

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE INTERNATIONAL

OIC Co-founders Gary Sinise & Laura Hillenbrand



# Operation International Children

## Action Pack



**OIC**  
**OPERATION**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**CHILDREN**  
[www.operationinternationalchildren.org](http://www.operationinternationalchildren.org)



**Everyone deserves the right to an education.**  
**Do *your* part to help children in Iraq and beyond.**



# What is Operation International Children?

Since 2004, Operation International Children (formerly Operation Iraqi Children), has provided a way for concerned individuals to reach out to the children of Iraq and Afghanistan and at the same time to support troops' efforts to assist the Iraqi and Afghan people.

In September 2009, OIC co-founders actor Gary Sinise (*Forrest Gump*, *CSI: NY*) and author Laura Hillenbrand (*Seabiscuit: An American Legend*) announced that Operation Iraqi Children would expand and be known as Operation International Children. This expansion enables individuals to send school supply kits not only to Iraq and Afghanistan, but also to children of other nations. While OIC's focus remains

on Iraq, it has extended its reach to send shipments of school supplies to Afghanistan, the East African nation of Djibouti, the Philippines and Kyrgyzstan.

Since its inception, OIC has shipped more than 275,000 school supply kits, along with more than half a million toys, thousands of Arabic-language books, shoes, blankets, backpacks and sports equipment, all of which have been distributed to children by U.S. troops.

OIC is administered by People to People International. The kits and other items are assembled for shipment at PTPI's OIC Warehouse in Kansas City, Missouri, and after their arrival abroad, they are distributed by U.S. troops to school children.

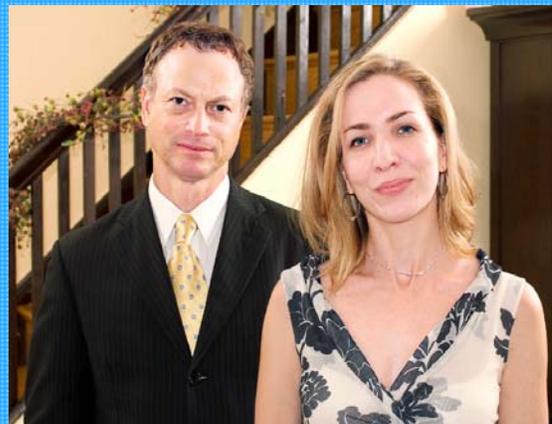
## Students' Uphill Struggle to Learn

Without basic tools of education, Iraqi children face an uphill struggle to learn.

*"Imagine sending your child to a school in which there are virtually no books, no pencils, no paper, no blackboards. This is the reality for Iraqi children. The future of the Iraqi nation is being squandered for lack of basic school supplies."* - Laura Hillenbrand, OIC Co-Founder

## OIC: Making an Impact

"I have seen Iraqi kids climbing on our soldiers and hugging them and kissing them," remembers actor Gary Sinise, who accompanied U.S. Army soldiers to a dilapidated school they were rebuilding in Iraq. "I have seen their smiling faces and their attempts to say 'I love you' in broken English. The folks I saw had hope in their eyes and gratitude in their hearts for what was done for them."



Gary Sinise and Lauren Hillenbrand established OIC in 2004. PTPI administers the program.

# How You Can Help OIC

## Are you ready to begin a collection for OIC but have no idea where to start?

Don't worry. Planning an OIC collection is a great and easy way to help the children of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries. The most effective way to help is to collect and to create sets of School Supply Kits. Each kit contains basic, badly-needed items that can make a world of difference to a child. Assembling standardized kits ensures each child receives the same number of the most-needed items, facilitates customs clearance and relieves volunteers and soldiers of the time-consuming and labor-intensive process of sorting and allocating random donated items.

### OIC Collection Timeline

1. Set a goal.
  2. Gain support —volunteers & donations.
  3. Plan for program (shipping) costs.
  4. Publicize your efforts.
  5. Get ready for the big day.
  6. Assemble kits.
  7. Ship your kits to the OIC Warehouse.
  8. *Congratulate yourselves on a job well done.*
- Feel great knowing you have helped children in*



**YOUR HELP IS NEEDED**

### What materials do I need to build an OIC School Supply Kit?

- One pair of blunt-end scissors
- One 12-inch ruler with metric markings
- 12 new pencils with erasers
- One small pencil sharpener
- One large eraser
- One box of colored pencils
- One package of notebook paper
- One composition book
- Three folders with inside pockets
- One zippered pencil bag

*Package items in a two-gallon zipper seal plastic bag.*

*The goal of Operation International Children is to improve the quality of education for children by ensuring their access to the basic tools of learning, and to foster goodwill between U.S. troops and local citizens while promoting the peace process.*

# Collecting alternative items for OIC

While school supplies are the primary need of OIC, it also ships items, such as sports equipment and stuffed animals.

