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World Vision Experience: AIDS—Step into Africa
Walk through a free, interactive exhibit and for the first time experience the consequences of the AIDS epidemic from the perspective of the world's poorest children.

Zeeland, MI—The nationally touring, interactive World Vision Experience: AIDS Step into Africa exhibit is coming to Community Reformed Church in Zeeland to raise awareness about the effects of the AIDS pandemic on children in developing countries. Community Reformed Church, along with volunteers from other churches in the Zeeland area, is hosting this innovative and non-denominational exhibit in order to engage the community on the issue of how AIDS is devastating parts of Africa.

“World Vision is providing local residents of the greater Zeeland area with an opportunity to see, hear, and experience in a personal way, the lives of children whose worlds have been devastated by AIDS,” said Tim Custer, the project manager for the exhibit. “The statistics are staggering. Worldwide, two million children are living with HIV and more than 15 million children have lost one or both parents because of AIDS. By 2010, that figure is expected to jump to 18 million.”

When visitors enter the community life center, turned into a 2,500 sq. ft. virtual African village, they will don headsets and ‘become’ one of four real children—Kombo, Babirye, Emmanuel, or Mathabo—whose life has been affected by AIDS, and whose life has been touched by World Vision, one of the world’s leading charities for children. The exhibit is set in the hardest hit region of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa, where about 25 million people are infected with HIV, about two-thirds the world’s total.

The exhibit visited 75 cities during 2007/2008, drawing 150,000 people. This year, World Vision is expanding that to 40 more cities and hopes to double the visitors.

“World Vision, unfortunately, cannot take thousands of Americans to Africa to witness the tragedy of the AIDS pandemic personally,” said Richard E. Stearns, president and CEO of World Vision, U.S. “So we’ve created this exhibit to enable people to ‘step into Africa’ and learn more about the effects of the greatest humanitarian disaster of our time and how they can help. No one can do everything, but each of us can do something to help turn the tide against AIDS.”

The World Vision Experience: AIDS—Step into Africa exhibit will be at the Community Reformed Church on February 24 – March 1. Hours of operation are as follows: 11 am – 9 pm.

Reservations are available online at <http://www.worldvisionexperience.org> and are strongly suggested.

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World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. For more information, please visit www.worldvision.org.