

Bumps & Babies

March 2006

Your UAE guide from pregnancy to preschool



Picasso was a toddler too

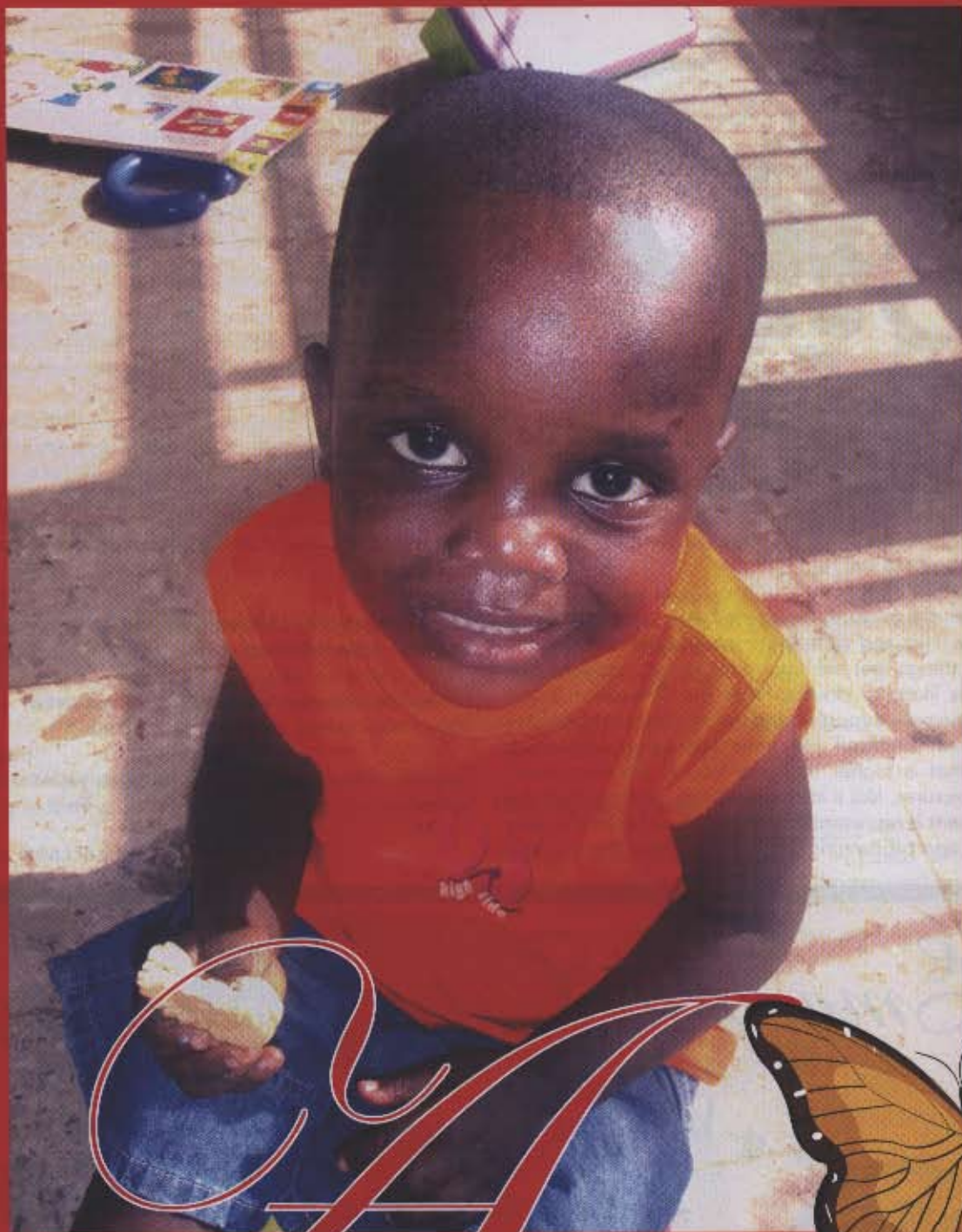
The importance of painting

Going Potty

From nappies to toilet, the stress free way

Baby sign language

- Paying it forward for children in need
- Helping labour along
- Allergies and pregnancy
- A closer look at immunisation



time

to give

By Gilla Brunt

As I am writing this, I can hear my almost-three-year-old playing throughout the house. She is happily chatting to stuffed toys, the dog, the cats and anybody else within earshot. Her clothes are practically brand new and fairly clean - and if they get too dirty in the playing process, there is a wardrobe full to change into. She had porridge and chocolate milk for breakfast, tea and chocolate biscuits in-between and will have at least two more full and nutritious meals today. She will be safe where she plays, go to sleep in warm pyjamas in a brand new, cosy bed and wake up to a brand new, carefree day in which all her needs are met and she is loved for just being who she is.