## Sports Fans!

Children are thrilled when they receive sports equipment. If you would like to send sports equipment through OIC, be sure to send items from this list:

- Soccer balls
- Jump ropes
- Frisbees

*Please send all balls deflated for air-transport and include a small hand pump for re-inflating.*

## Urgent Needs

Because of current needs, OIC also ships blankets, backpacks, shoes and tarps.

## Serious Considerations

Please use discretion in choosing your supplies, sports equipment and stuffed animals. Avoid items that are religious, depict war or conflict or are strongly gender or age specific. Please be sensitive to the fact you are sending items into a culture less exposed to television and video games, and under emotional strain.



*Ten-year old Bobby Gaston was moved listening to a friend's father, who had recently returned from Iraq, talking about the conditions for Iraqi children. After his mother agreed to give him money from a family garage sale, Bobby set out to collect new shoes and soccer balls for children in Iraq. Bobby collected 92 pairs of shoes, 130 pairs of socks, 25 soccer balls, four air pumps and enough money to buy 75 soccer balls directly from Wilson!*

# Steps for Success

## Step One: Set a Collection Goal for your OIC project

Setting concrete goals will focus your efforts. A sample goal could be, "Together, we will collect enough supplies to build 200 school supply kits by June 30."

## Step Two: Gain Support

After your group sets goals, get support from your local community. Begin by contacting schools, churches, non-profit organizations and stores in your area. Many community groups and organizations are eager to help and can provide valuable donations and support for your project.

- Introduce your group and share OIC's mission.
- Share your group's goals.
- Ask for support.

### Get the word out!

Modify and print the [OIC flyer](#) to advertise your project. Also, feel free to create your own flyers explaining the mission of this collaborative project and asking students, parents and organization members to participate.

## Step Three: Plan for Program Costs

Don't forget about shipping costs. To raise funds for shipping, be creative and have fun. Ask PTPI for a complete list of fundraising ideas. Don't forget to contact local shipping companies to see which company will ship school supplies at the lowest rate. Here are a few fundraising ideas to get started:

- Organize a bake sale, neighborhood yard sale etc.
- Plan a fundraising breakfast at your school or community center.
- Host a benefit concert or have a "battle of the bands."
- Start a coin drive.
- Ask every participant to donate a few dollars to help cover the costs.
- Make a cookbook. Assemble tasty recipes and have a promotional "sampling" party to raise funds.

### PLANNING TIP

If you are a PTPI chapter member, you can apply for a **PTPI Grant** to fund part of the shipping costs for your OIC project. Grants are awarded on a quarterly basis with application deadlines March 15, June 15, September 15 and December 15.

## Step Four: Share Your OIC Project with Others

Publicizing your OIC activities will help draw attention to your group's efforts and success. Local newspapers, television and radio should be contacted, but more importantly, advertise to your peers, family and community. Take advantage of publicity opportunities at your school or community center by hanging posters or making announcements to create excitement for your OIC project. If your project involves working with partner agencies, utilize resources they may have and publicize your event through their networks.



# Making Your Project Happen

## Step Five: Get Ready for the Big Day

Good management and advanced planning are critical to completing a successful OIC project. Set a deadline for the collection of materials. Establish a central collection area where items will be sorted, boxed and labeled. Ask donors to bring tape and sturdy shipping boxes. Banana boxes, which are available from your local grocery, or paper boxes from an office supply store or your school both work well.



## Step Six: Assemble Kits

On the day your group assembles School Supply Kits, you may find it helpful to create a schedule of the day's events. By including an exact breakdown of each event of the day with resources needed, location, person(s)

*"I took this picture of the tail end of my truck that was filled with supplies from your organization. Rest assured that these supplies will be well-received and evenly dispersed. What you guys are doing is absolutely phenomenal. I can't tell you the impact that these school supplies will have on the kids. Thanks, again, from me AND the children."*—SSG Michael Gaudet **Baghdad, Iraq**

responsible and contact information, you can ensure the project will be organized and run smoothly. Good management and advanced planning are important. Before activities begin, be sure to include an orientation for volunteers that explains the goals of Operation International Children and information about the agency/site and related issues, the day's schedule and any other specific instructions.

**Boxes of supplies should be mailed to:**

**Operation International Children - 1529 Atlantic - North Kansas City, MO 64116 USA**

## Step Seven: Shipping Your Supplies

Thanks to OIC's alliance with FedEx and People to People International, donors are only responsible for shipping costs to Kansas City. Donors should ship School Supply Kits to the **OIC Warehouse in Kansas City (see address above)**, where the supplies will be inventoried and prepared for international transport.

It is impossible to determine exact shipping costs in advance, but to get an estimated figure, contact your local mailing service, such as USPS, UPS or FedEx, and provide them with the approximate weight of your boxes. Be sure to ask whether there are weight limitations for boxes shipped, as this may affect the total shipping cost. Before mailing your boxes of supplies, complete [donor information sheets](#) and place one in each box.



