kids; and they demonstrate strong leadership. However, these orphanages lack the resources to raise the children to be successful adults. They rely on faith and determination. They are eager to learn, but they need someone to help them grow and thrive.

A Child’s Hope Foundation can do a lot of good with aspiring orphanages. Through our certification program, we help them set goals for improvement, connect them with volunteers and financial support, and train them in the best practices to build trust with donors. In this way, “aspiring” orphanages become the models for “poor” orphanages, and they serve as a light of hope in their communities.

We currently have tremendous support and momentum for our work. This has pushed A Child’s Hope Foundation to hire more staff, collaborate with more volunteers and donors, and partner with more orphanages in successfully raising children to adulthood. Just like eBay made it easy for buyers and sellers to trust each other, we are building a system of certification and reporting that makes it easy for donors to trust directors and see the results they are getting for the kids. This is a system that we will be taking across the globe!





Our Mission: Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving

Hopefully you can see the big picture of what we do. Is your heart expanding as you think of the kids you are serving? That is our main focus: helping kids who have been placed in orphanages because they have been abandoned, abused, or forgotten. We are 'Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving.'

What does that mean?

Our mission is to give these kids the opportunities that they would have in a healthy family setting. We want to go beyond alleviating the effects of children's poverty and abuse to give them a better life in all aspects.

The United Nations' 1989 [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) defined the rights that we are working to give orphaned children: the right to live with family; having a stable, loving, nurturing environment; quality healthcare; good nutrition; clean water and electric power; quality education; equal opportunities; guidance from caring adults; participation in decisions that affect them; to prepare for active and responsible citizenship; protection from abuse and neglect; dignity and freedom; and spiritual development.

We want to give these kids hope that comes from meeting their survival needs and going beyond that to help them thrive. Raising children with this kind of hope will help them become adults who contribute their talents to their communities and raise healthy families of their own. That is long-term success for us.

Section 2: Our Team Culture

Core Values

In the introduction, I said A Child’s Hope Foundation is a people-focused organization. We are not only in the business of serving orphans, their caregivers, and volunteers; we also strive for self-improvement achieved in an awesome team setting! We are here to become better people ourselves. Our team culture is built around our core internal values: **Stretch, Invest, Validate**.

Let’s define these simply before we go into greater detail.

STRETCH

Push yourself to do things you didn’t know you could do. Try new things.

INVEST

Take time to get to know your coworkers. Take time to do a project or job well. Be fully engaged in a conversation. Share yourself with others. Give your all.

VALIDATE

Recognize others’ strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and accomplishments so team members can effectively serve and build each other. Demonstrate your love.

We are learning to embody these values as we practice them. These values aren’t on our website because they are really just for our staff and office volunteers (and it is a bit too much to try and translate them for the public who really just care about our mission of Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving), but they really do help us decide on who we invite to join our team. Following is a closer look at each core value.

Stretch

We are growing rapidly, which means change is inevitable and everyone will stretch in their work at A Child’s Hope. Taking on new challenges—including projects you aren’t sure you can do—is a big part of each person’s experience. Challenges and change might seem intimidating, but here you’ll find that change can be immensely rewarding at the organizational as well as the personal level. Seeing growth can be motivating, rewarding—even life changing.

As the organization and our reach expands, we need people to be able to grow, learn new things, and improve the systems we already have in place. Team members must be okay with constant change. And so we stretch.

To be able to stretch, you need to understand what you already bring to the table, and how you can expand that. Take me for example. One of my strengths is that I’m super competitive. I compete with both others and myself. This competitive compulsion is a strength, in that when I make a mistake, I fix it and change my processes so I don’t repeat the same mistake. I have to be organized and efficient to stay competitive. This also drives me to continually find new ways to improve different aspects of my job. The meaning I find in my work keeps me going.



I want to create something new and great. I want to contribute to the world in a positive way. My competitive nature helps me add value to A Child's Hope, though there are also weaknesses that come with it. I have a difficult time admitting when I am wrong and taking feedback. The competitive drive in me wants to do everything perfect. Though this can be a significant weakness, I have acknowledged it and can keep it from causing problems on the team. We all have weaknesses because we have strengths, and as long as we are open about them, we can all work together effectively.

What is your unique contribution to the team? We want you to share your ideas, try new things, and take risks. That is how you stretch in your role.

Another example. Leksi, who used to be the Service Trip Coordinator like me, was asked to set up and design our Salesforce database to serve several departments within A Child's Hope Foundation. Leksi is not a computer genius and she didn't have any experience with the Salesforce software. She was given this project because Leksi puts her heart and soul into what she does and she knew that the team would support her as she learned and worked with Salesforce experts to implement it. Kent (our Executive Director) knew that she would work hard, be organized, understand the many requirements different people would have for it, and, most importantly, that she would stretch herself to accomplish the task. All our departments now use Salesforce extensively because of the work Leksi has done.



Leksi Skousen, Director of Donor Impact

Invest

At A Child's Hope, we don't only invest in our work, but also in each other. This means that it's expected that you will come to care about the others that work with you. We believe that by slowing down to build real relationships, we will get better results for our stakeholders. Our work environment should feel like working with competent and healthy family members. This is a place where you bring your whole self to work and are open to your co-workers. It doesn't mean that you have to be best friends with everyone, but it does mean that you have to be vulnerable and open. We don't have time for politics and because we have lots of productive conflict as a team, we have to know and trust each other as people first (more on conflict later).