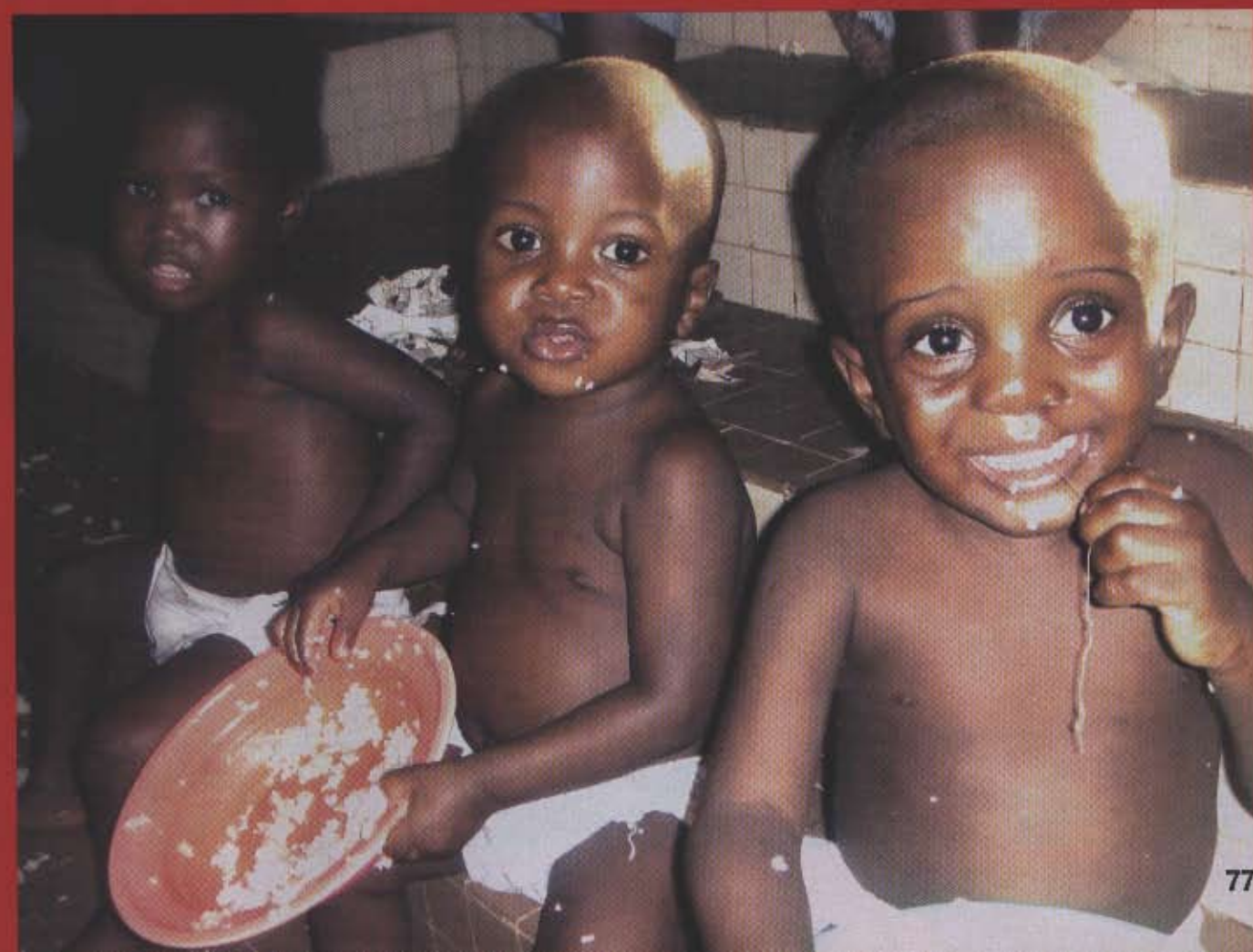
It is for her that I write this article, for the fact that she has a normal life the way a child should. For her, I want the world to be a better place, a place filled with love, peace and laughter - and the only way to make it so, is to make sure that all the children in the world experience love, acceptance and protection while they are growing up, so that they can grow up to give that to those around them.

