

Kids Sponsor Kids



Two family physicians in Goderich, Ontario, Jim and Leslie Rourke, are such firm believers in Foster Parents Plan that all three of their children are sponsors.

'When each of them turned nine, starting with our eldest son Patrick, we asked our kids to choose a country that they were interested in and begin a relationship with a Foster Child the same age as them,' says Dr. Jim Rourke.

Patrick, now 16, began corresponding with James Matheri Njeri in Kenya's Kiambu district, and through the years, has gained a much better understanding of what it's like to grow up in a developing country.

'I picked Kenya because I didn't know a lot about Africa. Through keeping in touch with James and his family, I've felt really satisfied I am helping

Leslie and Jim Rourke with Patrick, Ryan and Shannon, and Spirit, the family dog

When the Rourke children turned nine, they started sponsoring a Foster Child of their own age, from a country they choose. All three feel this has helped them to learn a lot about other countries - and improve their writing skills!

someone by writing to them,' Patrick says.

He remembers one of James' letters, which told how PLAN had helped get new books for his school. The letter made Patrick realize how much his sponsorship helped the Kenyan community.

'Maybe some-day I can travel to Africa, but right now I just hope James does well, is able to get a good job and not fall back into

the cycle of poverty that surrounds him,' Patrick says.

Ryan Rourke, now 13, decided when he was nine to choose a Foster Child in the Philippines—because it 'seemed like a neat spot, I like islands'. For the past four years, he and Raeann Villaverde of Calapan, Philippines, have been getting to know each other.

'I like having someone I can help. What's more, corresponding back and forth has helped me to improve my writing skills... and I have learned a lot about the Philippines to the point where I've done some school projects on Raeann's country,' Ryan says. 'And aside from all that, our names are almost exactly the same!'

The Rourkes' third child, ten-year-old Shannon, has only been a sponsor for a year, but she says that Sandra Paricagua of Saj Paya, Bolivia, has become 'like a sister to me'.

'I chose Bolivia because it was on a different continent than the countries my brothers picked. Also, Bolivia is so much



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