You will hear team members talk about slowing down so we can speed up. That means taking the time to get to know those around you so we can work together more efficiently and effectively because there is already a foundation of high trust. We work hard to have a culture of respect, love, and friendship where it's safe to be yourself. We all care deeply about each other. We care about your personal life, your work life, and anything else you have going on.

One way we slow down to speed up is through a little activity at the beginning of most team meetings (it's my favorite part!). We ask a get-to-know-you question that everyone answers. When we take a minute to get to know one another better, we accomplish more because we trust each other more and can argue productively. It works, just watch and see. Managers also invest in their teams members through regular one-on-one meetings. One-on-ones cover various aspects: how life is going for you and the struggles that impact your work; work-related projects you need assistance with; setting goals for future projects and tasks; and keeping you in the loop. Meetings are designed to not be boring AND to get work done.

When you work with team members whom you love, you want to give your best contributions for that team, and you feel safe disagreeing (more on that later.) So, as we invest in each other's success, we individually become more invested in our work and results. Giving your best for the team also means that you take ownership, both for your assignments and for your mistakes. We believe in learning from mistakes, and learning only happens when we own our mistakes.



Samantha Clive, Program Director, with her two adopted kids, Lalo & Yuli.

Samantha is a good example of a team member who invested in her work because her team depended on her. At the time, Sam was in the role of Director of Service Trips. She served on the executive team and managed our trips. As she built her job, Sam realized that she could work better with orphanage directors and help the kids if she lived in Mexico. She wasn't asked to move to another country, she volunteered to do it. Sam was invested in the mission, took ownership of her role, and did what she needed in order to do her job well.

We aren't asking you to move to Mexico; though if you want to, we will be very jealous of all the amazing tacos you will be eating! We are saying that Invest means taking extreme ownership of your responsibilities. You will do what is best for the stakeholders, our mission, and for your team members.

Validate

Validate means we praise effort and thoughtfulness, not just doing your job well. It means we thank you for disagreeing in a respectful way and for caring about the quality of our results. It especially means we validate your hard work when things aren't going well for you. We recognize that everyone has strengths and weaknesses. We build up each other by acknowledging everyone's strengths and also by being open about each other's weaknesses. When we recognize people's weaknesses, we can work around those weaknesses so they don't become inhibiting. If one team member is struggling, whether it's with the requirements of the job, stress, mental or physical health, or other personal struggles, the entire team is negatively impacted. If people don't know that their sacrifices and struggles are known and valued, they give up. And have no illusions—this work is hard! That is why we help each other push through difficult times by validating one another's sacrifices.

Besides telling each other that we appreciate one another verbally, another way we validate is by using a website called 15Five. There, everyone can give each other digital 'high-fives' within the 15Five software. This is where you state something you appreciate about them, what they did that you noticed that week, or any other thoughtful and specific compliment. This lets us see that our individual efforts matter and are noticed, which spurs continued progress and growth. We hope that you take this opportunity to build others up. Recognize their strengths, help them with their weaknesses, and acknowledge their struggles and hard work; not just by celebrating their successes.

Summary of Values

These values—Stretch, Invest, and Validate—are the backbone of our work culture. These shared values sustain an amazing team and drive our success in Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving.

Let me introduce you to Dave Terry. After participating in a volunteer trip with his family, Dave wanted to be more involved. As a business owner, he was already a busy guy, but he volunteered anyway because he knew his background in construction could help the kids. Dave brought his strengths and stretched himself to literally create a job that didn't yet exist: he became our Construction Project Supervisor. He is invested in the work and has built a plan for us to accomplish the construction portion of our mission. Dave participates as an active team member, giving and receiving validation from the start. By stretching, investing, and validating, Dave has advanced the work of A Child's Hope immensely.



Dave Terry, Construction Coordinator

Remember these values. Apply them. We can promise that as you do, you will grow to love them and find the success you desire here at A Child's Hope Foundation. We are excited to grow with you!

Ego is the Enemy



Kent White, Executive Director

As a team that embraces our core values, we have one more challenge that each individual must embrace: eating humble pie. If you have a hard time laughing at yourself, being asked uncomfortable performance questions in front of others, or needing to look like you've got it all together; you really won't enjoy working here. No one is judging your performance as if you were an actor on a stage, cheering or booing your every move. We all have too much work to do to also worry about maintaining our image.

Ego is the enemy of productive teamwork. Kent often says it is a cancer that destroys trust because we make others think we aren't capable of handling the truth about our weaknesses. We come across as fragile and self-deceived and make others walk on eggshells around us, and that builds resentment because we are asking others to be complicit in our lies to ourselves. Our need to defend our egos also keeps the focus on ourselves which prevents us from seeing the needs of others around us. Ego leads you to seek out allies against your perceived enemies. Reality says, "I am no better than my brother or sister."

