

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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“It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.” - Psalm 92:1-2



“All it took was a Care Worker making it personal and loving the children just as Jesus loves us.” – Morgan Glasbergen

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Morgan Glasbergen, New International Volunteer (Canada), Eswatini Support

From March through to July of this year, travel to and from Eswatini was restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, at the beginning of July, Busie Sityata-Jones and Vusi Mbuza found a way to travel to Eswatini where they ended up staying for two months because of the restrictions. Finally, in November, travel was more widely allowed if individuals had negative test results. Morgan had the opportunity to travel to Eswatini, alongside Melody, a member of the Service Centre, where they spent two weeks supporting Futhi, who is the only member of the Eswatini Service Centre actually living there right now.

“While we were in Msengeni A, I went on a Holy Home Visit with Melody and it was probably one of the hardest visits that I have done. We went into the house of a child-headed household and there was rubbish and clothes everywhere. These were tough conditions that they were living

in. During the visit, we were able to help wash their clothes and blankets and buy them soap. It was humbling to watch the Care Workers be a part of cleaning their things, and very encouraging to see how they care for the children.

Another visit that was very difficult was to the home of one of our girls in Bhandeni, who is very vulnerable. It was hard seeing how she lived. Her parents have both passed away and she wasn’t being cared for well. Walking away, we wanted to see what we could do practically, to help. Nomsa, one of the Care Workers from Msengeni A who happened to be with us visiting a different community, was deeply impacted by this girl’s story. Crying, Nomsa raised her hand and said that she wanted to take the child to live in her home.

After consulting the family she was staying with, and making the necessary arrangements, they

fetches everything that she had from Bhandeni and moved her to live with Nomsa in Msengeni A.

“She was so happy to be loved and, while she rarely smiled, she had the biggest smile that day. The Msengeni A Care Point is where she attends now and is very happy. All it took was a Care Worker making it personal and loving the children just as Jesus loves us.”

WEEK IN KABWE

Dawson Reddekopp, International Volunteer (Canada), Regional Support Team
Celine Reddekopp, International Volunteer (Canada), Communications Team

Recently, Dawson and Celine had the privilege of spending three days in the Kabwe area of Zambia, supporting the Kabwe Service Centre. During this time they made two community stays – one with Winfridah, the coordinator in Chisamba, and the other with a vulnerable family in Miswa, who Dawson had connected with in 2017.



Celine says, “Visiting the home of one family in Chisamba, where the grandmother had been struggling with an abscess for years, I was reminded of the inaccessibility to medical care that is such a common reality in our communities. As I sat with this grandmother and heard her ask why God hadn’t healed her yet, I was able to identify with her, because although our circumstances aren’t exactly the same, I – like I’m sure many of us – have prayed for years for things, that God has not yet answered. As we sat, I felt challenged, but also encouraged that it’s not because God doesn’t hear or care but because He has a far greater plan. In the midst of her weeping, I was able to share, and remind myself, that the good news that we can hold onto is the hope that we have in our Heavenly Father, who will one day wipe all our tears away.”

Dawson shares, “A couple of months ago one of the Zambian volunteers who is supporting Miswa community, and other communities in the Kabwe area, asked if I remembered a woman named Ruth*. It took me a minute, but once he told me she was from Miswa, I instantly remembered her. He went on to tell me how she was asking about me, and if I was still here. She shared with him that I had prayed for her back in 2017, and this year she had seen God answer her prayers, which had been for two cows.

After hearing that Ruth was asking about me, plans were made for Celine and I to spend one night at Ruth’s home. As we approached her house, Ruth was overflowing with joy and excitement! I didn’t even have to introduce Celine as my wife before she ran up to her and greeted her with a hug. She was singing and dancing, and proceeded to give me a hug after greeting Celine. Before we could even say much, Ruth quickly began cooking some nshima and vegetables for us. She was so clearly in awe of God’s goodness, and had come to know that He sees her and knows her, and as a way of praising Him wanted to show me her gratitude for praying for her.

As Ruth was cooking, I took time to look around. Her plot of land now consists of three small buildings – the one where we slept back in 2017, an enclosed outdoor toilet, and an enclosed outdoor bathing room. In addition to her many goats she had two doves, was in the process of digging a well on her own plot and, as you may have guessed, there were two cows. Though life is still far from perfect, Ruth’s spirits were very high! It became clear that God loves her, and her thankfulness did not stop flowing the entire time we spent with her. From killing one of the goats for us to have for dinner, to finding a mattress for us to sleep on, Ruth stopped at nothing to show us her gratitude.

Celine and I felt so blessed by our time with Ruth and her family, and personally I felt very inspired by the way she expressed her thankfulness. I remember the first time I encountered Jesus and I responded in a similar way. For those of you who have experienced this, you know what I mean; you feel so overwhelmed with thankfulness that you want to give everything back!

My prayer for Ruth, for myself, and for all of us, is that we don’t lose that passionately thankful heart. My prayer is that we will never cease in our desire to give of ourselves for the sake of Jesus.”



EARS TO HEAR

Erick Rukang, African Volunteer (DRC), Service Centre Coordinator

As a Hands at Work family, both in Africa and around the world, we need to be continually asking our Heavenly Father to give us the eyes to see the people around us who are in need, and the ears to hear the challenges that they face. Erick shares a story from a time in Kikula Community:

“One time, I went to Kikula Community to see how their Relationship Groups were going. As we finished with a word from God and a time of prayer, a Care Worker spoke up and shared about a Primary Caregiver who had been chased from her home with her three children. They had been left with nowhere to stay.”

At that time it was getting later in the day, but Erick and the Care Workers knew that they couldn't leave this family with nowhere to stay. In addition to the family's challenges the mother had been seriously ill only a month prior. Adding to the urgency

of the situation was the fact that the rains were expected to begin at any point.

“We knew that we needed to make a plan for her, even though it was later in the day and it might mean that we would get home late. Eventually we found a small home where they could stay until a proper plan was put into place. The following day, it started pouring rain. God brought us to that place to put a roof over her head. As we left, she said ‘I saw God’.

We are the hope to the hopeless, and we have to bring hope as far as God will lead us.”

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

2020 has been a year in which we have experienced many challenges. In Africa, we have experienced the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as drought, increased food prices, and a sharp increase in the vulnerability of our children, particularly our young girls. Despite the challenges, we praise God for His faithfulness in carrying us through, and making us stronger and more able to effectively care for the most vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the vulnerability of our children, particularly our youth, as they have had much idle time without school and have made unhealthy life choices. Please pray for our youth, that they will feel safe to come to the Care Point and share their challenges with their Care Workers. Pray that as Hands at Work we will find creative and unique ways to engage our youth, sharing the truth of Jesus and what it means to make healthy life choices.

The Christmas season brings an increase in the vulnerability of our children. Please pray for protection over them, that they will be safe and make wise decisions.

Over the Christmas break, many of the Hands at Work volunteers will be travelling. Pray for protection over each volunteer and that, as they have time to rest with their families, God will refill and prepare them for the year ahead.

We invite you to pray in earnest expectation of all that God will do in the lives of the most vulnerable children, Care Workers, Primary Caregivers and the wider communities in 2021. Pray for each person to come to know the transforming love and hope of Jesus Christ.

Greeting for Christmas – May our brothers and sisters in Christ experience the joy and peace we have in celebrating the birth of our Saviour.