**Every Child Ministries Special Gift Policy**

Special gifts have a special place in the lives of ECM's children, and we encourage sponsors to send extra gifts for birthdays, Christmas, and other occasions. However, because sponsored children are almost always surrounded by other Hope Center children, five important guidelines have been established for the good of the entire program. These guidelines apply to all ECM children ***except*** *Next Step* students, as their educational needs often require extra funding.

* Special gifts of **$30 or less** are encouraged at special times throughout the year, such as birthdays and Christmas. The specific use of the gift is determined by the Hope Center coordinator, the child, and the child's family.
* Any portion of a financial gift which is **over $30**, in order to avoid jealousy and conflict, will be used for *all the children in the project*. For example, our staff may choose to buy soccer balls for the Hope Center, which all the children can play with together. Ultimately, the use of all special gifts is up to the discretion of our Hope Center staff.
* Letters are sent quarterly to Africa, and the sponsorship coordinator will alert you in advance when the time comes to start sending in your letters.
* Sponsors may also wish to send non-monetary gifts such as birthday or Christmas presents to a child. Because of the high cost of shipping, along with possibility of theft, and difficulty getting the packages to children in remote areas, we **cannot send packages through the post** with the regular letters and cards, and therefore we request that donors DO NOT send the items to the ECM office without prior permission. When ECM staff members travel to Africa, they will make every effort, as space allows, to carry gifts from sponsors to their children. We will let you know when the opportunity arises to send small gifts with one of our staff members to Africa.
* In addition, when packages are sent to Africa with our staff, package limitations are as follows: Must be in an 8.5” by 11” envelope or smaller, under one inch thick, and up to 6 oz in weight.

Effective March 14, 2016; revised June 2021.