Here is an example of ego becoming a cancer. A few years ago, Kent (our Executive Director) was arguing with a friend and she interrupted the argument by asking him, "Why do you act like you know everything?" Kent immediately responded with, "Because I do know everything." As soon as those words came out of his mouth, he knew how ridiculous they were; but he just couldn't laugh at himself in the moment, he just got angrier and kept arguing. Kent realized that he had been arguing out of ego, not because he really cared for his friend. In fact, he had been thinking he was better than her and he just wanted her to accept that fact! Unfortunately, Kent wasn't humble enough to ask for forgiveness for several days; he was so stuck in his need to be right and look good, but he did eventually heal that relationship. He's still a work in progress. Kent told me this story because he doesn't want to be like that ever again and he's asked me to point it out to him when he is being a jerk.

Now let me be clear, weaknesses are not cancers. Weaknesses are good because they allow us to grow, be vulnerable, and connect with others. Weaknesses exist because we have strengths. For example, when you are really organized (a strength) you may struggle with being flexible when priorities change (a weakness). We are open about our weaknesses with each other because then we can help each other work around them.

How to Create Value on the Team

You will have a lot of opportunities to practice our core values. Some of it is about setting the right expectations for yourself. Some of it comes through the way you engage with your team and the work. Here are some of the ways you can stretch, invest, and validate at A Child's Hope Foundation.

- Try new things. Don't wait for new opportunities to be assigned to you. Take on projects that will make you learn new skills of an organization that is Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving. This is not the kind of work that you just leave at the office, it will fill your thoughts throughout the day. Be excited about the good you are doing in the world. Tell others about it. Let yourself love your work.
- Cultivate friendships at work. You already share a commonality with your co-workers in feeling called to do nonprofit work. You are surrounded by good-hearted, hard-working, self-sacrificing people. These are the best types to have in your circle of friends. Find ways to show that you care about them and want to get to know them.
- Let your team members get to know you too. At the beginning of team meetings, give an open and honest response to the get-to-know-you question. Listen intently to what your co-workers share. As everyone participates in this exercise, it becomes a powerful process for team cohesion.

- Every month there is usually an opportunity to spend time with your team outside of work hours. If you live near enough, go as often as you can! Join the book club discussion. Bring your family to the annual pool party. Attend art night, or camping, or game night, or whatever the activity is. Those who stay home are missed and in turn they miss opportunities to connect.
- Argue for what you believe in. Your opinion matters, especially when everyone else disagrees with you! Voice it and defend it respectfully, no matter with whom you are disagreeing. This is a shortcut to crafting great solutions. We see great results when people are willing to engage in respectful conflict.
- Equally important to respectful conflict is the willingness to lay aside ego and support the decisions that are made. If you don't understand why the team is going a certain direction, ask others for clarification. Get behind the why of whatever we're doing.
- Be honest about how you are doing. If you are struggling, explore that with your manager. I have made too many mistakes because I was taking on new projects and didn't do my job as well as I should have and I felt too rushed. This can be a common situation in a growing organization.
- Find ways to celebrate others' success. Be diligent about your weekly 15Five report, and give sincere High Fives and verbal validation to others. When you look for ways that your team members are progressing, you will be grateful to be part of it all.



Jaime Zogmaister, Director of Service Trips

I've said it before, and I'll keep saying it. We are in the business of serving people. Find ways to love and serve those you work with. In doing so, you'll become a better person and the whole team will experience synergy.

My favorite quote is from Jaime, who usually works remote but comes to the office every other week. She said once, "Every time I come into the office, everyone makes it feel like it's my birthday!" That is the culture we have and want to keep.

How We do Pay Raises

Here at A Child's Hope, we try to keep the lines of communication open in terms of what we're doing and what we want to do. Because we're encouraged to act like owners, we don't wait for someone to notice us. Raises are given for taking on more responsibilities and stretching into new roles, not just for doing good work. If you'd like to be considered for a raise, it is your responsibility to bring this up with your manager to propose how you may be able to bring new value to the team.



Section 3: How We Do the Work

Getting Started at A Child's Hope Foundation

Here you are, working for A Child's Hope Foundation. You are probably wondering some of those basic questions like when will I get paid (not everyone is a volunteer!), what the hours are like, what are our policies, do I get time off, what will my first day look like, etc.? Those questions are best addressed during your interview or training and mostly depend on your job, but we'll cover some of the basics here.

The Wiki

All team members at A Child's Hope—volunteers, interns, staff, management, directors and board members—have access to our [wiki](#). This tool contains all the policies for ACHF, as well as an organizational chart and the work of our various committees. Past and current reports are documented there so everyone can see what everyone else is working on. I recommend that you become familiar with the wiki to see what information is there.

Your First Day and Training Period

Your first day and training period are for you to feel welcomed, prepared, and excited to work at A Child's Hope. On your first day, you will be welcomed and onboarded to ensure you are properly oriented and have everything you need. If you initially feel overwhelmed, don't worry, you will eventually get to know everyone and grow to care about them. As you participate in team activities outside of work, you will build friendships that contribute to the family feeling in our office.

