

HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE FORTY NINE



“Sometimes in those moments of being unable to do anything, God speaks.” – Tyler Ralph

Change in Pace

Tyler Ralph, International Volunteer (Canada), Regional Support Team

At the beginning of September, Tyler had the opportunity to spend two weeks in Zimbabwe, serving alongside the Mutare Service Centre. The main purpose of his trip was to host a team from Canada.

“Throughout my time in Zimbabwe, I experienced serious headaches that caused me to spend lots of time in bed and resting. It was tough because I wanted to spend time in the Honde Valley and travel to Mozambique but I couldn’t. Sometimes in those moments of being unable to do anything, God speaks. I realised that a lot of the time, I rely on my own strength instead of relying on God. It was also a special time to focus on God’s word. In 2 Corinthians 12, it speaks about your weakness being a blessing. When I am weak, God is

strong. This time in bed enabled me to realise that even when I feel close to God I can be blind to the weak spots around me.

Even though I spent a large amount of time in bed, I did have a few opportunities to go out into community with the team. The primary project that the Canadian team were involved in was helping to build a playground at the Sakubva Care Point. During the first couple of days that the team were in community, they went on Holy Home Visits with the Care Workers. Initially they were hesitant about these visits because they were keen to get started with the build but by the end of their trip, they said that it was so beneficial to be in the presence of the Care Workers and to get to know the children. They loved this time. During the building of the playground, the children, Care Workers and Service Centre were an amazing help. Everyone wanted to go on the swing but were terrified! They did overcome this fear eventually

though, and really enjoyed the playground. The team loved doing a practical thing to show their love.

On the last day, we sat with the Care Workers and the team had an opportunity to appreciate the hard work that they do. It was beautiful and it was evident that the Care Workers felt appreciated and blessed by the time that they had to connect with the team. The community of Sakubva is a dark place and it can be challenging for the Care Workers. One of my highlights was spending quality time with one of the Care Workers, Priscilla. She is an incredible woman who knows the names of all of the 150 children that she helps support and visits regularly. Yet in amongst the business, she took time to send me a message every day to ask how I was feeling. She has been an amazing support.”



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

Tyler Ralph
Catherine Clarkson
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Dan Waspe
Kara McLaughlin
Xolani Makwakwa

OCTOBER GATHERING 2017

In the middle of October, there was a gathering of Hands leaders from across Africa in Zambia. Every day of the week, people participated in different sessions that focused on strengthening, evaluating and looking at ways that we can better care for the most vulnerable in the communities that we serve. Every morning, everyone gathered for a time of praise and worship to God. It was beautiful time to pause from the busyness of the week and celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness.

Busie Siyatha-Jones, African Volunteer (South Africa), Regional Support Team

"Over the years that we have been driving to Zambia for the gathering, we have learnt many lessons about what works and what doesn't. We used the three-day drive to build into each other, pray together and read through the book of Colossians in anticipation of our time in Zambia. We spent time preparing our hearts for the week to come. It was a beautiful and encouraging time and we arrived at Kachele feeling full and excitedly anticipating what God was going to do."

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

"Our times of worship were incredible. There were scriptures read, words spoken and people were broken and honest about the areas where they had failed. The team that helped facilitate worship spent two hours each evening worshipping in order to prepare their hearts for the morning. Seeing our leaders grow in front of our eyes was amazing. When the sessions were interactive, people were standing and asking questions – the growth in our young leaders was evident and so encouraging."



The team hung a wooden cross – that a member of the team had handmade – around each Care Worker's neck and commissioned them back into their community.

Malawi: the Warm Heart of Africa

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

Over the month of September, Catherine spent time in Malawi and the UK. Her first stop was in Malawi where she hosted a team from Church Unlimited in Nelspruit, South Africa. From there she travelled to the UK where she attended the wedding of a previous volunteer, David Bentley, and then met her new nephew.

"My time in Malawi was a special time. I have hosted many teams and I like to prepare well, but the dynamic of the team was quite different! Some of the team members didn't know each other very well; when I met them at the airport, I realised that they weren't just getting to know me, but each other! Throughout the trip, I saw God knitting them together in the unique things that they were experiencing. God was deeply challenging them as individuals on their attitudes towards the poor and needy and it was like their previous worldview was colliding with all they saw in the broken communities in front of my eyes. There were many deep conversations at the end of

each day as the team processed all that they saw.

One highlight was meeting a team member who can only be described as a 'gentle giant'. Even though he couldn't speak the local language, it didn't matter. The kids loved him. On a day that the team appreciated the local Care Workers for their love and ministry towards the kids, the team called each of them up by name and spent time ministering to them. They anointed the Care Workers with oil and prayed scripture over them. The team hung a wooden cross – that a member of the team had handmade – around each Care Worker's neck and commissioned them back into their community. There were beautiful choruses of praise and worship and it was an incredibly special time for the team.

While briefly in the UK, I had the privilege of supporting David and AJ Bentley as they were married. It was a beautiful celebration. I was then able to spend time with my sister and new-born baby nephew. Baby William is such a precious gift – we are very grateful to God for His goodness and faithfulness to our family."

OCTOBER GATHERING 2017

Kara McLaughlin, International Volunteer (Australia), Regional Support Team

“On the first night of the gathering, we had a big bonfire – despite the heat. We were singing and dancing when George asked us to turn our backs to the light of the fire and look out into the darkness. He posed the question, “are we willing to go out into that darkness and fight for our children?” If I’m being honest, in that moment, I was wrestling with God because I didn’t want to run into the darkness. My human desire was to stay where I was comfortable and where there was light. As the week went on, I remember the Holy Spirit asking if I was ready to share in Christ’s suffering. Again, I was wrestling with this invitation but gradually I gained a deeper understanding of the Father’s heart and what He has done for us. I caught myself during a worship time releasing my hands and saying ‘yes’ to the Lord. I knew I was saying ‘yes’ to running into the darkness and surrendering myself to the Lord.

As soon as I did this, I was reminded that Jesus is the light of the world. When I run into the darkness, the light goes with me. It doesn’t mean that I won’t fall or make mistakes but the light is there and I have the privilege of running into the darkness with Jesus. One of my highlights was looking around and seeing everyone together. These people are family and as a family, we hook arms and run into the darkness. The beautiful thing is that there is a larger array of light as we run together. We will miss out if we stay in safety. Are we ready to surrender and be part of the fight for the most vulnerable children and communities?”

Xolani Makwakwa, African Volunteer (South Africa), Oshoek Service Centre

“The week that I had in Zambia was a blessing. During our first session, we were challenged by George Snyman to think about where our foundation is based. Are we firmly based on Christ or have we let other things come in-between us and Christ – our foundation? Is Christ my foundation or have I slipped? Sometimes I say that I trust God but then I think that my plans are better than my Father’s. Christ needs to be my foundation and I need to rely on Him.”

