

HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE SIXTY-FIVE



“She spoke about how she trusted God and His promise to care for her.” – Bree Bone

SWAZILAND PLACEMENT

Bree and Ian Bone, International Volunteers (Canada), Regional Support Team

In February, 12 international volunteers from around the world came to serve with Hands at Work for a year. After six weeks of orientation, each individual volunteer was placed with a Service Centre (SC). They stayed in Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe for four weeks to learn, observe, encourage and walk with the local office team as they serve the most vulnerable. During this placement, Bree and Ian were placed with the Swaziland Service Centre.

Bree shares, “One of my highlights from Swaziland was doing a Holy Home Visit to one of the Care Workers in Shoka Community named Spongile. She was in mourning after the death of her husband in 2018 and was now isolated from the community, with only her fellow Care Workers coming to visit. In 2018. What struck me was the depth of her faith. She shared how

her husband’s family had come to take all her valuables and cattle. As they arrived, she was angry, but she heard the Lord say let them go, don’t fight them. She was obedient and watching them leave with all that she had. She spoke about how she trusted God and His promise to care for her. Since the family abandoned her, she has a new field of her own which produces maize meal, three pregnant cows, her son was miraculously healed of shingles and many other stories testifying to the faithfulness of God. While sitting with Spongile there was a beautiful moment, in which she was able to break down and cry, being relieved of carrying this burden alone. Even though her faith is strong, being isolated had taken its toll. Melody Makusua, African Volunteer (South Africa), come and embodied the love of Christ, dening her own culture and choosing to sit beside Spongile, showing love and support. Meeting this woman of faith will always be one of my dearest memories of Swaziland. Despite the pain that she was facing, Spongile asked eagerly about the children at the Care Point.”

A week after Bree and Ian returned to the Hub, they heard that Spongile was once again started coming to the Care Point, where she is serving and loving on the most vulnerable children.

Ian shares, “While in Swaziland, we were embraced by our neighbors because of Melody and Mabuza’s outreach, love and service. We experienced genuine hospitality by our neighbors, who often took us to church, fed us and invited us into their families. It was amazing to see the leadership that both Melody and Vusi Mabuza, African Volunteer (South Africa) have in Swaziland. These relationships within the community exist because Vusi and Melody embraced them.

In Bhandeni, Swaziland, Vusi and Melody met with Care Workers, to address some challenges. We could hear the tone of the conversation, and watch the body language for two hours. Melody and Vusi led the meeting firmly but gently, giving loving space for the everyone to share and be heard. The Care Workers made plans to resolve the stumbling blocks, but this wouldn’t have happened without loving leadership.”

After the meeting, Melody played with the young girls that were at the Care Point. It was amazing to watch Melody make time to be vulnerable and intentionally play with the children. It was group of girls watching a God-fearing woman have joy.”

+ CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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TRIP TO MALAWI

Charissa Cloete, African Volunteer (South Africa), Finance Team

In April, Charissa travelled to Malawi where she spent a week hosting a Nurses for Africa team from the US. The team provided a much-needed clinic in the community of Mpata, where there is little medical care available or accessible.



“One of the girls that I had the privilege of meeting in Mpata was Sara*, who is 11 years old and has been unable to walk since she was little. I did a Holy Home Visit to her home, and although language was a big struggle, I saw what an amazing child she is. It was so encouraging to meet this struggling family and see the joy they had. Recently, the local Hands at Work team in Dedza were able to get Sara to the hospital, where they put casts on her legs to straighten them with the hope that she will walk again.”



“When we woke up on the Thursday, which was going to be the second clinic day, but this time for the wider community, it was pouring rain. About 10 minutes into our drive to Mpata, our vehicle got stuck in the mud. Thankfully, people who lived in the communities lining the road came to help us get out. My thought was why it didn’t stop raining. Yet God reminded me that if it had stopped raining, we wouldn’t have seen people’s hearts and their willingness to come together in times like this. When we drove back after our day in Mpata, those same people were still there, trying to pull out other vehicles.”



