

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” - Hebrews 11:13-16



“It’s like finding a pearl, that we put everything into because we trust God that He can transform this life.” – Josh Snyman

LIFE AMONGST THE PAIN

Josh Snyman, Projects Team Leader,
African Volunteer (South Africa)

Towards the end of 2022, Josh and George Snyman travelled to Mozambique to spend time encouraging the Chimoio Service Centre, bringing spiritual rejuvenations into the lives of the Service Centre members and also into the lives of the Care Workers, children and Primary Caregivers.

“One of my highlights was meeting Filipe, a young boy from Macadeira. He went through some really tough times when the rebels attacked his community and he had to run away, but it’s amazing to see God’s grace in his life as people have fought for him. His story is like the story of the prodigal son, where he ran away but has now come back. And yes, it’s still a long journey to walk, but it was encouraging to see a young man, who grew up at one of our Care Points and has gone through many challenges, but who we have stuck with. God’s pulled him

through and now he’s at a place where he is able to give back. These are the types of children who we are called to. It took us a long time to get him to the place where he is now, but it’s so worth it. It reminds me of the story in Matthew where Jesus talks about finding a treasure and then selling everything because you know it is worth that. And I think someone like Felipe’s life is like that. It’s like finding a pearl, that we put everything into because we trust God that He can transform this life.

Visiting the different communities, it was amazing how God opened people’s hearts. At almost every Care Point we came to a place where people would repent and acknowledge their brokenness and pain. It was special to see that in the midst of the brokenness, there was an hour or two when everyone was sweating and dancing and celebrating, recognising that God is doing something special among us.

In Matsinho B we did a Holy Home Visit and our group went towards the Matsinho A side. When we were

done with our second home visit, we went to Matsinho A Care Point to go and see what was happening. When we arrived, a whole bunch of kids were waiting, and when they saw Farai (African Leader, Zimbabwe) you could see the excitement in their faces. They had already finished eating and cleaning up but they were waiting because they heard that George, Farai and the Chimoio SC had come to visit. When they heard that they were at Matsinho B, the kids ran from Matsinho A to Matsinho B to go and see them. It was amazing to see the joy and celebration in a place where if you look up and you look around you see brokenness and extreme poverty everywhere. But there’s this glimpse of hope and it’s almost like the spirit is giving that community something to look at and to say, wow, there’s life. There’s life amongst this pain. There’s life in a place where there’s brokenness and there should be no life.”

OFF THE TAR ROAD

Hands at Work is committed to working in the most vulnerable communities across Africa — the places that no one else will go to. A big push for 2023 is expansion — growing in both the number of volunteers and communities served. Prudence, Dan and Audres share the initial steps that they took to move into the new community of Manyeleti.

Prudence Mthabini, African Volunteer (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre

“We didn’t know where to go, we were simply following the lead of the Holy Spirit. We didn’t go with plans of building a Care Point but of hearing from God. We saw houses that were in rough shape. There is no clinic, but there is a school. We spoke to the Induna (local community leader) about whether or not this was the right place. We knew that God had led us to the right place. We started visiting the Mozambican side where there are many refugees and by the next time we visited, more people knew about us and that we were interested in helping. They brought us to the other side of the community and set up a church meeting. But they didn’t invite anyone from the Mozambican side and were introducing us to their friends. It was very clear that we were being hijacked. They didn’t want us working with the refugees ...”



Dan Waspé, International Volunteer (UK)

“Knowing that, we said that the one goal was that we were going to go and flat out ignore anyone from the South African side. We were going to go straight to the Mozambican refugees and we were going to be there and ask who was the most vulnerable, and we were going to stay with them. We didn’t know who we were going to stay with — the only thing we knew was that we were going to be staying with refugees. After checking with both the chiefs and parking at the refugee side we walked, and as we walked we asked the same question over and over again, ‘who is the most vulnerable’. When we asked people, they would mention two or three families but there were always two names mentioned as the most vulnerable. Imagine I walk into a room and I shake hands with the first man, then the second man, and I completely ignore the women and continue shaking hands with the men. The first people you greet and the way that you greet them makes a huge statement about who you value. We use the example of when you’re on a Holy Home Visit and a chief comes and walks past everyone to greet the white person and shakes their hand. It makes a big statement about the first person you greet, which is why we went straight to the Mozambican refugees and the most vulnerable.

