

HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE FIFTY-FOUR



“As we bring Jesus to our communities, the darkness has to flee.” – Kara McLaughlin

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

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

At the beginning of 2018, Kara started supporting the Mutare Service Centre in Zimbabwe in the capacity of Project Support. In March, she travelled to Zimbabwe to spend time with the team and visit the communities. This provided her with the opportunity to learn more about what it means to serve the most vulnerable in Zimbabwe.

“Over the last few months, I have been coming across the theme of Jesus as ‘the light’ in the Bible. This has been coupled with a realisation of how overwhelming the darkness around us can be, however, the truth is that Jesus is ‘the light’ and the darkness cannot overcome Him. As we bring Jesus to our communities, the darkness has to flee. I have been struck by this responsibility and privilege.

“During my time in Zimbabwe, the Holy Spirit allowed me to see how ‘the light’ is shining in the darkness. I had the opportunity to go the community of Chinyausunzi. The week prior, Chinyausunzi had a Maranatha Workshop. Once we arrived at the Care Point, the Care Workers spent the first two hours sharing everything they had learned about Jesus.

“I went on a Holy Home Visit with one of the Care Workers, Privilege. As we walked, I asked why she wanted to be a Care Worker. She proceeded to tell me that in 2015, her husband died and she was left to care for their three children. Her life was extremely challenging and the family was living in hopelessness and darkness. She was on the verge of taking her own life, when Uncle Sam (Mutare Service Centre member) and Sara (a Care Worker from Sakubva Community) started to visit her. They found her and showed her love. It was because of these visits that Privilege came to know Jesus. She said that was the reason why she wanted to become

a Care Worker; she wanted to love people like she had been loved, to visit like she had been visited. There is hope in Chinyausunzi!

“I also got to visit Pimai C. I went to the home of Gogo Ruth*, who stays with her youngest son. When her husband passed, she married his brother, a common cultural practice in the area. Tragically, he was abusive. Gogo Ruth and her son had no food, no blankets, nothing—they had hit rock bottom. Then the Care Workers visited them, and her youngest child joined the Community Based Organisation (CBO).

“As I heard her story, I was reminded of Hagar in the Bible. I was able to share this with Ruth. Hagar was a woman who was treated harshly and fled into the desert. But God visited Hagar. He had seen her affliction. Hagar gave Him the name ‘you are the God who sees.’ This same God had also seen Ruth!

“When we asked if she had any prayer requests, she did not want us to pray for her, instead she asked us to pray for the Care Workers and the International Church. I sat there completely humbled. She had hope and had been visited by Jesus, ‘the light’.”



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

Kara McLaughlin
Caleb Walton
James McLaughlin
Michael Mwila
Herman Cloete
Never Phiri
Kay Chizu
Evie Howells
Leslie Semashkewich



Five year old Patrick*
lives in Kalende
Community, Zambia

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR SERVICE CENTRE PLACEMENT

At the end of March, the 2018 Volunteer Intake, as part of their orientation, joined Hands at Work Service Centres across Africa for a four week placement period.

After their placement, each of the volunteers were placed in the role they will serve in for the remainder of their time in Africa.

Caleb Walton, International Volunteer (UK)

"During my placement, I got to spend a lot of time in Oshoek learning from the Oshoek Service Centre. I found it interesting to see the different Care Points and how they are operated differently but with the same heart. Something that stood out to me is the irony of the beautiful landscape in the Oshoek area with the contrast of the poverty and brokenness of the children. It was great to have the opportunity to return to the communities and be able to re-connect with the children and build relationships with them.

I am looking forward to continuing to build relationships with the Service Centre and the children in the communities as I continue to support the Oshoek Service Centre for the remainder of my time in Africa."

James McLaughlin, International Volunteer (Australia)

"One of the children that has stood out to me is Patrick* in Kalende Community, Zambia. The home that the family is living in is open because they weren't able to finish building due to the rain, leaving the family susceptible to mosquitos and snakes. The children were sleeping on a mosquito net because they had nothing else to sleep on. The visit left me wrestling with the question, 'why this boy and not me?' As I chatted with my sister, I began to realise that, as the Church, we are the solution. We are called to not just recognise the injustice, but to do something about it. There are three boys living in the home. At six months old, Patrick* was completely malnourished and none of the relatives would care for him because they thought he was going to die. Thankfully, one of the Care Workers, Fred, started caring for him and today he is doing well. I feel inspired and challenged by how personal the Care Workers make it, and I have been left asking myself the question, 'how can I make it personal?'"

LUANSHYA SERVICE CENTRE UPDATE

Michael Mwila, African Volunteer
(Zambia), Luanshya Service Centre
Coordinator

Recently there has been Foundations Training for Care Workers in three of our communities in the Luanshya area – New-Wells, Maposa and Katetaula. This training is important for people to be on the same page regarding who we are, why we do what we do and where we come from.