You will, most likely, be trained by your direct manager. Collaboration means you may be managed by different people for different projects. For example, you may have been hired by someone who is not your manager. You will have a weekly one-on-one meeting with your direct manager (see the "Invest" section above). As you work on various projects, though, you may receive quality control help from another manager or team member. Part of the fun of working at A Child's Hope is interfacing across departments.

Your training period includes becoming familiar with our processes and systems, and learning to focus on getting results. The length of your training depends on your roles. This will be a time for you to begin growing a love for A Child's Hope, our mission, and our stakeholders. I hope that after your first day you leave feeling comfortable and capable in your role. I had a great first day and training, and came away excited to get to work!



Nick Merrill, Service Trip Coordinator

StandOut Assessment and Goals

To achieve success as a team, individual team members must be successful in their roles. We can each be more successful when we understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. We use the StandOut Assessment as a tool for having conversations about each person's strengths. All team members have access to everyone's assessment results, which are open for discussion. Your results help us know how to help you with your weaknesses and how to magnify your strengths. We refer to each other's strengths and weaknesses often as we plan who does the different parts of projects and roles.

Knowing your weaknesses can also create opportunities to learn some compensating skills through goal setting. What part of yourself do you want to develop through your work? Are there routines that you might add to your life toward self-improvement? What growth would you like to see in your roles? We encourage you to think deeply about your strengths and weaknesses and set some short-term as well as long-term goals. Your manager and other members of the ACHF team are invested in your success and we will support you in your goals.

Getting Results

Everything we do at ACHF is centered on getting results for our stakeholders. To get the desired results, in the words of Stephen Covey, we must start with the end in mind. What does that mean? It means we know where we are going, and we make plans to take us there. Whether we are assigning tasks in a project, defining deliverables, reporting what we've done, or just sitting down and getting the work done, we know what our small piece is accomplishing. In this section, we will go over who our stakeholders are and how reports, feedback, meetings, and projects lead to results. Get ready!

Our Stakeholders



A Child's Hope Foundation serves the following stakeholders:

- Orphans (children who have been abandoned, lost parents, or been removed from their families who were abusing or neglecting them)
- Orphan caregivers, orphanage staff, and orphanage directors
- ACHF volunteers (those who join Service Trips and serve internationally, and those who work with us locally in the U.S.)
- Donors
- Members of our Board of Directors
- Staff Members
- Communities that touch our spheres of influence

Stakeholders are the people who are impacted by the results we produce, so we strive to increase the benefits they receive from our work. When we are defining the results we want from any project or work routine, we consider the following:

- Who are the stakeholders that will be affected?
- How will this work benefit them?
- How do we measure our effectiveness?

Once we are clear about the results we want to deliver for our stakeholders, we can monitor those results in a few ways.

Reporting

You will hear Kent White, our Executive Director, say over and over that we are a reporting organization. Our goal is to be so good at reporting that our volunteers and donors are amazed at how far their contributions go.

YOUR SCOREBOARD

One of our reporting tools is the scoreboard. If you are competitive like me, that word might have kicked your competitive drive into gear. If you are not competitive, it might have made your heart sink. Rest assured that you will only be competing against yourself.

Every paid employee has a scoreboard, which is just a spreadsheet of the most important results that each person is responsible to fulfill. These responsibilities are created by the employee and their manager and helps each person be accountable for her or his responsibilities. Everyone completes their own scoreboard each month and reviews it with their manager. This report helps managers make sure that they aren't burying you so deeply with new projects that you can't fulfill your main responsibilities. It also helps us see where processes need to be improved.

For example, one scoreboard item for the Service Trip Coordinator is whether trip payments arrive on time. This is important because on-time payments translate into people who will show up for the trip and don't drop out at the last minute after it is too late to fill their spots. On-time payments affect several other stakeholders. Now, we recognize that sometimes you can't have 100% control over whether or not these scoreboard expectations are accomplished. For example, the Service Trip Coordinator can't go to every volunteer's home and enter their credit card info for them. However, they influence on-time payments through reminder emails, calls, texts, etc.

If you struggle with reporting, be ready to create a new habit. This is one of the crucial ways that we make sure we are getting results for our stakeholders, which is the primary reason behind reporting. And like I said earlier, we plan to be the best at reporting among nonprofits our size, so be ready to become the best with us!

Here is an example. As the Service Trip Coordinator, the main stakeholders I'm concerned about are the volunteers. The result I work for is creating a great experience for our volunteers. One piece of a great experience for volunteers is that their emails are answered in a timely manner, which we have defined as receiving a response within 24 hours. My manager spot checks my emails to make sure I'm being informative and answering questions within 24 hours. In our one-on-one, my manager won't ask if I'm struggling with anything. She will already know if my email responses are lagging and she can help me explore what is keeping me from fulfilling expectations. Your manager is there to help you accomplish your goals and achieve the results our stakeholders deserve!

15FIVE

Everyone on the team shares a weekly update of their accomplishments and struggles through the 15Five website. Each team member takes 15 minutes to complete a weekly 15Five report, following the software's prompts. We write about how we felt about that week's work, what we accomplished, and what we might need help on. Then each person's manager spends about five minutes reviewing it (that's why it's called 15Five). Only you, your manager, and the Executive Director see your full report and feedback. He pulls information from the 15Fives to share progress being made in the weekly "What's New" report that is emailed to the entire team and board. This report shows progress and invites validation.