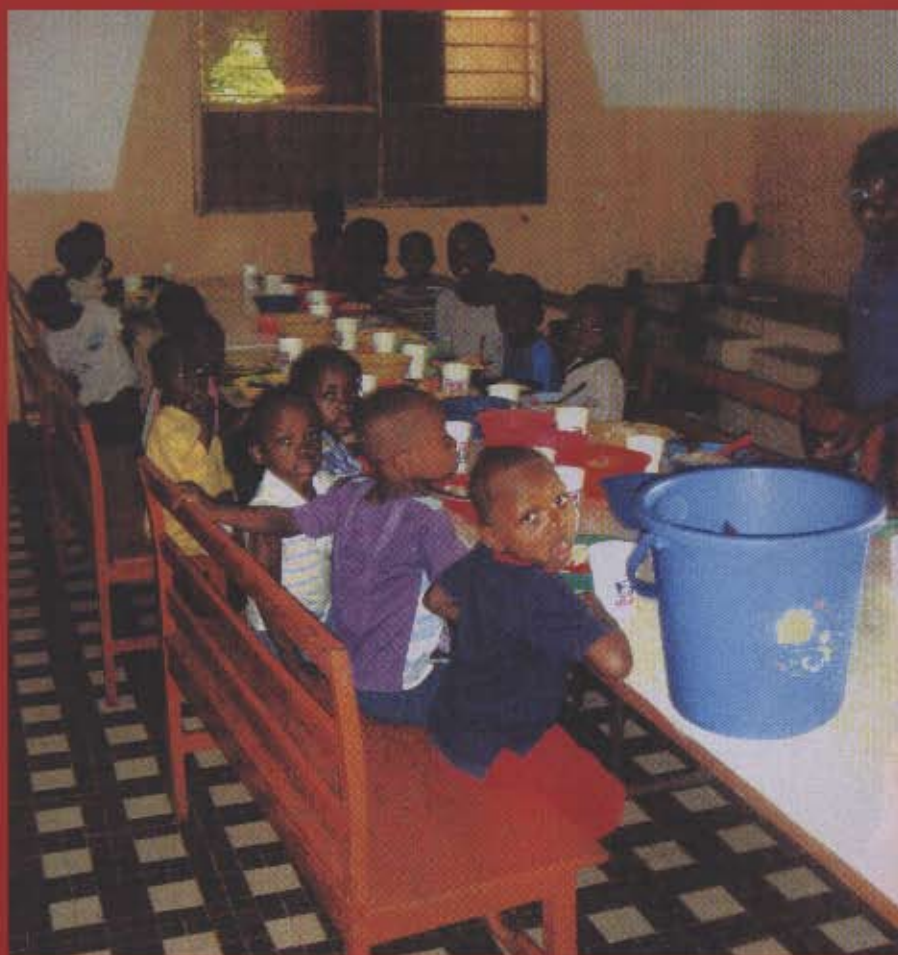
I cannot change the world in large measures, but I can do my best to touch the lives around me, and hope that every act of caring I send into the world has a ripple effect, as the people I save for pass it on to others. I hope that you will read this article and be inspired to do the same.

Sierra Leone emerged from a decade of civil war in 2002. It was a cruel and terrible war, not fought by highly trained professional soldiers armed with sophisticated weaponry, but by rebels and militia fighters, many of whom were mere children themselves, forced to fight a war they should not even have been witnessing. The war left more than 50,000 dead, but the atrocities committed in that time are still lingering in the lives and hardship of the country's people - and in particular its children.

The trademark of the rebels was to hack off the hands of their victims, ensuring that they had no means of supporting themselves and would eventually starve to death. However, the cruelty did not start or end there and the physical and emotional scars of the war linger in the lives of countless survivors. The survivors of the war are testimony to the invincible spirit of mankind; overcoming incredible obstacles and injuries (both physical and emotional), the people of this African country are slowly rebuilding their lives.

