

# HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE FORTY-THREE



*“Without the Care Worker’s transformative love and support, they are not going to survive.”*

– Catherine Clarkson

## THEY ARE NOT ALONE

Catherine Clarkson (International Volunteer, UK) - Partnerships and Communications Team

At the beginning of 2017, Catherine had the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time with the Dedza Service Centre (SC) team in Malawi. The first time Catherine visited Malawi was in 2016 with the main purpose of her time being to host two teams. Though it was an incredible time, Catherine shares, “During that time I was limited in my ability to dig deeper with the SC because it was busy. As I prepared for my time in Malawi this year, I made commitments with God about how I wanted to spend my time. I committed to a deeper study of scripture, embracing the quietness and the silent moments, connecting on a deeper relational level with the SC and remaining connected with the Hands family both in Africa and

around the world. While I was in Malawi, God reignited the passion and the calling that He had given me many years ago.”

The time Catherine spent in Malawi was divided between visiting the communities and connecting and working with the SC team in the office. On one particular day while Catherine was in the community of Mngwere, she met a family who had a profound impact on her. “I was doing Holy Home Visits with Beatrice, a Care Worker from the Life Centre. We were visiting an elderly grandmother who is caring for her three young grandchildren. As I walked into her small hut, there was nothing there except for two pieces of clothing on a string that held a mosquito net. The grandmother had lost her own children and shared that when her last child passed away, the relatives burned down her home, mocking and rebuking her. In order for her to care for the children, she built the home that I was now sitting

in. She had laid every brick by hand in sheer desperation to provide for her family. The faces and story of this family haunt me. Yet, when this grandmother was asked about her life, the first thing that she shared about was Beatrice, the Care Worker who regularly visits her. She said, ‘I don’t do this life alone. I am doing this with somebody else. Every day I struggle but I know that I am not alone.’ The Care Workers from Mngwere Community Based Organisation are her lifeline. We know the children need these life-giving services, like food, education and health care, but without the Care Worker’s transformative love and support, they are not going to survive.”



## CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

Catherine Clarkson  
Dan Waspe  
Carolyn Snyman  
Xolani Makwakwa  
Michelle Tom



## HOPE IN NIGERIA

Dan Waspe, International Volunteer (UK), Regional Support Team (RST)

At the end of March, Dan travelled to Nigeria and spent two weeks with the Lagos Service Centre (SC) team. At the beginning of this year, the Lagos SC started serving and supporting Temitope Community Based Organisation (CBO), which is just a short distance from Eagles' Wings CBO which are both based out of the slum community, Ilaje. Dan was able to witness the beginnings of this new CBO as he saw the two Care Workers welcome the children to the Care Point and know them by name. Additionally, he saw this act of love and care being displayed at the other communities in Nigeria as the children sang songs, ate their daily meal and were known by name.

Dan shares, "One of the days, the SC and myself met with the coordinators from each of the communities and it was one of those meetings only God could bring together. The coordinators were asked to share one story of a child they knew, which turned out to be a deeply emotional time. They cried as they shared stories of the abuse and neglect the children were experiencing." As the SC asked the coordinators what it would take for

the child's life to be better, the ladies responded with enthusiasm and a deep conviction that they needed to be more consistent in visiting the children in their homes.

An issue that runs deep in the areas where we work in Nigeria is the mistreatment and abuse of young girls. It is recorded that gender violence has caused more death and disability for girls between the ages of 14 and 44 than malaria, cancer, car accidents and war combined. This violence was evident. Dan says, "As I watched people use sticks to hit children as a source of punishment, correction and abuse, I asked myself, 'What do these children want God to do for them?' What they want is for someone to rescue them, grabbing the hand of the man hurting them and restrain him. We need to stand on behalf of the girls who are being abused, restraining the arms of the men who are regularly abusing our children because this is what God requires of us. This is a challenge to us as we move forward."