The next day we called a meeting and there were maybe 60 people from all over the community — both sides. They all wanted to know what on earth was going on, why we had come, and why out of everyone we had stayed with the refugees. It caused a stir. They all turned up to find out why. It caused such a stir that people visited local volunteers, Thembi and Angel, and said what are you doing here? We can’t believe you’re here. We thought it was a lie. Why are you staying with this family? In front of 60 people we told them the story that Jesus said, I didn’t come for healthy people, I came for the sick and those in need of healing. That’s why we stayed with them. That is why we are here. That is who we are here for. There was silence as we explained.”

Audres Baloyi, African Volunteer (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre

“On the way we prayed that God would show us the right places. It was hard to go without a plan but I went. It was out of my comfort zone, which was good because you can see different things when you are out of your comfort zone. I met a family where the husband had run away and married another woman. The son was in jail for poaching. They are vulnerable. The family was surprised that we would come to see and stay with them. The roof leaked and the floor was wet. They tried hard to accommodate us but we said that it doesn’t matter, we are here for you. People even came by to ask why we would stay there. They thought that it wasn’t a good enough place and they looked down on the family. But what a blessing to be with this family, and what a relationship we have begun.”

Please pray for the work that God has started in Manyeleti. Pray for each child who will be cared for, that they will experience the unconditional love of Christ through the support of the Care Workers. Ask God to continue to stir in the hearts of local church leaders and in the Care Workers they have mobilised. Pray for transformation in this community.



OSHOEK FOUNDATIONS TRAINING

Audrey Sibiya, African Volunteer (South Africa), Regional Support Team

When beginning to work in a new community or with new Care Workers, church or African leaders, one of the first things that is done is a Foundations Training. The purpose is to spend concentrated time sharing the vision of Hands at Work and the calling that God has placed on each one of our lives to care for the most vulnerable. In February, there was a Foundations Training for the new Care Workers and Service Centre members.

"Since our foundation is in Christ, we ask Him to show us in these meetings what we are going to do. We go through the logistics of serving but we also go in prayer and are flexible, so that we meet the needs of those we are meeting with. There was one who shared that there was some deep hurt and pain with her granddaughter. We were able to encourage her and share about the power of the Holy Spirit. Another took poison, wanting to end her life. She was unsuccessful in that, which was God's plan. We were able to meet with her and it was good, but then we left. Now what? We trust the relationships that we have with the local pastors and we expect the church to help meet the needs of the vulnerable as well. The pastors committed to following up all of the situations that were addressed during the training, because they live in the community and community ownership is one of our core values."

"HOLY SPIRIT COME AND MOVE"

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

At the beginning of the year, Kara moved to Zambia and joined the Zambian Regional Support Team. This new season in Zambia started with the launch of the 2023 Watchword and a week-long Bible school.

"The spirit moved so much this week. It's like He took our programme and said I'm going to do this my way. He moved powerfully and deeply in our lives. I learned so much about His heart, His mercy, His holiness and my own brokenness and desperation for the Holy Spirit. The Watchword helped us to see that we have been brought into Jesus. He is in us and we are in Him. It helped us to realise how desperate we need to be for the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and set us free, so that we can bring this good news to others. It's the mission of Jesus to see the captives set free, the eyes of the blind opened, to see the oppressed set free. That is the heart of Jesus. As the Spirit transforms us and makes us more like Jesus, we experience that freedom and we have the opportunity to go and bring that good news. But it starts with us. Please keep praying for us, that the Spirit will keep working in us, bringing that freedom. If we're not bringing good news, then we are bringing bad news. Pray that we will remember that this is a holy calling. Everything we do has to be about our children, with whom God has entrusted us. Pray that we continue to be stirred and that a fire is lit within us."

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God for the launch of the Watchword! Pray for each person who has heard it and will continue to hear it throughout the year. Ask God to speak into the hearts of each person, and that He will challenge and speak life and truth into their lives.

Thank God for our Care Workers, the heroes in our communities. Pray for the ones who you know by name!

Pray for each of our Service Centres across Africa, that they will be continually filled with the Holy Spirit as they go out into the communities that they serve. Pray that they will have spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear all that God has for them.

Ask God to give our children and their families peace and courage as they start the new year.

Pray for the situation in Goma, that God will make a way for His people. Pray for each person in the Goma Service Centre – Bindu, Zawadi, Josaphat, Bahati and Denise. Pray that they will have strength, courage and wisdom as they serve the most vulnerable in this challenging season of desperation. Ask God to protect each of our children and their families.

As many people have shifted in both their roles and regions at the start of the year, pray that they will settle in well.