

Mwandi OVC Project Newsletter



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Newsletter No: 45 – July to September 2010

Dear Friends,
I hope that you are well.

Where has the year gone? What an amazing year it has been for us. Really full on as usual, but now with Lucy here it has seen me hand over many responsibilities to staff and they are doing really well.

The weather is most certainly warming up in Mwandi and I'd say that it's HOT. We have the evaporator fans cranking and they keep the new house nice and cool. (As long as we keep them filled with water) We still wake up each morning feeling extremely blessed that the house is ours. We have so much space, a lovely view and Lucy has her own room, it's just unreal.

Rury has been helping some local Indunas from the Royal Establishment manage the chief's herd. For the first time in 35 years the chief visited his cattle (just across the river on an island from us) and then he came to visit our new house. This is quite unheard of - it was just lovely. Lucy got very excited and the chief thought our new house was amazing.



Lucy is now 8 months old and crawling around - there is no stopping her. She talks to herself and her toys, and is teething. She is just so beautiful and smiles and laughs and gets so excited to see us every morning when she wakes. Rury makes her lovely meals (puree – mash) of pear, apple and sweet potatoes etc and she just loves it. She has finally had her BCG injection so I can take her more places now. Lucy gets on very well with our cats and dogs. She finds that pulling the cats tails is quite good fun and pulling Morris' jowls is even better. She is certainly a very social baby and loves Mwaka, our house cleaner and Charles. We are still not sure what colour hair she has, but at least it is growing and she has this very cute tuft on the top of her head. All the kids at the project get so excited when I take her over to the OVC and she has so many grandmothers in the village, she is so lucky.

Bucky my dear faithful dog that I have had for many years had to have his back leg amputated. We collected him from Lusaka and he seems to be coping ok. He is staying inside during the heat of the day and Lucy is driving him nuts. He is so skinny, but now that he has been home a few days I can notice he has put on some weight. Even though he has only 3 legs he can still chase the other dogs and monitor lizards at a great pace, he is pretty tough and our watchmen are happy to have him back as he is such a good watch dog....

Not sure if I mentioned it last newsletter but Rury damaged his knee at work and had to go to South Africa for treatment. It has improved to a degree but because it's hard to get any rest around this place it's not healing 100%. Please keep him in your prayers for the knee to heal and for him to have some peace so he can rest it.

We have had quite a few deaths in the community recently due to aggressive hippos. There was one hippo with a calf that tipped a few men out of their canoes and they died as they couldn't swim. The Zambia wildlife association, along with Rury's help came and shooed her (through gun shots) into Namibia waters and she hasn't been back since. We don't have many hippos up this end of the river, but the locals have to learn to keep a close eye out, especially for mothers with calves. They are extremely protective.

We have been blessed to have a number of visitors here at the moment from Australia, the USA and UK; they are helping with many programs around the mission. It's wonderful to have their help, encouragement, energy and ideas. If any of you are interested in coming next year and to stay at OVC house please let me know, that really helps with planning.

Four of our special need kids who are on the feeding program travelled to Choma for interviews with the school in hope of being selected for 2011 intake. There was huge contingent as they all travelled in the mission bus with Godfrey, Mutinta, the

kids guardians and Katie for the journey to Choma , 5 hours from Mwand. Although there were some hairy times the children made it there and back and with great news that all have been accepted into St Malumba Special School in Choma for 2011. The school is for children who are deaf, blind and have mental disabilities from grade 1 to 7. All the children are boarding and have same term breaks as the other government schools. The Catholics, with the help from Rotary support the school and it is a lovely place. Although we shall miss having Lifaliza, Namachana, Mutafela and Mumma around at OVC - we know that they are getting a chance to learn to communicate, gain some social and personal development skills. It's just amazing to see how far these children have come and if they do well it will only be the start of amazing things for them all. People in Mwand have no idea that such schools exist for children with special needs, so it is going to be a learning experience and another door opening for our vulnerable children.

Only this week I have found a school close to us, for physically handicapped children, in Mongu, our provincial capital. (Mongu is only 400km west of Mwand, the road is so bad that it takes 10 hrs in a 4WD- the only other option is to travel to Lusaka and across to Mongu taking 18 to 20 hrs but on a good road). Again the school is run by the Catholic Church. Ida who recently visited Mongu said the school is amazing. We are hoping to send Mercy and a young girl who cannot walk called Namaku, to the school next year. Although the school only goes up to the age of 15 and both the girls are 13 years of age, it will give them some time learning and I am sure after completion they will find something for these girls to further their education. Let's pray that these two girls are accepted into the school and they will also get a chance to learn like all other children do.

