

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

- Isaiah 61:1-3



“God’s ways are not our ways and I think when we ask God to show us the way and to lead us,” – Catherine Clarkson

A SENSE OF URGENCY

Catherine Clarkson, International Volunteer (UK), Partnerships Team

For seven weeks, Catherine had the opportunity to live in Malawi, serving alongside the Dedza Service Centre team in the most vulnerable communities.

“On my first morning in Malawi, God gave me a scripture from Psalms 16:8. It says, ‘I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With Him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.’ Of course, this theme of ‘shaking’ echoes our Watchword for the year. It’s interesting to me, that word ‘shaken’. God didn’t say the mountains might be shaken, but that the mountains will be shaken. God in His grace tells us that life will be shaken, but He doesn’t tell us what will be shaken or how – I think if that was the case, we would never want to move forward! I knew this season wasn’t going to be easy but I knew I had to keep my eyes on God because I knew I needed to be focused on Him so I wouldn’t be shaken, even if the world around me was.

A significant moment from my time in Malawi was visiting the home of four

children, all under the age of 11, living in Mphunzi Community. As we sat on the stoep of their small home and saw the holes in the roof and walls, and the lack of door, we started to understand the reality of this family. It was a powerful and painful experience to sit there and look at the vulnerability of the situation. As we heard the story of the family, we learned that they had no parents and lived alone. Their father had left, having run away a long time ago, their mother had passed away and the grandfather – the only close relative – wasn’t connected to this family or looking after them. At the time we visited, the oldest child, just 11, had gone looking for work in the fields, leaving the nine-year-old responsible for caring for her siblings.

This sparked a huge urgency amongst many of us in the Dedza Service Centre. I remember coming home that day and weeping. I was reminded of the loss these children had experienced, the choice that these adults had made not to care for them and the pain they were going through. I wept and cried out before God, asking him how this was possible. It’s times like this we feel so raw and things are so painful, and we are frustrated by how slow sometimes

things can feel and sometimes how people seemingly aren’t responding in the way we wish they would respond.

Thankfully this isn’t where the story ends. A plan was made for three of the children to be taken in by Care Workers, some of whom were the most vulnerable in their community themselves. As we were talking as a Service Centre about what to do and challenging one another on what it means to make it personal, one of the Service Centre members raised his hand and said that he would take in the fourth child. Isn’t this incredible? God’s ways are not our ways and I think when we ask God to show us the way and to lead us, He often does it in very surprising and inspiring ways.”

Please continue to pray for these children – that God will bring healing to the brokenness and trauma that they have experienced. Pray that as they live in homes of safety and care, and as they gather as siblings at the Care Point, they will know God’s love and find their worth in Him.

MARANATHA WORKSHOP IN KATETAULA

Sylvia Chinyanta, African Volunteer
(Zambia), Luanshya Service Centre

Katetaula is one of the most vulnerable communities in Zambia, located close to the border of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is a community where alcohol abuse, traditional healing and misinformation are common. Recently there was a Maranatha Workshop in Katetaula to share the truth of who Jesus is with the Care Workers.



Sylvia shares, "I want to thank God because His ways are not our ways. We knew that as long as the Jesus we know was shared at the workshop, that God's way would prevail. On the Thursday, we had planned for a volunteer to share her story but she came down with malaria and wasn't able to attend. Thankfully, Mavis, who is a part of the Luanshya Service Centre, raised her hand and asked if she could share her story, which she did. There is an importance in sharing our stories. Sometimes people in the community think that 'we' don't go through things, so we need to share our stories. Hearing Mavis share her story gave people the courage to open up and confess to things like alcohol abuse, witchcraft and unforgiveness.

I want to encourage us to use every opportunity that we have – even if we may only encourage one or two people. Because of the stories that were shared, we saw Josephine, one of the Care Workers, reconcile with her mother, which is amazing.

There is a lot of power in spending extended time in the community. Sometimes when we visit we have plans, but God wants to show us something later in the evening. We do need to plan but we also need to be open to letting God do what He wants. We need to be sensitive to the Spirit of God. The healing that happened in Katetaula also happened in the nearby community of Maranatha as they talked to each other.

The moment you decide to stand up, God will use you. When God sends us somewhere, He wants to use us and we need to let Him do that."

HOPE IN MOZAMBIQUE

Jess Thomas, International Volunteer (UK), Regional Support Team
Tyler Ralph, International Volunteer (Canada), Regional Support Team

In June, Tyler and Jess had the privilege of spending two weeks in Mozambique, walking in the communities and supporting the Chimoio Service Centre (SC) as they care for the Care Workers and the most vulnerable children in four communities.

Jess shares, "In Matsinho B Community, a garden has been planted and cultivated by the Care Workers. The crops that they harvested from the garden will be sold to the Community Based Organisation, with the profits going to the Care Workers. Any other harvest remaining will be divided amongst the Care Workers for their personal use – either to eat or to sell in the local markets. In a place where the harvest has been poor, their garden is thriving!"