"Particularly, in two of these communities, we talked about abuse and what abuse looks like. There are certain things that are normal in our communities – but that doesn't make them right. In Katetaula we were expecting 25 people to come but instead 43 people came. We were even more encouraged because, by the third (last) day, there were 52 people in attendance.

When we shared about the struggle with physical abuse and early marriage it opened into a bigger discussion. I was able to share how, as Zambians, it is countercultural to ask the tough questions but we need to do it to care for one another. One of the biggest challenges in Katetaula is early childhood marriage. We were able to dig into this issue on Wednesday and broke into small groups to discuss how to handle it. As a Service Centre we plan to follow up each Tuesday, to continue to help and support the Care Workers as they deal with the issue of childhood marriage."

HOME REPAIRS IN MLUTI COMMUNITY

Herman Cloete, African Volunteer (South Africa)
Never Phiri, African Volunteer (South Africa), Maintenance Team



The Care Workers in Mluti Community, South Africa, identified the need for home repairs at the home of one of the children they care for. Herman, Never, and the rest of the Maintenance Team had the opportunity to go out and support the Care Workers with these repairs.

Herman shares, "The home we were repairing belonged to a mother who lives with her children. She is from Mozambique, lives with tuberculosis and has no identification documents. Unable to access treatment for her illness, she collects money for three or four months and then goes to Mozambique. The treatment she receives in Mozambique doesn't need to be taken with food, while the treatment in South Africa does, demonstrating the level of her vulnerability. In order to come back, she saves up money in Mozambique for three or four months until she has enough. This leaves her children to care for themselves. It was great to be able to somehow be a part of helping them."

Never says, "On the first day that we went to work, the floor was in rough condition, the roof wasn't done properly – water was leaking in, and there were no windows. One of the things that stood out to me was seeing how the boy living in the house helped. He didn't simply let us do the work, but was directly involved, even asking what he could to assist us. By the end of the day, we had finished everything, except for a few final touches over the next couple days. The mother in the house was happy to see it completed. It was a highlight for me, to be able to go out and help in the community."

HOLY HOME VISITS IN THE DRC

In the middle of April a team from Canada spent eight days in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Alongside the Likasi Service Centre, Mel Warren, International Volunteer (Australia), hosted the team and Kay Chizu travelled to support with hospitality for the team. This was her first time in the DRC.

Throughout their time there, each person had a unique encounter with hope and the restoration that comes from knowing Jesus.

Kay Chizu, African Volunteer (Zambia), Hospitality Team

"On a home visit I met two young boys who were being cared for by their auntie. She was already struggling to care for her own five children and yet she chose to care for these children. If it wasn't for her, they would probably have died in the street. From her body language, I could see that she was caring not because there were visitors or people watching but because she had a deep love for these children."

Evie Howells, Team Member, Canada

"During a Relationship Group in Toyota Community I was encouraged by the depth of faith that the Care Workers have and how reliant they are on God to help them care for the most vulnerable children despite the difficult situations that they are in. One of my highlights was

being able to wash the feet of the Care Workers, during which I was reminded of the scripture that says 'how beautiful are the feet that bring good news'. It was an amazing time to honour these women who give so much in order to serve God and the children."

Leslie Semashkewich, Team Member, Canada

"I had the opportunity to visit two young children who, when their mother passed away, went to live with their grandmother. Shortly thereafter, she was in an accident, rendering her unable to adequately care for the children. Thankfully a neighbour, despite her own vulnerability and large family, brought the children to live with her. While we were visiting with the neighbour she spoke so highly of the Care Workers and how they had helped her care for the babies. She said that people thought she was crazy for helping these babies but said that she couldn't live knowing that she could have helped the children. Although the children now stay with their grandmother, who is doing better, they call this neighbour 'mama' and visit her often. Mama is a great example to those around her that you don't need to be family to care for one another."

PRAYER AND PRAISE REQUESTS

There are many teams coming to serve with Hands at Work throughout the remainder of 2018. Pray for each member of the team to come with a heart that is open and willing to receive all that God has for them.

As George Snyman prepares to head to Germany and the UK at the end of May, pray for all of the preparation and planning that is needed to go smoothly. Ask God to use George to speak into the lives of many people while he is travelling, and ask God to give him the strength and energy that he needs to serve well.

This week, Busie Siyata-Jones, African Volunteer (South Africa), heads to

Nigeria for two weeks. The purpose of her time is to support the Lagos Service Centre as they seek to expand and increase the number of children they are supporting.

Within Hands at Work, there are volunteers regularly travelling to spend time in our communities or in different countries. Praise God for the protection and safety that He has given us thus far, and pray for God to continue to protect volunteers as they travel by road and air.