

# Mwandi OVC Project Newsletter



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Dear Friends,

I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas and Happy New year.

Christmas was just a fantastic time. It's been so long since I spent time with family at Christmas. We were able to attend Church together and celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I would really like to thank you all for the wonderful support that you have given to the Project and me over the past 12 months. Words escape me on how to express my thanks to you. The children are living a better life since the Project has been running. So, thank you so much for another amazing year of growth in all the Programs for the Mwandi UCZ OVC Project.

While I am in Australia Heather is running the Project and all the Programs we run at the Drop in Centre. She is a wonderful lady who has been volunteering with the OVC Project for nearly 5 months. She is a gem with admin and has been a great help to the Project and me. I'm sure she will need time out when I get back to Mwandi; she has probably got a few grey hairs as well.

The Feeding Program continues to grow and it amazes me to see where we are today.

Just over a year ago we started with only 20 children, now we are feeding 140 kids, Monday to Saturday. When volunteers read stories to the kids after they eat their meals, the older boys take on the responsibility and read to the rest of the children. The older boys are helping with teaching the younger ones correct manners and also helping with the bible studies on Saturday. This brings promise that in the future our men will take on the correct fatherhood role.

The Health checks for the children are nearly complete and at this stage 20% of the children who have been tested are HIV/AIDS positive. The hospital is sourcing for free Anti retroviral syrups for the children. We may have to employ a Nurse to make sure that all the children on ARVs receive their medicine at the correct time each day. There are only a few children who still need to be tested.

Sadly we lost two children in the last qtr of 2006. Muzo, the little boy I was telling you about in the last newsletter, passed away only a few weeks after that newsletter was sent out. Poor little Muzo was so skinny and we know that he now is in a better place. The other child who passed away was Matakala. He was a healthy 11 years old. He died of rabies. The children on the Feeding Program went to the boy's home the day before the funeral and sang a few songs to share their sorrow with the family.

I was so proud of the children as they prayed for the boy at the funeral home and some of the big boys and girls went to both of the funerals.

Volunteers from the Mwandi community make a huge contribution towards all of our Programs we run at OVC project. The Mwandi community has really taken the Project into their hands and this is a great relief to me. People want to help their orphans, and understand that the children are the Village's and Countries future, and we must cherish them.

As soon as I get back to Mwandu we are going to build a Counselling Centre for the Orphans. We really need to start helping the children with their inner feelings and help them to share the grief for the parents they have lost and how to deal with life after losing loved ones. We are going to select a female and male from the community to send to Lusaka for training. I am very excited about this Program and can certainly see a vast need for counselling with the children. We trust that we are able to support some of the Churches to send people to each Church headquarters to become Spiritual Counsellors. We pray that when this Program is up and running our Children will be able to deal with life situations more clearly and positively.

Pre-school had a great party to close up the year for the students. Quite a few children will move onto grade 1 and new registrations for 2007 were many. We look forward to Lyn (a volunteer from Australia who came to work on the year program) to return early Jan 2007 to arrive and help with the 2007 program for the pre-school.

During the school holidays there have been many activities running at the OVC Project. The Sesheke students have been helping run and supervise silent reading, soccer, volleyball, and playground for all the children in the village. Many children have enjoyed movie screenings and colouring in during these holidays. We try to encourage all the children from the village to come and spend time at the Drop in Centre having fun and just being kids.

**SCHOOL SUPPORT NEEDED:** School is opening on the 8<sup>th</sup> Jan in Mwandu and there are many students who will not be able to attend school due to poverty.

I'm asking you all who have thought about sponsoring Mwandu OVC school students, 2007 is the year that we need your support. There are 1000 children who attend the Mwandu Mission School - 500 of these are orphans. I have a vision of supporting all these children at school. Please help us make this possible for these children

**1<sup>st</sup> of December is World Aids Day held all over the world.** I hope that you remembered this day back in December and shared a prayer for the people who have passed away and for the people who are affected and affected because of HIV/AIDS. We made hundreds of red ribbons and distributed them to people all over the village to wear on the day. There was a march from the village down to the OVC Drop in Centre where the children performed dramas. The children wrote the play from their understanding of HIV/AIDS. The Pastor from the Baptist Church shared with the children the Christian understanding of HIV/AIDS and how they should help others that are sick.

