

Mwandi OVC Project Newsletter



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Dear Friends,
I hope that you are well.
Rury, Lucy and I are ok, tired, but a good tired ☺

The weather is so cold in the mornings now, but lovely and warm during the day. I really do worry about our children this time of year; they suffer with the cold weather if they don't have appropriate bedding and clothing.

Lucy is now 17 months, has a lot more hair that seems to be blonde, the red has gone. We have been potty training her for a few months now with great success on most days!!!! We have started to try to use the big toilet and its going ok. She has quite a few more big teeth and a she loves talking (well making lots of noises). She never stops pointing and letting us know what she wants or needs. Lucy loves going down to the farm with Daddy and makes all the animal noises. Morris and Bucky are her favourites and so are the cats –even though she pulls their tails. She couldn't say Bucky for a long time but for the past week everything is called Bucky, not just the dog!!! Lucy is a very happy little girl and never stops. She has been playing with Percy's daughter Thabo and they play well together, Inutu's daughter came up for a visit the other day, which was pretty cute.



I am still able to get to work most mornings and try to get to work 2 afternoons a week. Mwaka baby sits. Just this week Lucy is putting her socks and shoes on and wants to dress herself. She is trying but gets frustrated - it's so funny to watch. Once she turns 18 months we are able to take her to pre-school at the international school in Livingstone. We will probably only get there once a week but she will love it. She is a real blessing. We thank God that we are living here so she experiences so many different cultures.

I have been feeling ok, blood test results have not been so good. I am awaiting results of a test I took this week in Namibia. So I am praying that this time the results are better. I really appreciate your prayers regarding my health.

The River continues to drop, fishing is full on. Not with fishing rods though, but with illegal size fishing nets and I have seen some who are using shade cloth. This is not good for the breeding stock of the river. This wonderful source of income may be fished out in not so many years to come and what an impact that would have on many lives. The chief does stop fishing in the river for a few months each year, but it's the small fishing nets or mosquito nets that are used that are the major problem.

We have had a rogue Hippo hanging around, that killed up to 19 people, mainly fisherman in the community, even chased Rury and Ian (a good friend and returned volunteer) when they were out fishing. It was pretty funny really!!! I just had rang Rury to see how the fishing was going and he said "I can't talk, the motor won't start and we are being chased by a hippo and I am paddling for my life". Then hung up. So I sort of think about it for a minute and think "What the heck, this could be fatal". Ten minutes later Rury rings back all is fine of course and

laughing saying they even had to use the top of the eskies as paddles. Ian had caught a Tiger fish at the time and wasn't really aware that the hippo was chasing them until he was nearly on them as he was facing the other way and totally engrossed in the whole tiger fishing sport. It was very sad for the families who had lost their loved ones due to the angry hippo. The ZAWA (Zambia Wildlife Authority) came to kill the hippo.

On a very sad note, just last week one of the boys from the feeding program “from the first day of starting the program” died of AIDS. He was Simataa and he was one of the first children to start Anti-retro viral drugs for HIV in Mwandi, but due to neglect by his sisters they stopped taking him to the clinic and refused to continue the treatment for him, so slowly he died. He was 12 years of age and loved playing soccer and drawing, he was very good and such a lovely boy. He just looked happy to be going to his Saviour as his life was full of sickness. His friends and family at OVC will greatly miss this young man. We spoke to all the children who attend the feeding program about his death - enabling them to understand what happened to their friend. The OVC Project feeding program is one huge family and when someone in the family is sick or is not attending the program the kids get worried and confused. It was a very sad funeral and many children attended to say goodbye to their school mate. **It makes me want to work even harder to support our children who suffer so much. I thank God we are here in Mwandi to be able to achieve what He asks of us.**

A while back now we held the “Mwandi UCZ OVC Project – Soccer world Cup”. Ian and Debbie were here from the UK (Returning Volunteers) and organised the whole day. Ian and Rury were umpires, we had 10 teams from



all over the world. It was great entertainment for all ages and the noise from the children was encouraging to others that walked by. Ian made the Goals and we had a big trophy for the winners. It was so much fun and we shall continue to hold the “Soccer world cup” each year. Argentina won with Germany second and Australia third. The Trophy sits in the manager's office. The kids got really involved in the running of the day and some of the big boys who come for youth group were line umpires. The teams were mixed and the girls were really getting into the games. It was great to

see the children having so much fun. There was a lot of singing from the side lines from the children, feeding assistants and others who came to see what all the noise was about.