Many of these people are children, some old enough to remember the war, physically and mentally maimed during it, and some just born into the aftermath and poverty that lingers in the country today. Some are orphaned, others abandoned by parents who could not cope. Some were taken in by relatives or friends already struggling to make ends meet, some are living on the streets and some were brought to places of safety by desperate parents, relatives or strangers.





Providing a home with heart

All As One is a registered non-governmental agency that has been providing a place of safety and care for many children in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, since 2000. They are also actively supporting the people in the community at large, in an effort to help as many families and children survive from day to day and build a meaningful future.

Their mission is to provide not only the basic needs of the children in their care, but to add to that as much love and protection as possible – all the things that children should be able to take for granted.

The All As One Children's Center is an orphanage that usually has up to 70 children of varying ages in their full-time care. The centre is home to the children: they have beds to sleep in, receive three nutritious meals a day, are bathed and clothed, educated and receive medical care. These children

are nurtured and loved by the staff of the centre, who are all Sierra Leoneans supporting their own and extended families with the money they earn each day.

The centre is located in an old estate with ten large bedrooms and eight bathrooms on three floors. It includes a small clinic, office, laundry room, spacious kitchen and dining area, recreation rooms and covered verandas. The property is completely fenced and large enough for the children to run and play safely.

For most of the children, some who arrived there severely malnourished or at death's door, it is the only home they have ever known.

Learning for life

Alongside the orphanage, All As One runs a school to educate the children of the orphanage and the surrounding community, giving them a hand up in securing a better future.

Here, children are taught from pre-school to sixth grade, and are instructed

in English, mathematics, literature, social studies, science, arts and physical education. The class sizes are kept small to give each child the best opportunity for learning.

To these children, something as seemingly insignificant as learning to write their own names is a gigantic leap towards establishing their own identity and self-worth. Discovering that they can indeed learn about the world around them and master new skills, is a ray of hope for a better future.

Taking care of the community

All As One also works to assist and uplift the community in general. The stronger the community becomes, the more able it is to take care of its members, reducing the need for assistance from organisations like All As One.

The organisation runs a clinic to help keep the community's children and their families healthy by providing preventative healthcare and medical treatment as and when needed. The clinic is staffed 24 hours a day by registered nurses and doctors who rotate

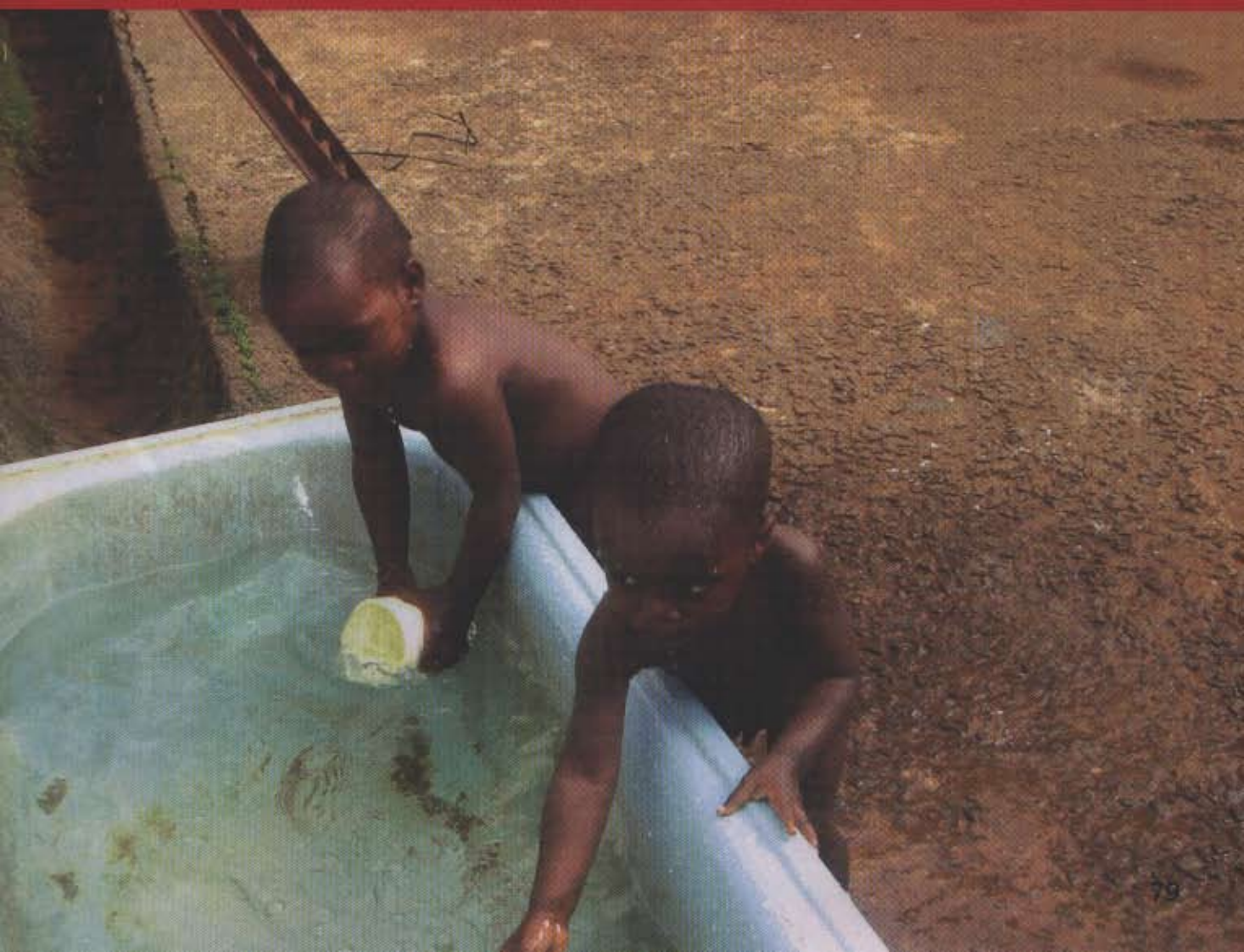
schedules to oversee the patients' care and treat more serious cases. It is also visited by doctors from other countries who work for short periods of time and provide in any additional or specialised treatment needed.