The annual Christmas party for the children on the feeding program was held on Christmas day.

As I wasn't there I have included a few paragraphs from Heather with her thoughts of the Christmas party. I organised presents and the printing of the OVC Project t-shirts for the children before I left, but I did leave the job of wrapping all the presents with Heather and the staff. I'm sure that all who attended the Christmas party had a wonderful day, a day never to forget. The presents the children received from the party are the only presents these children would ever receive. Can you imagine receiving your first Christmas present ever when you are 15 years old!!!

### **Heather's explanation of Christmas Day in Mwandu.**

**"Christmas Day with the children on the Feeding Programme was a really great Day and the kids really enjoyed it. The members of the Social Support and Nutrition Committees gave their time to serve the children so that they could have this special day.**

**We started off with the story of the birth of Jesus - the reason for Christmas. Paul - one of the church volunteers from the UCZ gave the Message. We had a really nice lunch of chicken, tomatoes and rice with Christmas Chocolate Cake for dessert. The older children had put together a Sketch on the birth of Jesus, which they presented on the day - they had Everything in it - the journey to Bethlehem, no room at the inn, shepherds and sheep, King Herod, the three wise men and of course baby Jesus lying in a manger. One of the highlights of the afternoon was the dancing competition. The children danced to Zambian music and it was great to see the smiles on their faces and the fun that they were having. The adults even got into the spirit and had a dance competition themselves.**

**Presents were given out in the afternoon - each child received an OVC T-shirt, toy and bag of sweets. The joy on the children's faces as they opened their presents just warms your heart. It's hard to describe the feeling but watching the children during the day, helping each other out, singing their hearts out about Jesus, sharing their food, encouraging each other in the dancing competition and just enjoying the day was incredible."**

Our **vegetable garden** continues to grow well. During the rainy season we are able to grow eggplant, watermelons, cucumbers, okra, beans, maize, rape and some varieties of tomatoes.

We have employed some piece workers from the community to come and help with the weeding.

Mubita seems to be spraying a lot to keep away the red spider mite on our tomatoes. We hope that this year with all the spraying the insects will keep away.

We have ploughed up a ¼ acre of sand to plant maize and beans to put nutrition back into the soil. The soil has no substance and I think we are doing pretty well with our vegetables with the lack of goodness in our soil. This year Mubita (the gardener) will start spending time with the children teaching them about the importance of vegetables in their diet and how to look after them.

**Bakery** – At last the Mwandi UCZ OVC Project Bakery is open for business. Very exciting!!! Our dream of opening a bakery is a reality and the people of Mwandi are enjoying fresh loaves of bread that come out of our wood oven. Our bakers are Kennedy and Mavis, they both live in Mwandi with their families. Kennedy starts work at 3hrs each morning and the wooden stove takes about 2 hrs to get to the correct heat and that's when Mavis starts work.

We have been selling up to 30 loaves per day, but Christmas Day they sold 130 and New Year's Day they sold 173.

Our customers are from all over the village, but schoolteachers, nurses, police and shop owners are our main customers at this stage. The bread really does taste good; it's hard to stop at just one slice. We hope that more people in the village continue to buy the bread and this will improve their daily diets.

**Electricity for Mwandi UCZ OVC Project** – is very close to becoming a reality. We are looking for a further \$2000 and then we will be able to have power connected at the Project. This will be fantastic for security purposes, but mainly in the kitchen and bakery. In time we will be able to stop using firewood to run the ovens and use power. We are hoping that we will receive funds to purchase industrial electric cooking pots to use in the kitchen and a bread oven for the bakery and electric mixing bowl. (If any one has any of these items lying in their shed please let us know)

**Clothes distribution** continues each month since the container arrived. Our children are looking so smart and have a nice outfit each. The clothes are being distributed to all of the Mwandi village plus 2 small outlying villages. Both of these new additions to our Program are very pleased with the support to their orphans.