MONTHLY REPORT

Every department has its own reports, and specific data from those reports feed into the monthly report that is given to the board of directors and donors. This comprehensive monthly report includes statistics, graphics and charts, progress on Objective Key Results, and more. The board of directors is the primary stakeholder for this report, but everyone gets an email copy of it, and it's also on the wiki. This is one way to see the progress each department is making and contributing to our mission as a whole.

Feedback

You might think that feedback is about graciously accepting constructive criticism. That's important, but at A Child's Hope, the feedback that is most helpful in getting results is your feedback for the team—your opinion.

Have you ever heard someone else's opinion and learned something? Has it ever changed your thoughts or even your opinion? Because we all have different backgrounds and insights, everyone's feedback is important. Kent likes to remind us that when you don't share your opinion and give feedback, you are doing a disservice to the team. It is not okay to not express an opinion if you have one that could help us get better results.

Sometimes people get scared to share their opinion. They worry about creating conflict, or about antagonizing others. Please know that at A Child's Hope, if your feedback is focused on improving results, it is welcome! We like constructive conflict! Amber Young, who has been with us for about three months said,

"I never thought I would enjoy 'fighting' with my boss—but here, the 'fights' are a showcase of how much we care. Our culture allows conflict (I may even say requires). If and when there are disagreements, we don't get defensive, offended, or silent—instead we dive in, head first, ready to find the best way forward. Kent embodies this—I've been so frustrated at times (most often it's at him) yet he welcomes the disagreement, the questions, the concern, and let's us 'fight' it out and then carry on. And I'm not just saying this. It's all real."



Amber Young, Director of Strategic Partnerships, and her husband, Jacob.

Even though Kent usually believes he is right (just one of his many weaknesses), he knows that your opinion may change his. He likes when we state an opinion that is different than his, and stand up for that opinion. So feel free to challenge Kent and everyone else on the team.

When feedback and opinions have been shared and discussed, we can come to an agreement that everyone supports. If one person doesn't support the decision because they didn't feel heard, that sows the seeds for future failure. The diagram at the end of this section is from *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni. Kent is happy to personally buy you the book if you want to read more about the type of team we work to maintain at A Child's Hope Foundation.

Because you will give feedback, you will also receive feedback. This means you will almost certainly get your feelings hurt at times. That is the downside of vulnerability, but it is worth the cost. Even Kent gets his feelings hurt sometimes at meetings, so don't worry too much about it. If you do get hurt and you still feel bad after a day or so, talk about it with someone with the intention to invest more deeply in the relationship of the person you see as having hurt your feelings. It is important that we recognize our emotions and talk through them instead of getting passive-aggressive. Sometimes you might feel like others are just giving contrary opinions to play devil's advocate. But they might also have a point, so try to be open to challenging your own thoughts and opinions. Be willing to stretch and invest in those relationships, especially where the other person seems to always have a different opinion than you.

Meetings

Some people cringe when they think about attending meetings. That is because many meetings feel like a waste of time. However, when meetings are focused on getting results, they don't suck. At A Child's Hope, meetings are effective, mostly efficient, and hopefully energizing because your meetings are where you fight for your ideas. If you found yourself in a meeting where you didn't share an opinion, you probably didn't belong in that meeting. More on that later. For now, here is a list of the different types of meetings that keep our organization vibrant.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Includes people from across departments as well as volunteers. These meetings are rather infrequent and are called as needed by each committee chair.

CORRELATION MEETINGS

Members of one department meet with others to discuss the status of specific projects.

CHECK-INS

A quick personal or team check-in to prioritize the day.

TEAM MEETINGS

Standing meetings for the different departments, directors, or other teams.

TRAINING MEETINGS

Meetings where we learn about specific technologies and processes, called as needed to include those who are affected.

ONE-ON-ONES

Staff member and her or his manager.

STRATEGY MEETINGS

Ad hoc meetings that include those individuals who can help with a new project or specific problem.

ALL-HANDS SUMMITS

Infrequent gatherings for all staff and regular volunteers. We look at the big picture, hold trainings, play games, and celebrate progress.

WORKING MEETINGS

Scheduled as needed, this is two to four people working on a project together to actually dig in and get it done.

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Get-togethers outside of work hours. (See Section 2 - How to Create Value on the Team.)



One of our previous Team Building Activities, celebrating RaVae Beck's, our Communications Coordinator, graduation of her Master's Program.

Let me highlight a few of the meetings in this list.

The most important meeting for keeping everyone on track is the weekly one-on-one with your manager. You'll each reference and add to notes you've accumulated through the week in your 15Five account. This meeting is crucial for your work to be successful because you are in charge of the agenda. This is your meeting to get clarity on a bunch of issues that may have come up over the week, but weren't big enough to interrupt your manager with. You prioritize the list and your manager's concerns can go to the bottom of the list. This is also where your manager will ask, "How can I help you get unstuck accomplishing this project?" not simply, "How are you doing?" We are specific in this meeting and always come away with action items to complete over the next week. One-on-ones also let both people give and receive feedback in the work they are doing.

