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REMAINING EXPECTANT

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

At the beginning of August, Catherine travelled to Malawi to support the Dedza Service Centre which was hosting a team from Sinani, one of our partners based at Church Unlimited in South Africa. The majority of the team's time was spent in the community of Maonde, which exists to care for 150 of the most vulnerable children.

“A week before I left for Malawi, someone prayed over me and gave me a word from God: to be ‘expectant’. For a few moments I was able to put a pause on the very busy past weeks and ask God what it meant to prepare my heart for my time in Malawi, being expectant for something special to happen.

On one of our Holy Home Visits I met a young girl named Ruth* who

lives with her grandmother. Both her grandmother and the wider community had accused Ruth of being involved in witchcraft. I didn't quite understand the depths of what it meant for a child to be accused of this, but I knew that it robbed families of life and freedom in a way that was agonising to witness. Children are ostracised from their community, unable to attend school or engage with their community. Their homes are often even marked out so that the wider community know to stay away.

However, I witnessed something quite amazing when I saw the team praying so earnestly for Ruth that even her grandmother confessed: “I don't want this for my child anymore”. The grandmother went on to remove all visible symbols of witchcraft from the home, burning them publicly in front of their community.

As a team we hear stories like this again and again. I met a young boy named Symon* who had been

diagnosed with epilepsy and was desperate for someone to see him at the clinic, but there were rarely any doctors or nurses there. Symon was given an adult dose of epilepsy medication and started to become very unwell, unable to walk, talk or eat properly. But because the Care Workers and the Service Centre fought for Symon, taking him to a hospital outside of his community and advocating for the correct medication, he is now doing so much better. He is gaining strength and the hope on his face is evident!

I share these stories to witness to God being on the move in Malawi; we saw utter transformation! I also share these stories because of children like Symon and Ruth who represent the thousands of children who we are caring for across Africa.”



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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KABWE SERVICE CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS

Benson Munamba, African Volunteer (Zambia), Kabwe Service Centre

The Kabwe Service Centre is currently supporting six communities in the Kabwe region. There have been exciting things happening in the communities of Nissi and Susu that Benson had the opportunity to be a part of.

"In July, we had a Foundations Training in the community of Nissi. I could tell that God was at work by the response of the people who came, many of which committed to being Care Workers. On the last day, Trina, who is the coordinator of the Kabwe Service Centre, was sharing about the vision of Holy Home Visits, and afterwards we went out to do Holy Home Visits together. What stood out to me was seeing these new people notice the state of one of the most vulnerable homes, and without any prompting by the Service Centre, start volunteering to provide the cement and bricks necessary to fix this grandmother's home. Another highlight was seeing a pastor, who had attended and was very touched by what was shared, give the Care Point a pump to use to make their own garden and grow their own vegetables. Additionally, he donated a sewing machine for the Care Workers to use.

This year, one of the grandmothers was able to harvest 35 bags of maize, which is the most that she had ever received from a harvest. While the Service Centre was there, she was dancing and praising God for the harvest. Even other people in the community are recognising that this is the work of God. This grandmother is planning to sell 15 of her bags, with the profits going towards the fertilizer and seeds that she needs for the upcoming season of planting."

Praise God for the work that He is doing in the Kabwe area and the lives that He is transforming. Ask God to give the Kabwe Service Centre wisdom and discernment as they support these six communities.



COMPELLED TO ACT

Crystal Letkeman, International Office Volunteer (Canada)

Frank Letkeman, International Office Volunteer (Canada)

At the beginning of August the Letkeman family from Canada travelled to spend two weeks serving in Zambia. Whilst there, they spent the majority of their time in the community of Katetaula, which is the community that they are helping to support.

Frank says: "While we were in Katetaula, we were able to lead a Sunday Service for the children and Care Workers. When we arrived on the Sunday morning we saw that an accidental fire had been started about 500 metres from the Care Point. As we sat at the Care Point we could hear it crackling and, as it moved closer, began to feel the heat. The Luanshya Service Centre and the Care Workers didn't seem concerned, so we continued as planned and it was a beautiful morning. When we left, the fire was approaching the Care Point and people were desperately trying to fan it away. When we returned on the Tuesday we didn't know what to expect. We saw that the fire had burned around the Care Point but hadn't touched it. As we walked up to the thatch, we were amazed to see that there had been

no damage. It was as if there was a dome of protection around the Care Point. This was a beautiful image to think of – God covering our Care Points with domes of protection, grace and love."

