



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
PORT LINCOLN

Newsletter No. 29

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Dear Friends,

I hope that you are well and taking time to smell the roses each day.

Today is a scorcher, 40 degrees, quite hot & windy. The heat always just creeps up on you here.

I was sick with malaria for about a month in August /September. It was very frustrating, as my house was full of volunteers and I had to explain things to them from my bed. Thank goodness Heather, from Adelaide arrived to serve in Mwandi for 6 months. She was able to make sure people were paid, food items where purchased etc while I was sick.

I am feeling a lot better now, although not 100%, but a lot stronger. Last weekend I was lucky enough to take some volunteers across to Chobe (A large game park in Botswana). It was lovely to get away for a few days and just turn off. Ru was able to come over and it was really nice to spend time together, which of course doesn't happen very often in Mwandi. When we arrived home we received some terrible news that Jack my ever-faithful dog was bitten by a black mamba and died. Apparently he was fighting with the huge snake and the snake had bitten him twice. I miss him so much and poor Bucky is very lonely without his playmate. I certainly don't feel as secure with him gone and am looking out for another big dog to have around the house. It's funny how we get so attached to our dogs. He was the most gorgeous dog. Everyone loved Jack. He is sadly missed by all.

The Zambian elections are to be held next Thursday so we have been inundated with many visitors to Mwandi. Last week the Vice President came. There were at least 10 vehicles of party members, police and army personnel. The police had to come the day before and look over the place to make sure it was safe for the Vice President to visit. He drove past the OVC Project a few times and the kids thought he was the Chief. When I said it was the Vice President, the children where puzzled. They couldn't believe that there was a person more important than the Chief in Zambia. There has been a lot more noise in the village as campaigners become quite loud with chanting out their policies etc.

Elephants, hippos and crocodiles have been seen quite a lot lately around Mwandi. Okay, about 1km downs the river on the Namibian side of the river. I reckon it would be very cool looking across the river and seeing elephants eating the reeds and trees on the island. I don't think that will happen, but you never know.

I look back at the year which is fast ending and I am over whelmed with the Kindness, Love and Support people have given to our Project. So many volunteers have come this year and worked and given so much to our Project. They have worked on maintenance, and spent time with the children and shared their personal gifts. It really is wonderful that people can see the vision for giving our children some light to their days. We all appreciate the hard work the volunteers have done for the Project and it takes special people to come and work in a new country and culture.

**If any one is interested in coming to work for short term or long term at the Mission
Please contact me. We will welcome you with open arms.**

Our bakery is very close to completion. Today we are installing the glass in the windows and cleaning around the area. We shall advertise for a baker once we are able to finish the inside of the building. We have a super duper oven that Max and local Mwandia builders built. We haven't tried it yet, but I am sure it is going to bake some good bread for our bakery. The community is getting excited about the near completion. It is unfortunate that I have been sick, as it would have been finished sooner.

Thanks to donations we have been able to start building the **new toilets** for the Project. Because we have so many children coming to the centre each day and new staff for the bakery we really need the new toilets. We call them drop dunnies at home (Australia), but here in Zambia they are called VIP Latrines. We will need to paint the toilets once they are completed. The toilets will have a seat so we can teach the children how to sit on a toilet seat. Because all of the children are used to going to the loo in a hole in the ground, when they use a seat they stand on it. So we need to spend time teaching them to sit on a seat.

We also have started on building the **new shower and change room** for the children. Now we will be able to have boys and girls showers and the children will be able to change in private. Saturday is very busy at the feeding program as the children get here early to have a shower. They look forward to Saturday's so much. **Thank you so much for peoples' donations so we are able to keep our children clean.**

We have 122 children registered on the **Feeding Program**. The children are becoming very healthy and fit. They have so much energy now it's hard to control that energy. We have been so blessed to have good financial support for this program. The children receive fruit and milk three times a week as well as a very good balanced diet.