**Another container for Mwandi Mission** – The Port Lincoln community are currently working on sending another container of much needed items to Mwandi. The plans are to send this container mid year. Another very exciting project organised by the Support Team and Port Lincoln Uniting Church. God continues to supply us with generous people who are willing to spend their time and efforts to help the Orphans and Vulnerable children of Mwandi.

We are looking for some **educational toys** to send to the children in Mwandi. If you can help with the following items, we would be very happy. We would love to be able to purchase 5-10 of each of the items.

Tupperware make a toy called Shape –O; Fisher Price – activity boards (pre-battery); Plastic Hula Hoops, Soccer Balls and Quoits

**Sports for the children of Mwandi** – Here in Australia we have all been enjoying the clash of the Ashes between England and Australia held every two years. Australia has won this series with a clean sweep. (Yippee) I'm very keen to teach the children of Mwandi cricket. While I have been home, I have been able to contact some cricket clubs asking for second hand cricket bats, balls, pads and hats. Cricket is already played in schools all over Zambia, but not in Mwandi. The children would love it and it would give them another sport to learn new skills and team work.

I would also like to encourage the children to play football and soft ball. So if you have any cricket items, footballs or softball mitts etc that are no longer needed, and could send in the container, please contact Leonie.

## Urgent needs

- ELECTRICITY - Balance needed to have electricity at the OVC Project \$2000
- Paint for the inside of the Drop in Centre \$300
- Paint for Change Rooms - inside and out \$150
- Shade Cloth Area for Pre-school \$200
- Building maintenance \$300
- Cement – for cricket pitch and wickets and Labour \$220

**More exciting news for the OVC Project** – we have a web site [www.mwandiovc.com](http://www.mwandiovc.com)

Thank you so much to friends who have set this wonderful website up for the project.

## **PRAYER POINTS**

- Church leaders in Mwandi to work together for the community
- That Support for the Project continues
- For all the Programs that we are running at OVC Project
- People & Children living with HIV /AIDS all over Africa
- Safe Travelling back to Mwandi for Ru and Me
- Volunteers and Missionaries over Africa – to keep safe and spiritually strong
- Staff at the OVC Project and Mission Hospital

## **Closing comments from Heather about the importance of the Mwandi UCZ OVC Project:**

“A child writes about how excited he is to go school and study his subjects; a 13 year old girl experiences joy as she plays with a doll for the first time in her life; a little boy runs around with loads of energy playing ball and having fun when 3 months ago he was barely able to walk due to lack of food, an orphan feels part of the OVC family, it gives her the feeling that she matters to someone. These are the significant things that make the Mwandi UCZ OVC Project important to Mwandi. The Project provides hope and promise to those in most need in the Village. It provides a safe and secure environment where children can come and just be children, away from the pressures of daily life (that often include caring for younger siblings, looking after the family herd of cows, working to provide an income for the household). It provides an education for those who may never have had the opportunity if it wasn't for the Project. It provides spiritual and emotional support for those who have had too many losses in their lives. You only have to look into happy smiling faces of the children on the programme and the students who are studying towards a better future to know what the Project's importance to Mwandi Village is.”

May God bless you through out this year and I hope that you all know that He is there with you all the way.  
Keep smiling and take care until next time. Much Love, Fred (Fiona)

PS If any one wishes to donate funds for The OVC Wish List for the next container please contact  
Leonie (my dear Mum) - Email: [robwater@bigpond.com.au](mailto:robwater@bigpond.com.au) Phone: 08 8684 2065 Fax: 08 8684 2058



WORLD AIDS DAY – MWANDI 1/12/06



BAKERY OVEN



CHRISTMAS DAY 2006 AT OVC PROJECT