

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” - John 8:12



“At the end of the trip it felt like we had been on the frontline of a battlefield, but in God we were more than conquerors: we observed and had the joy of being part of so many victories!!!” – Jo Poulson

BAPTISING MANY

Jo Poulson, International Volunteer (UK), Regional Support Team

Recently Jo had the opportunity to travel to Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The purpose of her visit was to support the Service Centres in both countries, bringing encouragement as well as key maintenance and electrical work.

“Before setting off I knew that for the time to be of value I had to lay down my agendas, submit to God and spend precious time with Him so that nothing of me got in the way of Him using me to build up and speak the truth about Jesus. By the end I felt like the gap between heaven and earth was paper thin. God was so gracious in speaking clearly to us and the Holy Spirit equipped us for every challenge we faced.

In the first week one highlight was going to Masasi, a new community for Hands at Work. The Care Point meets under a tree in a very remote

area where the vulnerabilities of the children are so visible. It was cold and the need was so great that we gave blankets to families so they could sleep with some warmth. A 15-year-old boy there who hadn’t received a blanket was so sad, and weeping. It shows the level of need for a teenager to cry in front of his community. Seeing this, we brought him to the vehicle to choose a blanket. It was a simple and beautiful moment for all of us.

The following week we travelled to Mozambique for a Maranatha Workshop in Matsinho. During our time there it was like we had a framework to cover but God spoke clearly through each person as they shared. Days ended up looking different to those originally planned but so much better, as God was the one directing them! It was such a privilege to be with the Hands at Work team and to serve under the leadership of Farai. He released us and it felt like he was blowing the embers of the gifts in each one of us into flames. The team pulled

together for the sole desire to see men and women meet and come to know Jesus. We saw 51 baptisms over two weeks, and God moved powerfully, which brought freedom to people physically, spiritually and emotionally.

At the end of the trip it felt like we had been on the frontline of a battlefield, but in God we were more than conquerors: we observed and had the joy of being part of so many victories!!! The journey back to South Africa went so quickly as we all shared story after story of what God had done.”

THE FOUNDATION IS CHRIST



A Foundations training for the new members of Oshoek Service Centre was recently held at the Hands at Work base in South Africa. It was a chance to go deeper into who Christ is with the Care Workers and to delve into the vision of Hands at Work to care for the most vulnerable children and their families.

Michael Masetla, Oshoek Service Centre

"I have been on a long journey. My father passed away in 2005 and my mother felt the loss as a single parent. Our view of Christ was from the ZCC perspective, and I was told to become a prophet or a traditional healer in that church. Once, I was sick and was taken to a traditional healer who cut me. I was lost and tried to find my way through alcohol, chasing girls and smoking. When I left where I was staying for Oshoek, I thought I could find a new life. I did go to church there and wondered what people were doing and who this Holy Spirit was, but I went back to drinking and behaving badly. One time I was driving and speeding. There was a car in front of me that I hit and we

flew into a tree. I was fortunate to have a couple of scratches, but the car was destroyed. I was broken down in my spirit and was brought along by some people to pray and share my story. Experiencing this alongside people from Hands at Work, I began to be a part of these people, but I was still smoking and lying about it among my new peers. I was really lost. Since doing the Maranatha Workshop, I don't do these things. I don't even see a reason for it. The desire has left me. It's only been about a month but I'm so grateful to God for meeting me in my challenges."

Penelope Khumalo, Oshoek Service Centre

"I've been at the Hands at Work base in South Africa for three weeks and in that time I've been overwhelmed by the love and the welcome. These people have the love of God and I want to experience all of Him too! I appreciate everyone who has helped me and my friends that I have met. I got to walk with Hands at Work volunteers, and they made me not afraid to be here. I have been invited to people's homes

to share meals, which has made me feel a part of the community. I've never experienced the Spirit like I have in this place. For that reason, I got baptised last week. I've benefitted from being here and from the rhythms here. I love ladies prayer and the lessons shared. The Foundations training has inspired me. It's not enough to be a church member. We need to participate in this calling. I see how the book of Nehemiah has been reflected in the lives of George and Carolyn as they walked out their faith. The foundation here is Christ!"



NOT JUST OBSERVERS

Tyler Ralph, International Volunteer (Canada), Regional Support Team

In July, Tyler, Alicia and their two children had the opportunity to go with Jayme and Lynn (International Office Volunteers, Canada) and their family to Eswatini, to spend time visiting the communities and supporting the Eswatini Service Centre.

“So often Alicia or I go to other countries and our kids ask us why we have to go. It was a blessing to have the chance to take our children with us. There were such special moments where my kids interacted with Lonneck (African leader, South Africa) and the Care Workers and kids in community!

In Msengeni A community we visited the home of a young mum and we sat and listened. The mother shared that she is sick and her child is also sick. Alicia went into the house to see the baby and the child had laboured breathing. We prayed with and encouraged the family and then we left. Afterwards we talked to Futhi (African leader, Eswatini) about it. I could see our children were processing the visit too. After we went to another community, I could not shake the thought of that visit. Later that evening we went back to the house and made a plan for her to go to the hospital with her baby. We can know these stories, but the real life of it is something else. The job doesn't end after hearing the story or at the end of the day. It goes beyond office hours.