I have been praying a lot about the children in the village who are not receiving a balanced diet. I am meeting this week with the Social Support Group to discuss how many children in the village do need a balanced meal. Circumstances change so quickly around here in the families that we need to be visiting homes often. I know that if we do add another 20 children to Feeding that God will supply the support needed for the program.

There are still 30 children who need to go for **Health Checks at the hospital**. So far 20% of the children who have gone for Health checks are HIV/AIDS positive. We are waiting for the clinical officer who has been seeing our feeding children to return from his annual leave and then he will complete all the tests.

One of our babies who has been coming to the feeding program since we started is very sick in hospital. His mother took him to Namibia for three months to visit family. When they returned he went straight to hospital. He has lost so much weight- I don't know how his little body will hold up. He is HIV/Aids positive and has always been under weight. We asked his mother to bring him in for 5 feeds a day at the Centre but she refused. She has lost 4 babies now. I only hope that she might learn to look after her children better by starting Anti Retroviral Drugs. She currently refuses to take the drugs so each time she breast feeds her child she is re-infecting the child.

Last week a child came to the program with welt marks on his back. The poor child had burnt a pot and his father, who is HIV/AIDS positive and very sick, took his frustrations out on his son. The father wrote me a letter saying how sorry he was for hurting his son and promised never to do such a thing again. He said that he is so sick he is unable to work and all of his children are suffering, but the man is also a drunk and this makes life even more difficult for the children.

These situations make me more determined to try to do whatever I am cable of to support these kids.

We have been **producing quite a number of vegetables** over the past month. Mubita picked the biggest onions that I have ever seen today. Now I know we are able to grow decent onions we will have to keep the onion production going strong. Many tomatoes, cabbages and Rape have been used in the feeding program and we have been able to sell some tomatoes. We currently have eggplant and pepper seedlings about to be planted out as well as rape, cabbage and tomatoes. These three vegetables are a very important vegetable in Zambian's diet.

With the weather warming up, I have been spending time encouraging Mubita, the gardener, to mulch as much as possible around the vegetables and fruit trees. This is something new for him; Zambians tend to burn leaves and leave the sand bare instead of mulching and leaving grass to cover sand to stop heat reflection and water evaporation. I am hoping that he will see the difference in the garden and will do future mulching without me even suggesting it.

It's that time of year again when we ask people to sponsor, and past sponsors to re-sponsor the Orphans and Vulnerable with **Education Support** at Mwandi Basic school grades 1-9, Sesheke School grades 10,11 and 12 and Mwandi Evening Classes . This year we were able to support 270 children at Mwandi Basic School; 46 students for the evening classes and 65 children at Sesheke High School.

A great support to these children and certainly helps them with confidence and hope.

We have high aims for 2007 and I know that we can achieve them.

Our OVC Education Committee wishes to send 45 more children to Sesheke High School, 40 more students for Evening Classes and another 230 for Mwandi Basic School.

Our Children have a right to education and I feel strongly that we can help these children with their education. There are 500 Orphans and Vulnerable Children who attend the Mwandi Basic School and my dream is to get sponsorship for all these children. I also have a dream of being able to support 4 students in college. Many of our year 12 's have passed with very good results and if we can support them in college then those students can come back to Mwandi to teach and nurse in their community.

If you are interested in this very important program please do not hesitate to contact me or Jane Carey at ajcarey@aapt.net.au. We can answer your questions and send out sponsorship forms.

Pre- School has started the new term with a few guests on the scene. Vernon is back from Pre-School College for his practical and the children are so happy to see Vernon again. Lyn, a volunteer from Australia who has been out for 8 weeks has been helping the teachers plan for the rest of the year with their education curriculum. Lyn spent many hours with the teachers working through a plan that would work well with the children here in Mwandi. Sadly next year Kalpelwa will be leaving the Pre-School and going to Teachers College in Livingstone, but Vernon will be returning from college to work at our Pre-School. We all look forward to having Vernon's smiley face around Mwandi again.

