

Making Every Shot Count

As basketball season rolls in this month, 18-year-old Austin Gutwein continues to use his favorite sport to save and change lives.

When Gutwein was 9, he was moved to compassion after hearing the story of Maggie, a young Zambian girl who lost both her parents to AIDS.

But Gutwein didn't only sympathize with his peer; he began thinking up plans to help her and others in her predicament. Having limited resources at his age, he asked friends and family to sponsor him to shoot hoops.

The result: Hoops of Hope was born. It's now the world's largest free-throw-shooting marathon. First held on World AIDS Day in 2004, Gutwein shot 2,057 free throws to represent the amount of children orphaned every day because of AIDS. He raised \$3,000. Now, eight years later, the ministry has 40,000 people participating in 25 countries, and has raised nearly \$3 million to help African orphans.

"What really gets me excited is that we're making a difference with something simple like a basketball marathon," Gutwein says. "Not only are we helping AIDS orphans, but we're preventing AIDS orphans by actually getting the meds and resources to the people."

Hoops of Hope has built two medical clinics, a high school, four dormitories, a computer laboratory and has done multiple water projects through out Africa.

Gutwein travels the country encouraging people to allow God to use their gifts and resources to help others, which is his message in his new book *Live to Give*.

"For me, it was shooting hoops to raise money," he says.

“[God] wanted me to give my time and my favorite hobby. For the boy in the multitude of 5,000, it was his lunch. There is one common theme throughout all of our stories: We all need to live to give because we were made for it.” –*Felicia Abraham*