

Mwandi OVC Project Newsletter



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Newsletter No: 47 – January to March 2011

Dear Friends,

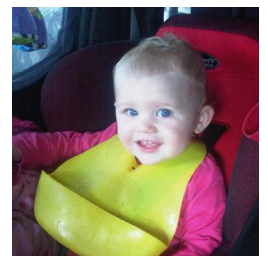
I hope that you are well.

Lucy and I have been home in Mwandi for over a month now and it's so good to be back. I am feeling much better but I know myself that I am still not 100%. Some days I really struggle and that's hard for me, but I shall get there. My back has been really bad too and that just drives me nuts as most of my work is sitting at a desk and that is what really makes my back worse.

We are now back to just us 3, Lucy has no kindergym to go to or has no other children her age to hang out with, but that's ok she has enough to keep her occupied each day and Mubita, Keith and Ida visit her a few times during the week so all is good.

The mornings are becoming cooler and it's becoming darker earlier. I am sure that the rain has now stopped and we won't see any until November. There was even some fog on the river so I am sure it will be cooling down in the next few weeks.

Lucy is now 14 months old and has 9 teeth, a lot more hair and is walking so fast everywhere and never stops making noise (gee I wonder where she gets that from!!!). She loves her books and all our animals. The latest addition to the family is a tortoise, Lucy finds him quite funny. I often take Lucy over to the OVC Project and the children just love her. No one can say Lucy – it's Rucy. So mostly we encourage people to call her SEPO – her middle name. Everyone smiles at her when they call her that name. Today was so sweet - she was playing with some girls at OVC and Namachana picked up Lucy and was whispering her name again and again and Lucy thought this was so sweet and Namachana had the softest eyes just looking straight at Lucy.



Rury's sister and husband were out from Scotland for a few weeks in March/April and it was so good to see them. Lucy loved spending time with them and it's so important for her to get to know her Aunt and Uncle. I am not sure when she will see them again so it was just lovely for them to visit. We were able to spend a few days in Botswana with them which was good.

The river has risen quite high – it's nearly up to the entrance of the basic school, so we have built a fence around the rising river so Lucy cannot run down to the river's edge. We have also built a fence around our verandah to slow Lucy down too.

Chocolate Easter eggs – What do they mean to us? New life? A symbol or reminder of Easter? I would say that 99% of the members of the Mwandi Community have never seen a chocolate "easter" egg let alone know that it is what people all over the world receive at Easter.

I spoke with Mwaka the other day about Easter and she told me about Palm Sunday and the events that happened over Easter from the Bible but knew nothing about a chocolate egg. To me this time in our Christian year is the most humbling I experience. A time of sadness, reflection and celebration. What an

honour it is to be in God's family knowing that from the beginning he knew His Son would come to this earth to die for us!!! Wow how did we deserve that?? But we do, and if anything, our eggs and our holiday should help us to remember that someone died an extremely painful death for our sins. Again the simple most important gesture anyone can give and receive - LOVE

The OVC Project looks great, all the children are being looked after wonderfully and all the staff have done so well while I have been away. I have been catching up on what has been happening and I can't complain at all. The staff are taking a lot more responsibility with their duties and with the correct guidelines in place we are making waves. The construction is the only thing that slows down when I am not around but it is happening bit by bit.

We have hired some tractors from the Sesheke sawmills to move the last container we received from Australia (2 yrs ago) in preparation for the next container that will arrive from Australia soon. The guys came from 70km away with their John Deere tractors and the children were very excited. It didn't take long and the container was dragged in place. It looks great. We still do not have enough funds to send our next container, so please help if you can so we can receive the very important items inside.

The new intake of sewing club students are making clothes for our children in the community as we have run out of clothes that came in the last container. They are not able to make the 440 pieces of clothes we distribute each month but they are doing really well. They are also making school bags for the children too.

It's school holidays at the moment so the students are coming to help clean the surrounds at OVC in the mornings and helping putting chicken manure all over our garden. We offer maths and science tuition over the holidays for the students and we can see that is really helping. I am so proud of our students, some of them have just received their grade 12 results and the results are just fantastic, how the books have turned.. I can't believe the change in these students. When we first started supporting students in school we never saw grades like we are seeing now. We have so many applicants for college it's just amazing. Pity we don't have the money for them...

School support is still needed in all our different programs. I ask that those of you who have not yet supported a child with education support, please think about it, as it's so important and we are really needing help with the new intake of grade 10's, evening classes and college/University. \$1500-\$2000 a year for a child in university can change their lives. Most of the students we support in University are on a 100% bursary from the Zambian Government but they need the extra \$2000 per year to help cover the items that the bursary doesn't. We have so many applicants who have been accepted in to University too - maybe your Bible study group or team from work can help a student by supporting them in university. Please let me know if you need information. It doesn't matter if 100 people support one student actually that would be quite amazing to have so many people praying and thinking of one student. Please consider it.