*"I really wish the donors could witness first-hand how the supplies you provided are making a tremendous impact in the lives of the children here in Iraq."*  
—LTC Linda J.M. Holloway  
**Western Anbar Province, Iraq**

# Do something to help!

*Thousands of children lack basic school supplies.*

Publicize your collection effort for OIC! Complete these important facts about your collection and post in local supermarkets, schools, religious institutions and other public locations.



WHO

WHAT

WHERE

WHEN

WHY

Operation International Children (OIC) is a program functioning in partnership with People to People International. OIC is a grassroots program founded in early 2004 by actor Gary Sinise and author Laura Hillenbrand. Sinise and Hillenbrand created OIC to give concerned individuals a way to reach out to war-stricken Iraqi and Afghan children and support U.S. troops in their efforts to assist them. To learn more, visit Operation International Children's Web site [www.operationinternationalchildren.org](http://www.operationinternationalchildren.org).

Since the program's inception, OIC has shipped more than 275,000 School Supply Kits and more than half a million toys to U.S. soldiers who have delivered these items to children in war-torn countries.

*Download this form at [www.operationinternationalchildren.org](http://www.operationinternationalchildren.org)*

# Donation Information Sheet

*Complete and include in each box shipped to the OIC Warehouse.*

## **Operation International Children**

Donation Information Sheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Donor Information**

Name of Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

School or Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Which transportation carrier was used to mail the donation? \_\_\_\_\_

### **School Kit Information**

# of boxes shipped: \_\_\_\_\_ X # of Kits per box: \_\_\_\_\_ = Total # of Kits donated: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Other Donation (bulk school supplies, sports equipment, urgent need items)**

# of boxes shipped: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation: \_\_\_\_\_ # per box: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like an acknowledgement letter for your donation? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Would you like to be added to the OIC Mailing List? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Briefly describe the group that put this donation together and why you want to donate it to Operation International Children.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Gift in Kind Agreement**

#### **I AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

Operation International Children will do our best to send these Kits to Iraq and other countries with a US military presence. In the case that we are unable to ship these Kits, due to circumstances beyond our control, please sign below to release these Kits for humanitarian use in another needy area of the world. Operation International Children is not responsible for assigning a dollar value to the contribution. The donor is responsible for declaring the fair market value.

Released by: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail donation to:  
Operation International Children  
1529 Atlantic  
North Kansas City, MO 64116 USA

# Common Questions and Answers

**Q: Can I request materials for use in promoting an OIC collection?**

**A:** Yes. Please contact us for more information. We are happy to provide brochures, photos or a PowerPoint presentation.

**Q: When is the deadline for sending supplies or donating money?**

**A:** There is no deadline. This program is ongoing.

**Q: Instead of collecting school supplies, I would simply like to collect monetary donations. Can I do that?**

**A:** Of course! Please make all checks payable to "Operation International Children" and send to:  
People to People International World Headquarters  
911 Main Street, Suite 2110  
Kansas City, MO 64105 USA  
100% of monetary donations are used to purchase school supplies and offset shipping costs. Thank you for your generosity!

**Q: Will OIC pay shipping costs from my location to Iraq or Afghanistan?**

**A:** No. All donors should send their donations to the OIC Warehouse in Kansas City, MO. We will ship the donations. FedEx and OIC's monetary donors' generosity greatly reduces the cost of shipping, but donors must pay for the shipping cost to the OIC Warehouse.

**Q: Can I donate school supplies that are not listed on your school supply list?**

**A:** While it is tempting to add items that fall outside OIC guidelines, we ask donors to stick to the list. Including non-listed items greatly slows the process at the warehouse.



**Q: May I send used materials?**

**A:** Because used materials are sometimes perceived as insulting to the recipients and create a disparity in the quality of items each child receives, we ask all donated items be new or unused.

**Q: May I enclose a letter to the children receiving the supplies or to the troops that will be distributing them?**

**A:** Please do! We ask you do not put the letters inside the school kits; rather put them in the box with the donations. We also ask the letters be positive and do not include any religious or political material. Do not include any contact information on the letter. If you wish to receive a response, please include a pre-addressed stamped envelope. When OIC receives letters in return, we will send them to you in the envelope you provided.

**Q: Are there any tax benefits for donations?**

**A:** Yes, you may receive a tax deduction for donating school kits to OIC. Provided you send a donor information sheet with your donation, you will be sent a thank you letter that may be used for tax purposes. You determine the value of the items that you have donated, but as a guideline we estimate the value to be \$15 USD per kit.

**We want to support your OIC project in every way possible. Please contact PTPI with any questions regarding your OIC efforts.**

**Kelly Meyer**, Operation International Children Project Director +1.816.531.4701 *phone* • oicinfo@ptpi.org *email*

**Operation International Children**  
1529 Atlantic North Kansas City, MO 64116 USA  
+1.816.241.7321 *phone* • oicwarehouse@ptpi.org *email*