“The first clinic day that we held in Mpata was for the children, Care Workers and their families. When people first arrived, they would register, then go meet with the US nurses for assessment, then go to the local nurses for prescriptions, and afterwards, head to the pharmacy. We saw 415 patients that day. It was such a peaceful atmosphere.”



“When we finally arrived in Mpata, people were lined up everywhere and the tent that we had been using had fallen down. When we were able to get the tent back up, we opened the clinic and for the three and a half hours that we were there, we saw 395 patients. The whole time that people were waiting to be seen, they were standing around in the rain; many of them without shoes. It really broke my heart to see the situation and know that we wouldn’t be able to see everyone who was in line.”



HOPE IN DESPERATION

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

Recently, George Snyman, co-founder of Hands at Work, and Busie travelled to Mozambique to support the Chimoio Service Centre.

“It was not one of those trips where I was in control and had a plan. I was there, not knowing what we were going to see, but sensing the responsibility to be there on behalf of everyone, and having to communicate what we were seeing. Upon arriving in Mozambique, we met with the Chimoio Service Centre where we spent an emotional and honest time together, hearing from them. Ramos shared how when his house fell, the Service Centre supported him and he felt like he has a wider family that came around his family. We felt overwhelmed as we heard story after story of the devastation. As we walked with the Service Centre, we saw the devastation firsthand and were able to encourage some of the church and community leaders in the way that they were responding. We recognised that it was good to involve our African leaders, who were already coming for the African leaders training, in the way that we were going to respond.

“During the training, I was reminded of the fact that our time together was not simply about learning to become a leader but rather it is a time where we bring existing leaders together and spend time challenging and encouraging one another on what it means to represent the Kingdom Culture within our own cultures. What does it mean to me? How do I live it out? What does it mean to be a Godly leader? We talked about how

we need to respond to crises, and that it’s not necessarily simply working on our procedures, but thinking about our core values. Why do we do what we do? How do our core values influence how we respond? It was amazing to see our vision of local community ownership come alive and Care Workers, church and community leaders come together.

“Being in the community, we spent lots of time with Care Workers, church leaders and Primary Caregivers. In one of the community meetings where we discussed the food crisis, we asked people what they are going to do between now and the next harvest. We were then able to share about another community where they were planting sweet potatoes. Then, out of the blue, a church leader offered some of his land. Immediately, tension and confusion broke out because people just didn’t know how to move forward. We felt paralysed and waited for George to help us. He challenged all of the African Leaders to look beyond what we were seeing in the meeting. Eventually, we knew that we had to pray and we got people into groups for them to discuss the situation and they came back with plans. We turned from no hope and despair to a sense of excitement and a feeling of ‘we can do this’. It emphasised why we need to wait and push to see if something can happen. It’s the same as with Holy Home Visits; we wait until God shows up. That morning, our Father showed up and we ended up with the garden. We arrived in the community with a feeling of despair but we left with such great hope.”

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

It is amazing what God is doing in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the way that He is growing the Goma Service Centre (SC). Thank God and pray for unity and that He will continue to grow the team, giving them a deeper understanding of what it means to speak on behalf of the most vulnerable children.

For the last two and a half weeks, Dan Waspe, International Volunteer (UK), has been in Malawi supporting the Dedza SC. Praise God for the time that he has been able to spend encouraging and challenging them. Pray that God will give him the strength and wisdom that he needs and that God will have sown deep seeds into the team.

Thank God for those in the Chimoio SC in Mozambique, who are serving the most vulnerable in the wake of Cyclone Idai. Ask God to bring encouragement and a renewed energy. Pray that they will have the wisdom and discernment that they need to serve.

Pray for growth and development of the Hands at Work community in Zimbabwe.

There are exciting things happening with Hands at Work in Swaziland. Pray for God to send more African volunteers in Swaziland with hearts that desire to sacrificially serve the most broken.