We've found that an effective way to tackle a problem or project, especially when you're feeling stuck, is to pull collaborators together in a working meeting. These meetings are helpful to productivity because you can pull in others whose strengths complement your weaknesses. Working together also strengthens friendships throughout our team. Remember, you're not alone, but you will be if you don't ask for help.

We do have a lot of meetings across the organization. We also need to give everyone time to get work done. That's why Thursdays are blocked out for deep work wherein no standing meetings are scheduled. Thursdays are also a great day to schedule an ad hoc or working meeting since it is much easier to find an opening.



From left to right: Leksi, Jaime, Amber, Beson, and Erin in the Management Team meeting.

Because we have many meetings, we need to make sure they help us get results and are not a waste of anyone's time. Every meeting has a specific purpose. For standard meetings, the purpose is on the written agenda, so all attendees already know the point of the meeting. For ad hoc or other new meetings, we start by asking, "What has to happen by the end of this meeting?" and then write that purpose on the whiteboard to stay anchored to the results we're looking for. Designing meetings with the end in mind helps us avoid "meeting stew", which is where people bring up whatever is on their minds, or they follow rabbit holes into work that should be done later or in another meeting. (To learn more about how to have effective meetings, read the book *Death by Meeting* by Patrick Lencioni).

Another of our practices for effective meetings is that we encourage healthy conflict. An important tangent to sharing your opinion in meetings is to not wait to be called on. Our meetings are not formatted to go around the table and ask each person what they think, though managers do try to do better at making sure everyone's opinions are shared. Mostly we just jump in after the speaker takes a breath which makes the manager running the meeting have to play referee so we don't all talk at once. Because we do so much to foster a feeling of trust on our team, we are comfortable talking passionately and not worrying about hurt feelings. You need to be assertive and jump in with your comments, occasionally interrupting. If this is not your communication style, you will struggle on our team; so talk openly about that struggle and we will figure it out together. Again, we need your opinion, so speak up and give it!

Meetings are also effective when everyone is clear about decisions made and tasks assigned. We use agendas for standing meetings to stay on track during the discussion. Everyone takes their own notes and captures the tasks they accept. When you come out of a meeting, you should have multiple new tasks. If not, you should consider taking yourself out of that meeting to maximize your time.

You also might find that you need to create a meeting. Recently, I began having one-on-one's with Jaime, even though she is not my manager. We found ourselves constantly communicating back and forth, and sometimes tasks got lost in our conversations. We decided to meet to capture our tasks. After one of our meetings, I walked away with 18 new tasks to accomplish—that is not a joke! That's when I knew these meetings were long overdue. This new meeting has helped my work be entirely more effective.

Now, as much as we love effective meetings, we individually avoid them when possible. Most regular meetings shouldn't have more than six people. Kent said you lose 20-30% efficiency with every person you add (he probably made up that statistic, but [here is some real research](#) on the size of meetings). If you have more than six people, a different meeting may need to be set up. Or someone should write up notes of what is discussed in the meeting and give it to the people who don't really need to attend but who want to stay up to date. Try to get out of meetings where you have nothing to add. Leksi and Erin are great at getting out of meetings. Why? Because they realize their time is better spent accomplishing the tasks they need to finish than being in a meeting where they will only be needed for one or two agenda items. If you can exchange instant messages rather than attending a meeting, do that. If you can get all the information you need from the weekly report or the wiki, use those instead of a meeting. Meetings are about making focused decisions and dividing up work toward results. If you need to be in only ten minutes of a meeting, schedule yourself for the beginning or end of the agenda. As we grow and our processes mature, you'll find that you aren't as needed in meetings that you used to attend. That's great! So try your best to get out of meetings when you find that you aren't able to contribute. And if you are in a meeting, use that time to share your opinion and get the best results.

So there you have it. I hope you have changed your mindset about meetings. As Kent says, "Meetings should be fun, or at least not suck." At A Child's Hope Foundation, we work hard to have engaging, meaningful meetings that drive results for our mission.

Communication Expectations

Because we all work so closely together, we will often need to communicate with each other to make decisions. So just some rules of thumb on the expectations on how we communicate as a team.

I NEED TO TALK, BUT NOT URGENTLY, JUST WITHIN THE NEXT 48 HOURS: AZENDOO (IF ABOUT AN ASSIGNMENT/TASK), OR EMAIL.

If you need an answer on something within a couple of days from a team member, then you might (but probably shouldn't) use email. Most of the time, a direct message within Azendoo (our team's task management software) is treated the same as an email. You can also have group conversations within a Subject or a Task in Azendoo, so when it is about a specific task or issue, that is usually best.

I NEED TO TALK, BUT JUST RESPOND SOMETIME TODAY PLEASE: HANGOUTS/WHATSAPP

A lot of times you just have a question but don't want people to drop things to respond, but you need input to move forward. When you want a same day response, try Google Hangouts chat (or WhatsApp). It is like text, but people know it isn't as urgent.

I NEED TO TALK NOW, LIKE ASAP! : CALL/TEXT

If you need something immediately (or they are late to a meeting and you worry they got hit by a truck), call that person and then if they can't answer, text them saying you need to talk ASAP. Text messages are also kind of urgent, say, within 3 hours (though people do need to sleep, so be cool about not texting too late).