Our Social committee has been very busy with the **distribution of clothes** to the OVC of the community. We have been distributing 300 pieces of clothing to the community each month. The community is very much appreciative and the children get so excited when they receive their clothes.

Talking of excited, **each week I usually head to the hospital and hand out hand knitted teddies** to the sick children who are in the children's ward and newborns. Last year I asked if people could make 1000 to send to Mwandi so we would have enough for the children. Well 8000 teddies have been made, what an awesome effort to all the ladies and some gentleman over Australia have made. Not all those 8000 will reach Mwandi, but I know that we will get a few thousand and **I thank you so much**. When the children receive their teddies, it's just so lovely to see their eyes brighten and a smile on a sick Child's face just makes all the hard work worth it. These teddies are all shapes and sizes and are so light that can be easy posted or packed tightly in the next container that will come.

Sadly Brian Kashimoto our Social worker for Mwandi has left us. He has been promoted to Sesheke our district head quarters. Today a lady called Sibeso arrived from Mongu and she is our new Community Development Officer. I will invite her to be on our committees and hope that she will be able to share her skills and run some workshops for our community and volunteers.

Urgent needs for the OVC project:

The rainy season is approaching (early December) and we would love to do some maintenance on the buildings with painting. Over 300 children are at the Drop in Centre each day and the walls are washed often, causing the current paint to rub off. Paint is very expensive in Zambia thus the costs are high.

Paint the outside & inside walls of Drop In Centre & all doors and benches	\$500
Paint for our newly constructed toilets	\$150
Paint for the inside of the Bakery	\$430
Utensils for the Bakery	\$200

Because of the increasing hot weather each day I would like to extend our shade cloth area so that when the children come for feeding and washing hands they are able to stand in some shade. The reflection from the sand is very hot and the burns the children's feet.

To build the shade cloth area \$300

Also because of the heat the gardener is concerned about the tomatoes production in our hot months. He has suggested that we build a shade cloth tunnel so we are able to keep growing vegetables in the hot season. There is no shade for the majority of the vegetable garden and it would be a great asset to be able to have an area of shade cloth for our tomatoes.

To build a shade cloth area for the vegetable garden \$500

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Good health for Missionaries and Volunteers serving in Zambia and for safe travel on the roads
- Children who are suffering with HIV/AIDS and the effects of the disease
- School Sponsorship for 2007
- Project - that it continues to grow and that we able support the children in all needs
- Staff at the OVC Project and at the Hospital to be caring and supportive to the children and the sick of Mwandu

Well friends that about wraps it up for another month.

I thank you for your continued love and support to the Project and me. Keep safe and well.

Lots of Love

Fred (Fiona)

Report from Fiona/Mwandu Support Team

Once again we have taken up the challenge to fill a 40ft Container - to be shipped from Pt. Lincoln to Mwandu - approximately April 2007.

Fiona has a **WISH LIST for the Container** - so Fund Raising will help purchase these needs.

A 20,000gall Sheet metal Rain Water Tank (this is in sections-with a liner) has been donated

We are **Fund Raising for an Auxiliary Generator and Pumps** - cost approx. \$15,000AUD

-donations are needed for these purchases.

A **Spring Fair at Unity Hill, Pt. Lincoln on Nov. 25th** is happening.

Maybe your Church or local Service Clubs might like to become involved in the Projects and raise some Funds.

**DONATION CHEQUES MADE PAYABLE TO: Pt. Lincoln Uniting Church Appeals / Mwandu
CAN BE POSTED TO: Fiona/Mwandu Support Team, PMB 58, Port Lincoln SA 5607**

FIONA / MWANDU Support Team, PMB 58, Port Lincoln, South Australia, 5607.

SUPPORT TEAM Email Address: robwater@bigpond.com.au

FIONA's Email Address: redfred1972@yahoo.com