Further, the organisation works to assist destitute families in becoming self-sufficient. They do not merely hand over money to families in need, but rather support these families in building a sustainable future. Sometimes this involves helping people obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to find work or start their own small business, while at other times this process might start with something as basic as providing food and shelter and helping the family work towards an independent future.

So little can do so much

Naturally, these initiatives involve a great deal of work on the part of many people - and none of this would be possible without ongoing funding.

Fortunately, there are many willing hands, and a little help goes a long



way when it is direly needed. Relatively speaking, the money required is ridiculously little – just place it into the context of your monthly household budget, remember how many people they care for and consider the enormous positive impact this type of assistance has in the lives of so many with so little.

For All As One to keep the orphanage going, they need US\$8,700 a month. The money is spent on the following:

- \$2,500 a month for the children's food;
- \$500 a month for vitamins and medication, plus doctors' bills for the children;
- \$500 for utilities and maintenance of the Children's Center;
- \$1,000 for rent on the Children's Center property;
- \$4,200 a month for staff salaries.

The above summarises only the cost of keeping the orphanage going, but without it, these children have nowhere to go.

I don't know about you, but I think I need to pitch in and help.

How you can make a difference

Naturally, All As One needs money – the more they have, the more children they can help, the better they can help them and the longer they can keep doing it. Whether you choose to donate some cash once off or each month, or can help to find a company that can sponsor a portion of the orphanage's budget for a set period of time, every little bit counts.

