



EARTHCHECK

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ALILA VILLAS ULUWATU, BALI

We all know the side of Bali that draws tourists in their droves; sun-drenched beaches, a dramatically beautiful landscape, the diving and surfing, fascinating temple ceremonies, friendly people, and so on. What many of us don't usually associate with Bali though is the sight of children living, sleeping and begging in the streets; particularly in tourist-packed Kuta and Denpasar.

Extreme poverty often has a big hand in these children's fates; their parents too poor to take care of them, leaving them to fend for themselves. Many end up on the streets, where they may be 'owned' by a boss and made to beg in exchange for a small place to sleep.

For such kids, an orphanage is their best hope of breaking out of this cycle of poverty and having a chance to create a better future. There are thousands of children living in numerous orphanages and children's homes in Bali. One such home is the Bali Life Foundation located in Jimbaran.

Australian Brad Little and his Sumatran wife Siska, started the Bali Life Foundation after meeting a 9-year-old boy begging for money on the streets of Kuta. They got to know each other and the boy asked if he could move in with Brad and start going to school.

The Littles were unable to help the boy at the time as they were expecting their first child, but today, they run an eight-bedroom house fully staffed by Indonesians, providing a safe and loving home for orphaned, abandoned and rejected children.

In creating an environment of hope, purpose and dignity, Bali Life provides the children with physical, spiritual and emotional guidance, and an education to help them become independent, responsible and successful in life.

Through workshops, the children learn practical skills such as English, IT, farming and cooking, which will stand them in good stead in terms of their future employability.

Running as sustainably as possible, Bali Life has devoted much of its land to farming fruits and vegetables, as well as a chicken farm which provides eggs for the children's consumption. As for other essentials, Bali Life depends on contributions from partners such as EarthCheck Member, Alila Villas Uluwatu.

In the pipeline are plans to build a much larger purpose-built home that will be able to accommodate up to 60 children, as well as a new training centre and community centre.

INSIGHT

Alila Villas Uluwatu is located on a clifftop plateau along the southern coastline of Bali on the Bukit Peninsula, Alila Villas Uluwatu is just 30 minutes from Ngurah Rai International airport and 15 minutes from Jimbaran Bay near the renowned Uluwatu Temple.

Responsible tourism is a big part of Alila's DNA. The Gift to Share programme (which incidentally is offered at other Alila Resorts besides Alila Villas Uluwatu) is a great way for travellers to combine a fabulous holiday with the opportunity to help contribute to local community needs.

The Bali Life Foundation is one of the nominated charities Alila Villas Uluwatu recognises under its Gift to Share programme; a programme that pledges donations to selected local causes for every Gift to Share package booked by its guests.

The resort provides all of the foundation's basic food requirements on a monthly basis, items like rice, cooking oil, cooking gas and condiments. It partners the foundation in its recycling and sustainability programmes. It will also be providing full-time employment in its kitchens to the home's oldest child, who is 16 years of age.

Even with all the good work the foundation is doing, it hopes to do much more. It is currently packed to the rafters with 21 children in its care. Heartbreakingly, it has to regularly turn away other desperate children.

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