Our vegetable garden at the OVC is looking amazing and producing large amounts of fresh produce for our feeding program and sales within the community. We pray the weather doesn't get to harsh that they start burning, but there is talk of rain so we are all hoping it will survive the shocking heat.

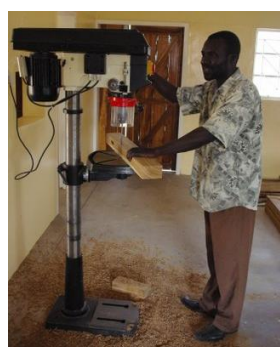
Our 10 Agriculture students are doing well and have theory lessons on Saturday and practical lessons on Sundays. Most of them are in school so these are the only days that work for all parties.

The Fruit Trees are bearing fruit and the kids will receive fruit grown at the OVC this year – (pawpaw and guava). We have a few varieties of fruit trees with very strange looking fruit and no one seems to know what they are, they taste OK.

We have been busy painting the outside of most of our buildings at the OVC before the rains come. We have painted the inside of the feeding hall and still need to paint the inside of the counselling centre. The weather conditions cause the paint to fade so we try to maintain the buildings and have them looking nice each year. Melinda one of our visitors has been painting a few murals on some of the buildings and the kids just love them and so do we - it really brightens the place up.



The Staff Flat is slowly nearing completion. We are installing the ceiling at the moment and building the septic and soak. The electrical cables, boxes etc have been installed and are awaiting the plasterer. Doors are on and so are the burglar gates. We hope in the next month we should be very close to painting the inside.



The Carpentry centre is also close to completion. The work benches are one week away from finishing and then we have to build some more lockers, buy some hand tools etc and we aim to have a teacher here in Mwand to start at the beginning of 2011. We wanted to start before then, but since the rest of the schools start in January we thought it would be good to follow suit. We do have a container coming over to Mwand next year and we desperately would love some "old or new" carpentry tools. If you would like to donate some money for tools or donate your much loved "strong" tools please contact the support team as they have our wish list. I have spoken to some coordinators that have been running large scale carpentry education programs here in Zambia and they say the best equipment is the strong cast iron electric planers, and old hand planers chisels and tools. We would love to have a few electric planers, mitre saws that we could also use for income generating for the project.

Pastor Mudenda has recently travelled to Lusaka for training as a Child Counsellor. It's a pretty intense course and he is thoroughly enjoying it and will complete it in 8 weeks time. Once finished the training we will have 4 child counsellors and I feel it would be a good aim to have at least one more male and female attending in 2011.

We have many children with psychological issues that they need to talk to someone they can trust.

Some of our visitors have been spending time with some of the girls and boys from the feeding program. Giving them encouragement and helping the children realise the importance of education, and how to grow as Christians. These kids don't have many people to give them these basic guiding principles of life as parents are dead or guardians are too busy trying to

survive, so they really enjoy the time with our visitors and counsellors. The girls especially need extra support and guidance as they have low self esteem and they use their bodies to gain attention and false love. We try to teach them that God loves them no matter what and that they should love themselves too.

Currently we are doing research in the village. We are firstly focusing on the 270 children on the feeding program, child headed households and grandparents over 75 years who look after orphans. We have asked a trainee social worker, OVC section leaders and Australian visitor Lisa (a chaplain among many other skills) to help do the research. The results are going to be quite interesting and this will guide us in planning for the future – in all aspects of the project. We hope to be able to continue this sort of research each year. Previously we have done yearly surveys and that has been good, but this is more detailed and in depth.

Last week before heading to Lusaka we had a visitor in the middle of the night, trying to break in. A few things went missing from the garage and vehicle but we are all safe. The watchman took off after the burglar and managed to get my bike back. Sad thing is that the guy went from our house to other houses on the mission and broke into one poor girl's house while they were asleep. (Just to let you know that all of our windows and doors have burglar bars on the windows and doors but most of the hospital housing does not). This nurse screamed and our watchman ran down the path to see a guy climbing out of her window with a box full of electrical items, so our watchman shot the guy with his pellet gun, the burglar screamed and took off. After all of this Rury was chasing the burglar with other hospital staff but they couldn't catch him, and I was standing in the yard with my base ball bat along with the next door neighbour and of course Lucy slept through everything. We have now extended our fence with barbed wire down right at rivers edge in hope to slow these burglars down. We haven't had any one try to break in for a long time and I pray that it doesn't happen again.