That's pretty much it on how we communicate with each other. We avoid Slack and other types of ways to always stay in touch, mostly because we want you to be focused on getting things done, not getting pings constantly on conversations people are having. That's what Facebook is, and it's too crazy on the brain.

Now, one more word about email. Email can be pretty terrible if you start to use that as your to-do list. It's really just the worst form of prioritization probably and so we want you to be careful with it. We don't use it to task other people on the team. Instead we use Azendoo. Author Cal Newport wrote a great blog post titled: [Don't Delegate Using Email](#). He explains:

"Instead of allowing tasks to exist implicitly among emails buried in an inbox, why not instead isolate and clarify them as standalone cards on a virtual task board? Now it's clear who is supposed to be working on what, and all the information relevant to a given task can be appended to its card, instead of fracturing itself among impromptu email threads.

The person doing the delegation must now clarify what exactly they're delegating. When creating a new card for a task, as opposed to dashing off a message, you're forced to actually think through and articulate exactly what it is you want, when you need it, and what information will be required to get there."

So email is pretty much only useful to send information to multiple people, mostly people who work outside the organization. So if an email contains a bunch of information and you want them to read it as supporting information for a task, then please say so at the beginning of the email and task them within Azendoo so that it doesn't fall through the cracks. Which leads us to projects.

Project Management

Projects at A Child's Hope are fun because they are challenging and force you to learn new things. As you learn to manage your tasks and projects well, you will accomplish so much more good work, and you may find that project management improves other areas of your life.

The most important thing to understand about any project is that it is a collection of tasks organized toward getting a specific result. You can't finish a project without completing a bunch of tasks, so you should never have a project on your to-do list as if it were a task. A task is any single step that moves you closer to completing a project. For example, in my project to collect trip payments on time, sending a reminder email is one task, calling volunteers is another, and writing notes about contacts I've made is another. Really, good project management is good task management. Slow down to get clarity so you can speed up!

Here are some tips for good task and project management that you will put into practice at A Child's Hope:

- You will need to schedule 20-60 minutes a week to review your projects and reprioritize them. This is called a Weekly Review and if you fail to do this, your life will get very difficult very quickly, especially if you are a manager. Please ask Kent for his checklist for Weekly Reviews so that you can turn this into a habit. It is life-changing!



Stay on top of your projects and it'll be like you have your own team of you's getting stuff done!

- When tackling a new project, think of all the tasks that need to be done toward its completion without worrying about their order. Once your brain is done thinking of all the steps of the project, then you can put those tasks in an order that makes sense.
- Avoid plural deliverables. A plural deliverable is a sneaky way for one task to become two. If your task includes the word ‘and’, ‘too,’ ‘also,’ or anything plural, break it down and create another task. For example “Follow up with the Jones and Smith families for trip payments” should really be two tasks: “Follow up with the Jones family” and “Follow up with the Smith family”.
- A task should never require more than two hours to accomplish. If it does, break it into subtasks.
- One task should never require you to report results to more than one person. Why? Besides it creates confusion and you might report to one and think you reported to the other. If you need to report results to two people, break that into two subtasks where you can check off reporting to one person and then to the other.
- If your task has been stalled or past due for a week, make the next step even smaller.
- Especially in the setting of a meeting, make sure each task has an owner. Don’t just assume that someone will get that task done. Attach a name to it.
- Speaking of owning your tasks, be sure to capture them in a system as soon as you get them. We use a task management software called Azendoo to track progress on projects. You’ll be trained on that tool. The main point is that you have to build the habit of documentation to be successful around here. Writing your tasks is also helpful when creating projects that will repeat because then you already have the process documented.
- If you also want to use pen and paper to track your tasks, or you have a different process for task management, that’s fine. But the point of having a system we use as a team is so that your manager or another member of the team doesn’t have to ask you where you are at, they can just look and see. Think of Azendoo as part of your reporting, not just a task management tool.

Take this book for example. When I was assigned to write this, I felt like it was too much. It was too big. With everything else I was doing, I didn’t have the time to write a handbook. But then Kent and I sat down and broke it down. We had meetings talking about small sections of the content. He gave me resources to read and listen to. Then I would write, just one section or two at a time. That is three tasks right there, you could even say four since I would take notes on everything. When I cut this big project into small sections and then those small sections into small tasks, it didn’t seem so daunting. It was accomplishable. And it got done.

And double check that your tasks aren’t plural.

Recap

The following graphic, from *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni, illustrates qualities we aspire to embrace as a team at A Child’s Hope Foundation. I hope you can see that our culture and the way we do our work is focused on getting results for our stakeholders. You are one of those stakeholders too! In this job, you will be part of an environment of trust, constructive conflict, commitment, accountability, and getting results. Be prepared to stress, grow, build this organization, and ultimately change lives for the better!

Qualities of High Performing and Dysfunctional Teams



Based on book The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Section 4: Where We are Going

You may be wondering how exactly A Child's Hope Foundation achieves our mission of Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving. Well, we are in the midst of a three-year plan that moves us toward that goal. As you probably guessed, this plan is centered around getting results for our stakeholders. (You've read that phrase a lot. Soon you'll be hearing it a lot!) We are ahead in some parts of the plan, but here is what it looked like when we defined our work for the years from July 2019 through June 2022.