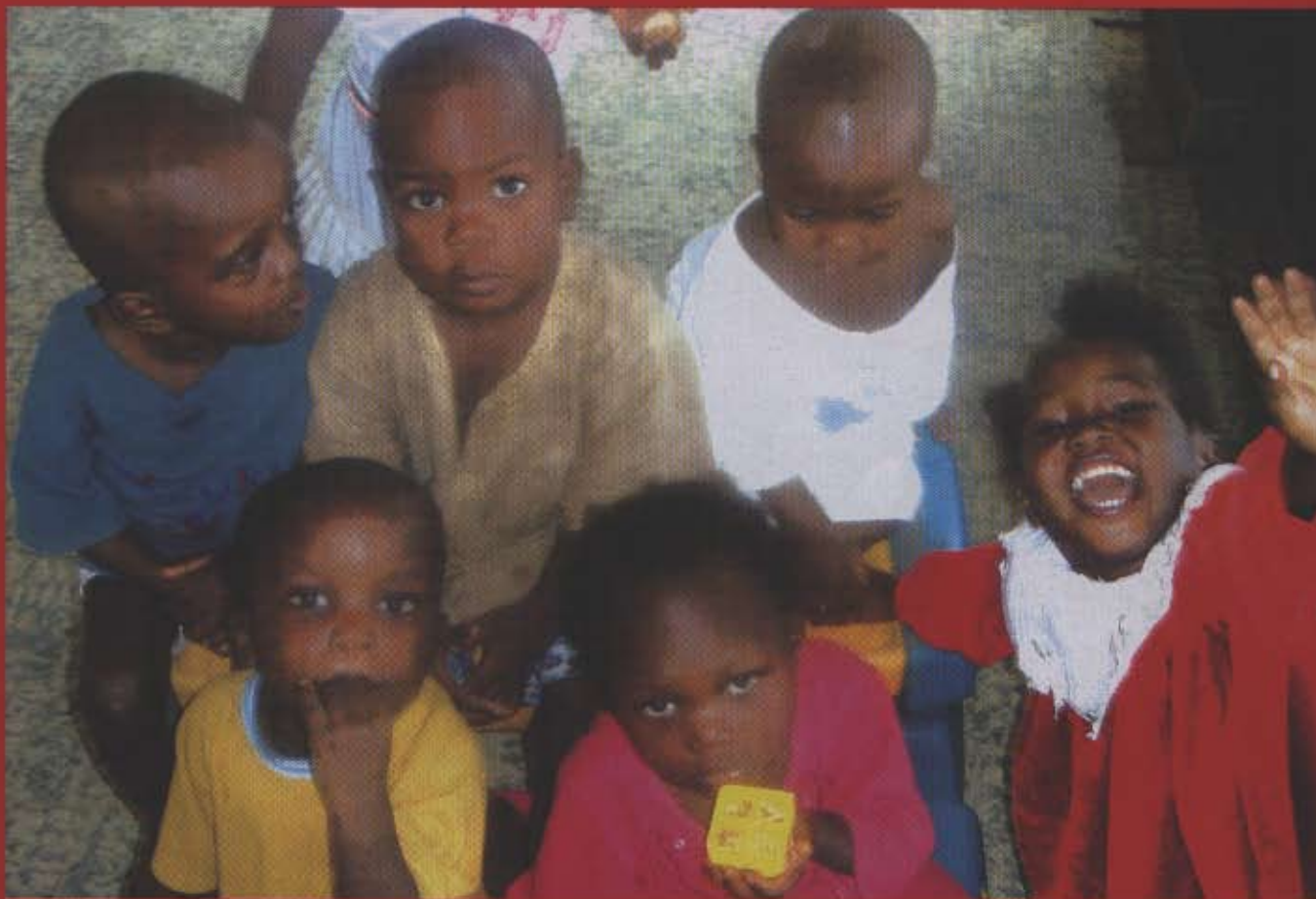
If you would like to have an excessive amount of fun while donating your money, why not grab a few friends and attend the All As One African Ball on Thursday, the 30th of March at the Shangri-La Hotel in Dubai. For details of the ball, see their poster on page 81.

However, if you prefer sending goods rather than money, they will always be grateful for the following items:

- Children's clothing (summer) – ages toddler to 14 years
- Shoes (summer) - ages toddler to 14 years
- Cloth nappies/diapers – these are re-used so need to be cloth
- Over the counter children's medication
- Bed sheets (single size) and waterproof mattress protectors
- Toys for the toddler room – must be durable, no guns, no water or batteries required.

For more information on All As One, log on to www.allasone.org.

For information about the African Ball, or to donate money or goods, contact Matthew Morgan-Jones on (050) 654-3126 or email matthew@allasone.org.





Presents...

The African Ball

Date: Thursday, March 30th 2006

Time: 7.30 pm

Location: Shangri-La Hotel

**Dress Code- Black Tie with a hint of
animal print!**

For tickets and table bookings contact

Matthew Morgan- Jones

Email - Matthew@allasone.org

Mobile- 0097150 6543126

**The All as One Charity was created to ease
the suffering of orphaned, abandoned and
destitute children in Sierra Leone.**

**They need your help to avert closure of the
orphanage that has saved the lives of
countless children since 1997.**

For more information visit...

www.allasone.org