In Bhandeni, the Care Workers are very much family. They have a great garden where they grow food for the Care Point and to sell, in order to buy other food. After visiting the Care Point and seeing Jayme and her boys acting out a bible story, the Care Workers were obviously blessed by the interaction. They thought it was just amazing that someone would visit them.

I was also able to reconnect with a boy that I know from previous visits and have been intentional about building a relationship with and following up on. He is one of the children that my family and I are committed to praying for on a regular basis. It's one of those friendships that you can have without even speaking the same language! I loved that my family could also meet him. What a blessing to be with the team in Eswatini. We can talk about each community having so many children, but the real stories are deep, and the team there is committed to being in the children's lives in a real way. They are not just observers.”

“We can know these stories, but the real life of it is something else. The job doesn't end after hearing the story or at the end of the day. It goes beyond office hours.”
- Tyler Ralph



IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mossent Mbuyane, African Volunteer (South Africa), Maintenance Team

Recently a Maranatha Workshop was held for the Care Workers in Sthobela C Community – a branch of the existing Sthobela A Community. It was a special time to share who Jesus is with the Care Workers and who He can be in their lives.

“When my brother, Caiver (African leader, South Africa), said I was going to be a part of the team, I said “Why me?”! But the Lord said He was going to be with me and open my mouth and give me something in that time. I was so privileged to be a part of the team.

We shared devotions and stories. We spent time with the Care Workers from Sthobela C. I got to learn who these Care Workers are and how life is for them. They all came with some issues and challenges but they came together to meet, even with their burdens. We spoke of Jesus. These ladies go to church, but they recognise that their lives are split between the Kingdom of Christ and another kingdom. All these ladies saw that they needed God and called on the Holy Spirit to be in their lives.

We heard of people having health problems and difficult family circumstances, but we also heard of Jesus bringing hope though prayer. I was able to share a Bible story with the Care Workers, which was a real blessing for me.

One of my joys was the time that we had to play with the children who come to the Care Point. We had specific times with the zero to fives, six to twelves, and the youth. The Care Workers all played with the children, which is great because it’s important. The Care Workers are precious seeds that we need to nurture and water, and then we can see them produce younger Care Workers as well. On the final day we sang and danced on the bare land for the Care Point. What a privilege to be there on that soil and to see what will grow there.”



SHARING THE HOPE OF CHRIST

Sara and Xolani Makwakwa, Hands at Work Volunteers (US and South Africa), Regional Support Team

In June and July, Sara and Xolani and their two sons were able to spend time in the US, reconnecting with family and friends and connecting with Hands at Work partners in the New York area.

"It had been three years since we were able to visit and for many people it was the first time meeting our children. It was great to see our nieces and nephews and simply be together. We had lots of quality time with our family, and also arranged to meet with some of Hands at Works' advocates and share at some events.

We met with different churches that support the work in the Oshoek area of South Africa, which was great. We spent time with a church which has a long list of people assigned to pray for different things within Hands at Work. It was so encouraging. They are faithfully supporting us. These are normal, ordinary people from all over the world who are standing in the gap for us.

We noticed how many people are still

really struggling with COVID and the effects of losing jobs and loved ones. There is a lot of social anxiety with being in church and out in groups. We were in the US during a time when Christians were at the forefront of the news due to social issues. We were struck by how hard it is for Christians to be salt and light there. Many people pray for us and love us and support us, but they are also doing their best to be missionaries at home in a culture that doesn't want to hear anything about Jesus. We have many friends who work or whose children go to school and cannot speak the name of Jesus. We can be praying for them, how they can shine for Jesus and how we can support them.

Pray for our partners and their families in the US and around the world. Pray that they will have courage in the face of so many challenges. Pray that they will stand firm in the truth of who Christ is. Ask God to show each one of us how we can support them!"

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God for the many baptisms that have been happening across Africa and the lives that have been given to the Lord.

Praise God for the gathering of International Office Volunteers that was held in South Africa. Pray for everything that was talked about to bear fruit in each person's life and in the lives of the volunteers unable to be in South Africa.

Praise God for the teams that have come to Africa already and that will be coming this year. After many years without regular teams, it is a privilege to have them in Africa again. Pray for God's hand to be upon the logistics for each team. Pray for each person to come with a willingness to receive from God and serve in any way.

Pray for the expansion that is happening in several of our countries across Africa, both in our communities and in our Services.

Pray for the under-fives programmes that are happening across Africa. It is amazing to see the way that our Care Workers and Service Centres have taken the vision and are running with it, understanding that safety and love are foundational to the care of their children. Ask God to give continued wisdom and discernment to those who are leading these programmes. Pray that our children will experience transformation in their lives as they experience love, care, proper nutrition and rest from a young age.