2019 YEAR 1: DEVELOP & CERTIFY ORPHAN CAREGIVERS

- Grow donor base through service trips
- Create Thrive Assessments and Orphanage Improvement Roadmaps (OIRs)
- Provide training and coaching for orphan caregivers
- Begin an International Volunteer Placement Program
- Provide grants to orphanages through the new Lift Fund
- Hire an international shared services staff
- Build A Child's Hope Foundation's capacity to scale

2020 YEAR 2: VALIDATE WITH NGO AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

- Refine our systems and assessments
- Initiate a University Partnership Program
- Set up an NGO Alliance Network
- Create a Child's Hope plan with each child at our partner orphanages

2021 YEAR 3: CARE AND LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

- Scale our systems for growth
- Develop curriculum and trainings for orphan care
- Connect leaders in orphan care with each other
- Create a technology platform for reporting on child progress
- Serve an increasing number of orphaned and abandoned children

I know that this list needs a lot more explanation, but I'm not going to do that here. That would take up way too much space. However, your manager will be happy to go over our plan for growth with you, just ask!

Are you excited about the work ahead of us? We are going to improve orphan care across the world! We will help children from broken homes, or who never knew their parents, become adults who have healthy families. Think about where you will fit in helping us fulfill this plan. It is a great cause to be a part of!

Section 5: Why We Want You



Emily Loudon, Finance Assistant

Nonprofit People

If this is your first time working for a nonprofit, let me tell you that nonprofit people are a real thing. From my experience, these are the people who love their job. These are the people who find a lot of purpose in the work they do. These are the people who are willing to sacrifice, try new things, and work really hard to do important good for the world. This isn't easy work. That's why you grow as a person when working for a nonprofit.

Emily, our Finance Assistant, who will soon graduate from college, put it well when she said, "I want to work for a nonprofit because it provides a work environment where I am proud of the cause I am working towards. Nonprofits provide a space where I can utilize my business background in a meaningful way that impacts people's lives in a tangible and measurable way."

Why We Do What We Do

We are here for people. We are here because we love Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving. We are here to Invest, Stretch, and Validate. We are here for our stakeholders: the Orphans and their Caregivers, our Volunteers and Donors, and the team members of our Board, Committees, and Staff. We are driven by the desire to effectively serve others.

It is a wonderful thing to see children's lives changed for the better because of our work. Recently, we received a report about Maria, a 13-year-old girl. When Maria arrived at Rancho de los Ninos, she didn't know how to read or write, and had a speech impediment. Despite the fact that she's a teenager, she was placed in 1st grade because she was basically illiterate. She worked really hard with our tutor, Lee, and our speech therapist/extended volunteer, Vicky. After four months, she could write down what someone said and read it back. She was then able to move up to 5th grade. She made so many improvements and she will continue to do so because of our programs.

Kassidy Hancey from our Marketing Team puts it this way: "A Child's Hope isn't looking to provide short-term relief to the children. Instead, we are looking to create fundamental change to the direction of each individual child's life so they can grow up with the support they need to accomplish their dreams."

I hope you are ready to make some dreams a reality!



Kassidy Hancey, Marketing Manager

Summary

Here at the end of this handbook, I hope you take to heart the advice I offer as someone who has worked for A Child's Hope for almost a year. This is an incredible organization. For me, it has been hard work, a learning opportunity, a fulfilling job, and an organization that makes me happy. I work with some of the greatest people I know. Are we perfect? Absolutely not. But we are all driven by the same goal to help others.

I invite you to revisit this handbook occasionally. That said, though this book is full of important information, remember that most of this information will be learned best by doing. Filling out a report, giving someone a 'high-five', coming to a work party, reading a book club book, getting to know your manager, breaking your tasks into smaller pieces, being a part of a meeting with a lot of conflict...we each drive A Child's Hope's culture, making our organization better each day. Get excited for an amazing journey!

Working for A Child's Hope has had an extremely positive impact on my life. If it feels like a good fit, I hope you take advantage of this opportunity too. If you don't think you'd be a good fit here, that's great too! I hope this little book just saved you a lot of time working in the wrong environment. If you do think that you'd be a good fit, get excited! The work we do is exhilarating and fulfilling.



Thank You!

Thank you for investing your time into learning what it's like to be part of the team at A Child's Hope Foundation. Whether you join our staff, join a volunteer trip, or just tell other good people about us, I hope you will support what we do at A Child's Hope Foundation, Lifting Orphans from Surviving to Thriving.

Kinsie Robbins

Appendix

Books to Read

The wiki contains a list of books that are recommended reading for our team. Here are a few of Kent's recommendations to have success on our team.

- The Ideal Team Player by Patrick Lencioni ([here is a helpful summary of the book](#))
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni
- Getting Things Done by David Allen
- The Anatomy of Peace by The Arbinger Institute
- Creativity, Inc. by Ed Catmull
- Death by Meeting by Patrick Lencioni
- Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when the Stakes are High by Al Switzler, Joseph Grenny, and Ron McMillan