Visitors coming to Mwandu or anyone can please help - this year can you ask work mates, friends etc for laptops that they no longer need. We are going to start building our IT/Recreation centre for our children this year in August and we would love to have at least 10 laptops for the children to use for computer classes. We are desperately needing a place for the children and youth to hang out instead of drinking at the bars in the village at a young age. My dream is to have a pool table, computer classes, dart board, foosball table etc. in the recreation centre for the children to use. I would love to run youth group three times a week enabling our children to have a place to come instead of being tempted to do other things like sex, drugs and beer. Please let me or the support team members know if you can help with a laptop and then we can work out how to get it to Mwandu.

We have a new reverend in Mwandu. His name is Rev Wezi Manda and his is here with his young family. Rev Manda is straight out of college and a very nice person. I am sure in time we will get to know him better and he will be a great leader for the mission.

I have started Sunday school but only a few children have been attending, I shall continue to ask others to come and I am sure it will grow. I pray that all Sunday schools in Mwandu are full with children each Sunday and so they grow and learn more about our Saviour.

Friday night youth group has become popular and more youth want to come. One of the guardians to youth in the community came to ask if her grandchildren could come to youth group as she could see the good behaviour of the children.

Lifaliza, Namachana and Mutafela have returned from Special school. Namatama "Mumma" was sent home as she kept trying to run away and so the school suggested she comes to the school next year. The kids have grown in size and maturity. Namachana has this sense of peace and Lifaliza seems more open. Mutafela is still obsessed with chairs, but I can see changes in his walking and greeting gestures and wanting to spend time with others. Lifaliza still has a long way to go with that. Namachana and Lifaliza are now 14 and Namachana is in grade 2 and Lifaliza no grade. Their carer at the school is just wonderful and she tells us that she can tell that they have had a horrid life and that the school really wants to change that for the children. Let's hope and pray that they can learn to communicate and be themselves. It is so lovely to have them back in Mwandu though.



In February / March Rury and Given (the OVC Book keeper) attended a 1 week Micro-finance course in South Africa. What a wonderful experience for him that I am sure he will never forget. The guys said the course was well worth attending and hope to implement some of the ideas soon within the Mwandu community. I will ask Given to explain in greater detail in the next newsletter.

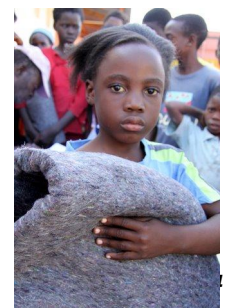


Our first intake of Agri-course students of 10 orphans finished last month, but we have a new intake to start in May so that will give these other 10 children some wonderful skills in Agriculture and life skills.

The Feeding program continues to give our children the ingredients they need to lead a fulfilled life. The few hours they come each day to OVC continues to give them a break away from the responsibilities that are placed on them at a young age. We are having a few issues with pork at the moment but tomorrow we are going to run a survey to see what the children really think about pork. Because the children listen to adults they really don't know what to think about it but they know it tastes yummy. We are having problems trying to get cows to slaughter as the water is so high out on the flood plains near Mwandu. So we have had to be buying cows quite a distance from Mwandu and walking them to Rury's butchery for slaughter.

Late May our carpentry centre will be up and running. The first week of May we will travel to Lusaka to purchase the basic hand tools for each student and once these items are purchased we will start advertising for a teacher. It has taken us a long time to get to this stage, but it will be wonderful to start. We can only grow from there. My prayer is that our youth will come and learn and realize the importance of having a trade and skills to be able to find a job enabling them to support their families.

We still need support to purchase blankets for the up and coming winter months. The Blanket appeal is such an important program for the children in the community who have to share blankets with their siblings. For only \$15 you can buy a blanket for a



child. We wish to place an order at the end of May/ early June so please help us keep the children warm this winter. And yes it does get very cold here in winter.

Newsflash – our website is gradually getting updated, by a great friend of Rury’s in South Africa. So that is fantastic news. As he gets time from his very busy job he makes updates. So it won’t be long and we will be able to have the whole site up to date.

I thank you for your love and encouragement. We couldn’t achieve what we do without your ongoing support. Please keep us in your prayers.

Until next time, lots of Love
Fiona (Fred)

Urgent needs

Feeding Program	Continued support needed
Staff eating area	\$2000
Blankets x 650	\$15 each
VIP Latrines (double toilet block)	\$1500

Prayer Points

- ☞ Children suffering from HIV/AIDS
- ☞ Fiona’s health to improve
- ☞ Protection for Rury, Fiona and Lucy from the Spiritual warfare that is so apparent in Mwand
- ☞ Ongoing support for all the programs that are at the OVC Project



World AIDS Day 2010



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**Please make ALL Cheques Payable to
Port Lincoln Uniting Church Appeals – Mwand**

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