Tyler says, "The monthly Bible stories that we have been sharing across Hands at Work have been having a great impact in Mozambique. In Matsinho A Community, the Relationship Group with the Care Workers and pastors was one of my highlights. The Chimoio SC would act out the Bible story and then ask the Care Workers what they saw. Then the Care Workers and pastors would have time to colour in papers with the Bible stories drawn out. It was so encouraging to see how everyone was so engaged."



RECONCILIATION

Jones Kabambanya, African Volunteer (Zambia), Kabwe Service Centre
Blessings Sambo, African Volunteer (Zambia), Zambian Regional Support Team

When Blessings and Jones travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), they spent two weeks walking with and encouraging the Service Centre as they care for the most vulnerable children living in difficult circumstances.

Jones says, "One day, we were in Toyota Community with the Likasi Service Centre. We had a chance to do a Relationship Group with many of the older youth and I was prepared to share my story but at the last minute something changed my mind. I felt the need to make my story short and then share about who Jesus is, which resulted in several of the youth giving their lives to Christ.

Throughout my time in the DRC, I learnt more about how we need to help our brothers and sisters we are working alongside before we go out into the communities to care for the children and Care Workers. We shouldn't stop supporting and praying for one another - it's a testimony of who we are."

Blessings shares, "It was encouraging to see the way that the youth identified with Jones' story and how God used him to start bringing healing amongst the youth.

When we went to Kikula Community, we learnt that there had been some struggles amongst the Care Workers because of a misunderstanding. As a result, some of them had stopped coming. When we went to visit one of the Care Workers, it was obvious that she felt hurt and so we took time to hear her story and then were able to share some scriptures about forgiveness. Struggling with the situation, her husband felt that she couldn't go back because of the issues. We didn't push but committed to praying.

A few days later we heard that the husband had been so convicted after we left that this Care Worker has reconciled with the other Care Workers and has now been back at the Care Point."

*"We shouldn't stop supporting and praying for one another - it's a testimony of who we are."
- Jones Kabambanya*



PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

In June, two teams were able to come to visit the communities that they support. One team was from Sinani in South Africa and the other was from Christ Church in the US. It was a huge blessing to have teams on the ground after such a long time. Praise God that they were able to visit and connect with the Care Workers and children. Pray that the work God has started will continue to grow. Pray that team members will be bold in sharing stories and testimonies of the children and Care Workers they met.

This year, the harvest in Mozambique has not gone well. Many families are struggling to yield the food that they need to survive. Ask God to make a way and pray for Hands at Work leadership as they prayerfully discern the steps needed to provide for our children, their families and the Care Workers.

Pray for the youth who are being intentionally invested into by Hands at Work leaders. Pray that they will grow deep in their faith and understanding of God's love. Pray that they will become voices of hope and truth in their community.

Pray for the follow up that will be needed from the Maranatha Workshops in Mafambisa and Katetaula Communities. Pray for the Care Workers – that they will continue to experience healing and transformation. Thank God for the strongholds and burdens that were released. Pray that the Care Workers will stand strong in the truth of God's word and not pick them back up.

DARKNESS VERSUS LIGHT

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

Recently, there was a Maranatha Workshop for Care Workers in the community of Mafambisa, South Africa. The purpose of a Maranatha Workshop is to share with the Care Workers the truth of who Jesus is and how He changes lives. It is an opportunity for the Care Workers to receive healing and restoration through the transformational love of Christ.

The Hazyview Service Centre and members of the Regional Support Team facilitated the workshop and were able to spend the whole week in Mafambisa.

Kara shares, "From the start of the workshop, we experienced the Holy Spirit and were very aware of two kingdoms that were at war – darkness versus the light. There are many strongholds in Mafambisa. It is not uncommon when we visit the community to experience a lot of confusion and even attacks from the enemy. But God's word is powerful and it changed lives. As we were praying in anticipation for this week, the scriptures from Isaiah 61:1-3 became the backbone of what we shared:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance

of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

As God's word was shared, there were times when the Care Workers started to confess and release things that were holding them 'prisoner'. They said that they did not plan or even want to say these things but they knew that they needed to confess. There were burdens that came off their shoulders and strongholds were released. One Care Worker told someone that there was a 'fire' going on in the church building where we were meeting. There is nothing better than seeing people set free! We have been freed to help bring freedom to others.

One example of this was when one of the Care Workers came on the first day but did not return the second day. She was struggling. Some of the other Care Workers and team went to visit and bring her back. She came the next day because she said she was shocked that they came to find her.

We get the privilege of introducing people to Jesus. When that happens, they experience the Holy Spirit and the freedom that only He can give. That is when lives change! We are continuing to hear testimonies of what God is doing in people's lives after that week, like people being able to greet someone they had not spoken to for years. The Holy Spirit fills us with His fruit and we are able to do things that were not possible before."