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SHOPPING CART

Karito Kids

By Felicia Pinkney

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Someone once said that charity begins at home. That must be what the folks at Kids Give had in mind when they developed the Karito Kids. A quintet of multicultural dolls, the Karito Kids are like a modern-day, international version of the American Girl dolls. They include Lulu (Kenya), Wan Ling (China), Pita, left, (Mexico), Zoe (New York) and Gia (Italy). (Karito, from the constructed language Esperanto, means "charity" and "love of one's neighbor.")

Each doll comes with a novel that tells a girl's story and a passport that includes a secret activation code. Enter the code at www.karitokids.com, and a percentage of the purchase price funds Plan, an organization that supports children in poor countries worldwide. Kids can even choose how they want the money to be used, such as to benefit schools or health programs. (The Web site also includes e-cards, coloring pages and more.)

We tested Pita, a horse lover from Mexico City. My 7- and 4-year-old daughters loved that Pita was older than them -- Karito Kids represent the average 11-year-old girl -- so they seemed to respect her more than their other dolls. And the Karito message of charity hit home with me, because we're trying to focus more on giving, rather than getting, this year.

Details: The dolls, somewhat pricey at \$99.99 each, are intended for children 6 and older; books, accessories and outfits are sold separately. Available at www.karitokids.com or locally at Neiman Marcus and Puzzle Zoo in NorthPark Center, Dallas.



Karito doll