

The Noel Group

Building Hope: In a promising model to meet the looming AIDS orphan crisis, the Noel Group has spearheaded an innovative initiative called Nyumbani Villages International (NVI) that is attempting to create communities throughout Sub-Saharan Africa for elders and children who have lost their families to AIDS.

“Orphaned children, under the stewardship of elderly adults, will live in homes that simulate a family environment.”

The AIDS pandemic has the potential to create the greatest child abandonment in the history of humankind. Currently, there are approximately 13 million AIDS orphans worldwide – a number projected to double by 2010. The Noel Group is commended for its leadership to bring the issue of AIDS orphans to the attention of other leaders from business and government around the world and seek an innovative solution to the problem of AIDS orphans.

In 1999, The Noel Group partnered with the Nelson Mandela's Children Fund to create a self-sustaining, intergenerational community called Ntokozweni

in the Kwa Zulu Natal region of South Africa. Ntokozweni meets the needs of two groups that have been devastated by the AIDS pandemic – orphaned children and the elderly who traditionally count on their grown children to support them in their old age.

The Noel Group's founder John Noel is now spearheading an international coalition of partners to provide a permanent solution to the orphan crisis associated with the AIDS pandemic. Using the Ntokozweni model, Noel's vision is to create intergenerational villages throughout Africa that will provide a home for orphans and elders who have lost their parents/adult children. The goal for each village is to house about 1,000 residents, to be self-sustaining, and to be the antithesis of the despair and hopelessness that these vulnerable victims currently face.

Here, residents should find nutritious food, education, and the best in medical and spiritual care. It is planned that residents will support themselves through farming and trades they will learn in the Village schools. The idea is for elders within the Nyumbani Villages to receive care, respect, and a sense of purpose, while children will learn traditional customs and values in a family-like environment.

John Noel has built an international coalition of partners for the Nyumbani Village initiative that includes companies in the private sector, NGOs and government agencies. His ultimate vision is to see hundreds, and perhaps thousands of Nyumbani Villages built throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. With proper care and support that dream will become a reality.

ABOUT THE COMPANY Headquartered in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, The Noel Group is a diversified, global organization that provides integrated travel insurance, travel medical assistance, travel and concierge services for corporate clients and individuals throughout the world. Member companies include Travel Guard International, Travel Guard Canada, MultiNational Underwriters and Pan American Assistance.