The Education Support Program is one of the most important programs we run here at OVC and I ask that those who are supporting a child to try hard to re-support those children in 2011. "Education" - it is something we take for granted, but through your support these kids are able to attend school and learn to read and write. Basic needs for their future. We have recently found out from the Basic School that there are 158 orphans in school who do not have support and they are really struggling to stay in school, so our aim for this up and coming year is to have all our children responsored and to find new sponsors for the 158. We can proudly say we support over 700 students in school and this includes 6 in University. This is so hard for me to get my head around it's like our vision and dreams have come true for us and for the students. We know it's all God - for years we aimed to send students to University and now we do it's just too glorious.

Sadly a faithful disciple Jane Carey has had to give up her devoted roll as co-ordinating the Australian Education support program but a good friend of Mwandu Sandra Pugsley has taken it on board. Jane and Heather Scrimshaw will be supporting Sandra also. All the children are so thankful to Jane for all those years of hard work finding support for our children to go to school. Thank you from the bottom of our heart Jane for your love, dedication and support to the OVC of Mwandu. Sandra's email and contact details are written on the bottom of this newsletter; those in Australia please do not hesitate to contact her if you would like to support children in need of education in 2011 and beyond. Those from outside Australia that may be interested in supporting children in school please contact me here in Mwandu.



Feeding Program – Feeding 270 children each day in the heat gets quite draining on our feeding assistants, but they do a great job to keep our children fed, loved and supported. We have a new feeding assistant – Mary Simasiku. With so many children we felt we needed another set of hands to help at the program. The children look amazing and at the moment we are sending all the new children for 2010 for HIV/AIDS testing. This always takes some time as the guardians don't completely understand why we do this. A lot of people in our community feel that a child could never have HIV. They are changing slowly and we pray that once we know our children's status, we are able to supply greater support to them both emotionally and nutritionally. While I was in Lusaka I was lucky enough to be able to obtain 6x HIV/AIDS Education DVD's for screening at OVC each Wednesday. They come with a facilitator's handbook, so Lemmy is going to run this education program.

That pretty well wraps up all the most recent happenings in Mwandu. Although we see a lot of sad situations caused by HIV/AIDS here in Mwandu I remain strong in my faith that this is where God wants us to be and that all that is happening is through Him. We only survive through Him and I thank God that Rury, Lucy and I are here in Mwandu. All of us at OVC thank you all for your prayers love and support.

Till next time, please keep us in your prayers.

Much Love and thanks
Fiona (Fred)

Prayer Requests

- Rury's knee heals 100%
- All children and people who are affected and suffering from the effects of HIV/AIDS
- All our visitors that arrive and leave Mwandu make it safe and sound
- Pastor Mudenda is going on annual leave – pray he is refreshed when he returns to work.
- All Church workers working within Africa – for strength and support

Needs

- Laptops for IT room for children (that will be built in early 2011) - no need for new as long as has systems to take educational games and windows XP and 2003)
- New IBM Laptop for Fiona – as hers is close to death.
- Laptop for Project Manager
- (Contact Fiona if you wish to send over as we can link up with visitors from all over the world that come to Mwandu – we can't send in the container as it's too hot)
- Ongoing support for feeding program
- Security gates for the front and side of the fence around OVC Project \$ 600.00
- Sending of 1x more child counsellor for training in Lusaka \$1500.00
- Fridge for the store room \$ 600.00
- Toilet and Shower Block for Staff at House Compound \$ 600.00
- Blankets for 2011 \$15 each
- Feeding Assistants Token of thanks per month 10x \$45 each= \$450/mth



Fred & Rury's new house



Mwandu Education Sponsorship Program

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

Banking Details – for Direct Deposits
BSB: 735 067 ACCOUNT NO: 071 222

Westpac Bank (Port Lincoln Branch)
46-48 Liverpool Street, Port Lincoln SA 5606