## HOLY WEEK IN ZAMBIA

This year, at Kachele Village in Zambia, there was a Young Leaders' camp happening throughout Holy Week. The youth participated in each of the Holy Week events and the regular 40 Days of Prayer meetings. Several volunteers share about what they experienced during Holy Week and the impact it had on them.

Carolyn Snyman (African Volunteer, South Africa) Co-Founder

"Every day at 9am, the community met together to pray and it was great to see the kids praying deeply. On Good Friday, groups of us took turns carrying the cross and then we sang and prayed together. On Sunday at 5 am, we walked along in the dark to a bonfire and lit a candle along the way. This represents the light that Christ brings. It was a beautiful time to spend together."

Xolani Makwakwa (African Volunteer, South Africa) Regional Support Team

"It was special to have the young leaders with us at Kachele during this week. Through the small groups, God was speaking to the kids in amidst their struggles. It was the start of a new season as we saw healing take place in their hearts through the growing of their understanding of God's love and forgiveness. The kids were able to come to a place where they felt comfortable sharing their stories and started allowing God to do healing in their deep brokenness. They can go back to their community, knowing that there are people who know them by name. As a family, we can pray for the kids as they take back home what they have learned and support God's work that is happening in their community. We can give thanks for the healing that God has brought and we can continue to pray for healing to be brought in each of the communities."

## LIGHT FROM DARKNESS

Michelle Tom, International Volunteer (US), Finance Team



Holy Week is a beautiful and symbolic time which leads up to Easter Sunday when the hope of the world conquered death and gave us new life. This week can prompt us to confront our inner brokenness and the areas we do not want to let those around us see. Michelle reflects on the way Holy Week has impacted her and what she took away from this special season:

“As I approached Holy Week, I wanted to be honest with myself and confront my brokenness in the light of Christ’s death and resurrection and as I thought about the weight of what Christ did. Over the week, I found myself relating to people in the Bible in Jesus’ love for them despite their betrayal. As I walked to the chapel on Easter Sunday, I was filled with joy and anticipation. I could see our unity in Christ and I felt a sense of togetherness. Coming out of Holy Week and Easter, I have been thinking about ‘what does it mean to live a resurrected life?’ I want to continue to grow in learning to receive and embrace God’s love in order to be able to share His love with others. I am a part of something bigger which is God’s story of bringing healing and redemption. I am challenged: how can I be a light in this dark and broken world?”



In Chibote Community, Zambia, a new building is being constructed to provide a safe space where children can come and play. This is also where they will receive food from loving Care Workers. This building used to be a tavern, but is now being transformed into a Care Point. The basic facilities at a Care Point are one aspect of many that make up a Life Centre. Other aspects of a Life Centre include healthy leadership, church mobilisation, Maranatha Workshops, regular Relationship Groups, access to 3 essential services, support for the Care Workers, regular Holy Home Visits, a place where children are free to play and a preschool for the young children that attend the Life Centre.

## PRAYER POINTS

As Jackie finishes up her time in Mozambique, pray that she will finish well and be a lasting blessing and encouragement to the Chimoio Service Centre as they seek to serve the communities with grace and love.

Please pray for Tyler, Alicia and Hayden as they spend the next four months in Canada preparing for and welcoming the newest addition to their family. As they enter into this new season as a family of four, pray that God will give Tyler and Alicia grace, wisdom, patience and courage as they begin to parent two young ones while living out their calling to serve the most vulnerable in Africa.

In the last several weeks, the DRC Service Centre has undergone changes and shifts within their office. Pray that God will equip them with guidance, wisdom and unity as they move forward as a Service Centre.

Ask God to give the Regional Support Team wisdom and guidance as they serve and support the Nigeria Service Centre from afar. Pray God would guide them as they strive to support and protect the children who are daily subjected to abuse and neglect.

Pray for God to make a way for the children, Primary Caregivers and Care Workers in the communities that we serve in; that He would provide for their needs and protect them in their distress.