Crystal shares: "Before going, I read Jon Mycio's blog (International Volunteer, Canada) and in one post he shared about how we often talk about how things break our hearts but then we are actionless, which is contrary to how Jesus lived. Jesus didn't simply have compassion but was compelled to act upon what He saw. Reading that and then going to Zambia, being in community and seeing the desperation, I felt challenged by this and how we should use the situations that break us to propel us into action – bringing hope and healing to the broken-hearted. Having returned to Canada, I feel refreshed and challenged to take what I have seen and share it with the people around me."

SOUTH AFRICA CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Over the last few months Farzam Mohajer (International Volunteer, Canada) and Simon Mgwenya (African Volunteer, South Africa) have helped with repairs and construction projects in a few of the communities that we are serving in South Africa.

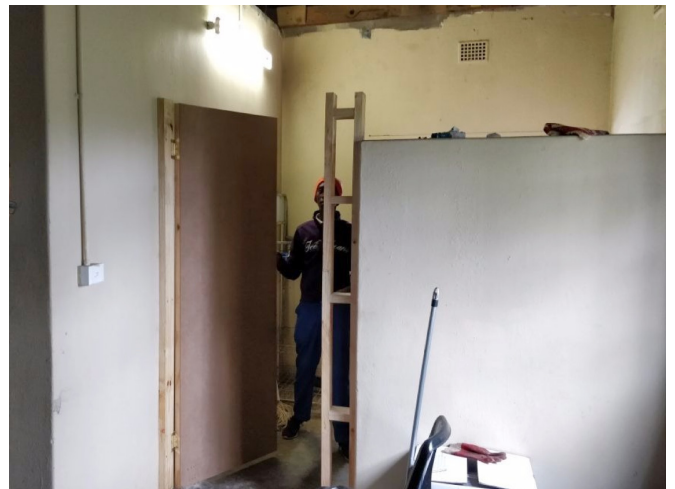


In July a fence was constructed around the Care Point in the community of Sommerset, with the support of a team from Australia. It was encouraging to see the Care Workers, the children and the surrounding community take ownership and help put up the fence.

Additionally, a new block of toilets was built which will help to improve the hygiene of the children and Care Workers and boost health (pictured below).



In the community of Sthobela A, near the Swaziland border, a store room structure was installed with new windows, which will help to improve ventilation. There are plans to plaster the walls soon and then to paint the outside.



The Oshoek Service Centre was renovated recently to enhance usability and health and hygiene. It will also enable the Service Centre to be better equipped to host teams.



In the communities of Oshoek and Beeskop boreholes have been built, providing the Care Points with safe and clean drinking water.

PRAYER POINTS

At the beginning of September, a group of Hands at Work leaders from across Africa gathered at the Hub in South Africa to plan and prepare as we end this year and look at the year ahead. Praise God for the time they had together!

As preparation for the October Gathering in Zambia continues, please pray for God to give wisdom and guidance to those who will be facilitating. Individuals from across Africa will travel to Zambia at the beginning of October. Pray for protection as they travel. Ask God to prepare the hearts of each person who will be attending.

In the middle of August, George Snyman travelled to Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with Erick, who is the coordinator of the Likasi Service Centre in the DRC. While they were in the community of Luhonga, they did a two-day Maranatha Workshop for the Care Workers. During those two days, they saw incredible transformation among not only the Care Workers, but also in the broader community. They saw the Spirit of the Lord show up and God come alive in the community. Praise God! Pray for continued transformation to take place in the lives of the Care Workers, the children and the Primary Caregivers.

One of the young boys attending the Care Point in the community of Chisamba, Zambia, has a very swollen cheek. He is often laughed at and teased, which results in him not coming to the Care Point or going to school. The Kabwe Service Centre is fighting for him to get to a hospital for an operation and for him to feel loved and accepted. Pray for the Service Centre to remain prayerful, trusting that God will guide and direct the situation.

INTRODUCING XOLANI AND SARA MAKWAKWA

On August 4th, Xolani and Sara Makwakwa were married in White River, South Africa, and had a celebration held in the community of Sommerset, where Xolani's family lives. The wedding was attended by many of our Hands at Work family from the Hub and Kachele, several of Sara's family and friends from the US, and Xolani's family from South Africa. Congratulations Xolani and Sara!