Paul is an 8 year old orphan and just loves being at the OVC project Feeding program. You cannot imagine what this little chap has been up to in the past few months. He was taken to Mongu from Mwandi to live with his Auntie and within one week of moving there he went missing. He arrived back here in Mwandi 4 months later, safe and looking very healthy (he was thought by his family to be dead). Mongu is 2,000km away from Mwandi and this lad sold mangoes, carried water for people, caught the bus and hitchhiked all the way back to Mwandi, just to get back on the feeding program. I saw him the day he arrived back and he was in tears when I gave him a hug. He said that all he wanted was to come back and was that ok? The family of children on the feeding program meant so much to him that he travelled across Zambia to come back home. To look at him you would never guess that this little boy could have managed to travel so far on his own and to survive over 4 months. Incredible how determined he was. He is receiving quite a bit of counselling as he has lost so many family members at such a young age that he is messed up and is so scared that all he is doing is running all the time. Please pray for Paul and others like him who are hurting due to loss of parents at such a young age.

This week we collected Namachana, Lifaliza and Mutafela from Special school, (it is school holidays for one month) they are looking amazing, so healthy, bright and alert. It's so lovely to have them around at the project and the other children are so happy to see them back home. It's so nice to read their report cards from school to see how much they have improved with just walking, mixing with others and even colouring in. We have a visitor here from Australia during these school holidays and she will work with the children like they do at school.

We have been truly blessed by all your support with our annual Blanket appeal. We have been able to distribute 650 blankets that we purchased locally in Livingstone. Thank you all for supporting this very needy appeal. This time of year is hard for the vulnerable here in Mwandu. It's bitterly cold sleeping on the floor of a mud hut. At least after we give out the blankets I feel that I know the neediest will be warmer. A lot of children have to share blankets with siblings so our annual blanket distribution enables the children to have their own blankets. Just last night the temperature was 1°C, so imagine how cold our little ones are.



Carpentry centre – What a challenge it's been to get the wood vices for the work benches and all the tools, I managed to get most of the hand tools in Zambia and the wood vices from South Africa. We have interviewed for the teacher and have started to advertise for students to apply for the basic course of woodwork and life skills. I can't believe we have finally completed the centre - it feels so good. We are getting wood for the centre from the Livingstone and Sesheke sawmills. These scraps are seconds, but I know we can make benches and side cabinets etc with the wood we have. It's so exciting for the community and the project, I now hope that the youth embrace it and apply for the course.

We have started a new class of students in our sewing centre. Many people are interested and want to learn new skills to improve themselves. This is very encouraging and I know that when the students finish the 6 months they are stronger people for doing it.

Empowering community members on Rights of a Child. We have engaged a local social worker to spend time with the families of the children who attend feeding program to start teaching them about what "the rights of a child" is all about. The information has been well accepted, which is encouraging. We really need our children to realise that they have a right to education, healthcare, etc. Because a lot of families don't realise how important it is to receive those things, they forget the importance of teaching the children what they should expect their families and government to supply them, **"if they don't get assistance then make a noise, don't just sit back waiting"**.

Garden –The cold weather had brought along a lot of frost and it has killed our mature tomatoes plants and other vegetables at the OVC garden. All the leaves on the fruit trees and some native trees are burnt. It looks like a fire has been through the place. The good old eucalypt look great and are the only trees that have not been burnt. The garden continues to flourish otherwise. We use 20 tomatoes a day for the soup on the feeding program so you can imagine how important tomatoes are to the project. We are producing lovely rape, cabbages and spinach at the moment. Rury allows us to use the manure from the chicken houses and his cattle Kraal.

Over the past few months we have had some wonderful visitors at the mission and helping at the OVC project. We are so thankful for all the work you have done during your time in Mwandu. Our children and friends shall never forget you. Seeing new faces brightens up our days and encourages us in our work and walk with the Lord. If you wish to come and spend time at OVC, please contact me.

I thank you for your wonderful support and I hope that it continues. I feel a great sense of relief now the carpentry centre has a teacher and we are ready to start our second vocational training facility. Maintaining what we have in place continues to be my biggest prayer but I know that God will always help us through.

Till next time.
Lots of Love
Fred (Fiona)

Prayer Points

- ❖ Pray for my health to improve and Lucy and Ruairidh to remain Healthy
- ❖ Pray for those children that are suffering from loss, for healing and guidance
- ❖ Pray for up and coming elections here in Zambia
- ❖ Pray for safe travel of visitors coming to Mwandu and departing
- ❖ Pray for financial support to continue for the OVC Project

Support needed

- ❖ We are still looking for second hand Laptops for educating our children, so if you have one please contact me or the support team so we can get it here to Mwandu, with some of the volunteers.
- ❖ Money for Wurley Birds (wind turbine) \$150 each x 4 for the roof at the feeding hall, we hope that will reduce the extreme heat that is in the feeding area when the hot weather comes. (Very soon☺)
- ❖ Staff eating area \$2000
- ❖ Continued support for the feeding program – fundraisers or monthly tithing to the project would be so appreciated. **Its only \$6 a week to feed one child on our feeding program.**
- ❖ Internet monthly fee - \$150 (Yes we have our internet re-connected – more info about this next newsletter)



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

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