

HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE SIXTY-EIGHT



“We were able to praise God for the way that we experience His presence” – Audrey Sibiya

THE POWER OF HEALING AND BREAKTHROUGH

Audrey Sibiya, African Volunteer (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre Coordinator

At the beginning of June there was a Maranatha Workshop for the Care Workers from Msengeni A and B communities in Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). Through Maranatha Workshops we have the privilege of equipping the Care Workers with the truth about God, as well as with the love and healing that can only come from Jesus. Audrey, along with other African and International Volunteers, was able to attend the Workshop and support the Care Workers, who had the opportunity to forgive and carry one another's burdens.

“The evening before the Workshop started we prayed for the Care Workers to arrive with open hearts,

ready to receive what our Father had in store for them. On Monday we spoke about the ‘Jesus We Know’, with the hope that our Care Workers would understand who Jesus is and commit to following and trusting in Him. We made it clear that we weren't coming with a judgemental attitude but, rather, were coming to share with them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. On Tuesday we shared about the importance of Holy Home Visits and then, in the afternoon, all of the Care Workers were able to do Holy Home Visits, to live out what they had learnt. We also had time with the Primary Caregivers in Msengeni B, with the hope that they would start to feel comfortable bringing their struggles and burdens to the Care Point. Having the community chiefs and leaders of the community there was important because it allowed them to see for themselves ways that they are able to support, pray and advocate for the vulnerable in their communities. We also had

a day where we focused on the importance of Relationship Groups, which are where we hear stories of brokenness and trauma that they have faced, and where they can then begin the journey of healing. On the last day of the Workshop we heard testimonies and were able to praise God for the way that we experience His presence.

As a Service Centre, one of our highlights was seeing the Care Workers change from being quiet and closed off to becoming completely open, vulnerable and filled with joy.”



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

Audrey Sibiya
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BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM

Nathan and Genevieve Bell, advocates and friends of Hands at Work from New Zealand

Nathan says: "Over the last few years, God has changed the course of our lives. Our professions often lead to a certain way of life, but it had got to a point where we both felt our future was looking predictable and comfortable. We realised that although this future 'ticked the boxes', deep down we felt uneasy and uninspired to continue living this way, so we got involved with a church that is very intentional about moving into rougher communities, to be a part of them. That was how God was challenging us.

Over the last few years I have been distracted by busyness and my plan to build my own empire, but it has taken me away from seeing where God is working and where He is leading me. When we decided to come to Africa with Hands at Work, we didn't actually know what it would be like and we had very few expectations. Since being here God has been challenging me on so much and we have felt so welcomed and loved by the Hands team. My time in Africa has helped me to see



how important it is to build His Kingdom, not my own.

Genevieve shares: "Throughout our time in Africa we learnt about the 'ladder' that many of us climb, leading to success and a strong future. Yet maybe this ladder isn't about how high we can climb but rather about getting off the ladder to help others begin to climb. It's not about how much we can get but about how much we can give. In our culture vulnerability means weakness and being 'needy'. However, what we have been learning is that being vulnerable can actually mean being present and open to what others are sharing. I have been learning that when we are real and honest about where we are at, it invites God and others to speak truth into our lives, and vice versa. I have been encouraged to be open about what I'm thinking and struggling with. At Hands at Work you are not only being vulnerable but are being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ."

RETURN TO AFRICA

Chris Dittmann, long-term advocate and friend of Hands at Work

In 2010 Chris came to serve with Hands at Work for eight months, before returning to Canada. In July he returned to South Africa for the first time in five years, spending his time reconnecting with the Hands at Work family and with the children and Care Workers in the communities.

"Oshoek is a beautiful place but there is a real spiritual battle going on there. In Sthobela B Community I was able to do Holy Home Visits. The people are living in difficult circumstances but are still so happy to see us. When I met one of the grandmothers, I could feel a wall of darkness. She was all alone with two young children, and couldn't mask the pain. She shared how far she walked each day. I can't imagine my mother doing that – it was so far. It made me think about 'running towards the problem' and reminded me of a time when George said that he wanted to run away because it was too big. It made me think about all of the grandmothers who face big problems. While I spent time with another family, I saw the conflict, violence and brokenness that had resulted because their family had left them. I don't know what to do, but I'm learning to surrender it to God. My instinct is to run away and isolate myself but I'm learning not to run away but rather to lean into others. I want them to know that I'm not leaving.

Sometimes I need to ask myself what I am running away from. I know the truth. I need to look in the rear-view mirror and see how far I have come and what I have seen with Hands at Work. It's through faithfulness and staying that I have seen my growth in maturity."

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Thank God for the grace that He has given to every Hands at Work volunteer who has been travelling over the course of the first half of the year.

In July Jennifer Kim, who is a member of the Hands at Work US office, was at the Hub in South Africa with her parents, before heading to Zimbabwe to lead a team. While she was in South Africa, she had the opportunity to share about their growing team in the US office. Please pray for the team as it continues to grow and expand. Pray for those who have come to Africa, that their experience will help to grow and equip them when they return to the USA as well as help them to advocate and share what they have experienced and learned.

Pray that as a Hands at Work community, both in Africa and around the world, we will be continually rooted in the love of our Heavenly Father, and that out of that love we will be able to effectively care for and serve the most vulnerable children.

OSHOEK YOUTH CAMP

Xolani Makwakwa, African Volunteer (South Africa), Regional Support Team
Hannah Mohajer, International Volunteer (Canada)

In June there was a camp in Oshoek for the youth from the surrounding areas. On the Friday 19 boys came to spend the day and then, the following day, 33 girls came.

Xolani shares: "In South Africa we have a huge number of young adults. There are 20 year olds who are in grade 9, but have been told that school is their success. We need to ask ourselves how we can walk with our youth who are unable to finish school? Doing home repairs and projects are important, but we need to be able to talk with our youth about Christ.

Going into the Camp, we wanted it to be a place of fun from which we could move forward in relationship. We didn't put a lot of structure on the day as we knew that would make them fearful and give answers to our questions that they thought we wanted to hear. On the day, they thought we were going to ask them questions and preach, but instead we had fun and also times of relationship groups, where we shared our own brokenness and personal stories. With the boys we

played football, danced a lot and talked about Christ. One of the boys shared a medical situation that he was struggling with and, during the week, realised his need for Christ, as previously he had been taken to traditional healers. This is where the follow-up starts. We heard from several of the youth about how much the day meant to them. They felt loved and accepted, which is an exciting start.

Hannah says: "While the boys were there Xolani shared his story, which was a shock to the boys because they were able to identify with him. It was powerful and helped them view him as a leader who they could relate to. The girls' day was different to the boys', and we felt there was more social anxiety in the relationships. A highlight was when one of the volunteers, who had come to support the Camp from the Hub in South Africa, shared her story. Sharing her story ministered to some of the girls' hearts, which helped break down some of the walls that the girls had put up. There was one young mum who had a two year old and a tiny baby. I was praying that she would come to the Youth Camp, and she did. It was a huge highlight for everyone involved to care for her babies for a couple of hours, so that she could enjoy playing with the other youth."

