

Dear friends,

Warm greetings from us here in Bulawayo Zimbabwe. And I hope this newsletter finds you well.

I just wanted to give you a brief overview of some of what's been happening at Our Neighbours Ministry. I'm keeping it brief given I'm also attaching our updated overview of the ministry, so you can get a big picture overview of everything, and what you are part of.

So, here's some of what's been happening:

- Things at the Babies Home are going well. We've had 2 additional volunteers with us recently, for a period, who helped to ensure the little ones get lots of love. Babies continue to be fostered/adopted, with a family at court to do this even as I write. Our newest precious little one, Thabani, who was found abandoned, arrived at Isaiah's on 1 November, and is thought to be about 1 year old.



Thabani



Babies play time

- We are very close to having some exciting news about a new Forever Family Home starting early next year. Stay tuned!
- Hearts of Love Ministries are going well. I was reflecting recently on our outreach and ministry to the Trenance community, particularly the 400 or so families who live in squatter camps there. It was in early 2009 when two of the team felt God was leading us to reach out to this community.

Since that time, much has happened with our involvement with this community. This includes:

- o Many relationships have developed;
- o People who have been very sick have been helped to get emergency treatment;
- o A number of kids who weren't attending school now receive a good education at Lighthouse Christian Academy (LCA). Some people have shared with me how there is a very noticeable difference with the kids that started at LCA at the beginning of this year, in terms of self-esteem, confidence, and behaviour;
- o A weekly Bible study;
- o Children have been removed from situations of sexual abuse, placed in safe homes, and other children counselled in relation to abuse;
- o People being empowered through small business;
- o Assistance with a mobile health clinic at times to this community;
- o People growing in their relationship and walk with Jesus; and
- o People being loved and supported during very difficult times.

I was reflecting on how God has led us to love people in this very disadvantaged and poor and vulnerable community, to seek to help them with some of the basics (for example of the 80 people/families that we provide regular food assistance to given the nature of their situations, 60 come from Trenance), and to seek to help them transform their circumstances. We have been blessed by them, and trust they have by us also.

- Many families from the Trenance 'squatter community' have recently been relocated. Whilst there are medium/long term benefits re this, the process has been a 'disaster' for many, and we felt the need to assist people in the circumstances they were facing, as well as advocate for them as appropriate.
- Lighthouse Christian Academy (LCA) has 3 weeks left of this term. This term it's been great to see the kids having Shelton come and do life skills/mentoring sessions (he will be doing counselling going forward as required), and the return of sport and music lessons.

- We have had a number of 'issues' come up this term for some of the kids. Some come from terrible living circumstances. One perspective is that it is great that we are able to seek to support, help and guide the children re the issues that arise.



Flash card game at LCA

- North End Home and Florence and the 6 boys are doing well.
- Finances are low for us as a ministry currently. It's 'hand to mouth'. Please pray. And for those who'd like to give towards these ministries at this time, great!
- Andy and Alison Fry recently came to bless the Imvelenhle empowerment project again, and plans and goals were made for 2013 re this small business.
- Now, in closing, I'd like to share one specific story:

One lady, I'll call her 'Gogo' (Grandmother) that we have assisted through Hearts of Love, is 72 years of age, and stays with her 14 year old grandson in a suburb of Bulawayo. When Gogo first came to see us, she was totally blind and was being led around by her grandson, who would also be with her when she went begging for assistance. Her grandson would need to assist her in many ways, including cooking (when he wasn't at school). A neighbor did the cooking in her grandson's absence, though it was felt the neighbour would 'help themselves' to the food also.

When Gogo came to us, and shared re her situation, she was asking for assistance with health issues, as well food assistance and clothing. As we've got to know Gogo, we've been able to assist her with regular food parcels (the basics, I mean meallie-meal, beans and cooking oil only!). We also referred her to Richard Morris, an eye ward at one of our local Hospitals, where she had both cataracts removed and is now able to see. She can now do things for herself like general household chores, and doesn't need to be assisted by her grandson with everything. This also frees him up to concentrate more on his schooling.



Gogo (after cataract surgery)

Well, I'll sign off here for now.

Thank you so much for your love, prayers and partnership with Our Neighbours Ministry.
God bless,
Martin

Our Neighbours Ministry is proud to be a partner for Project J301 Our Neighbours Community Project - Zimbabwe with Global Development Group (ABN 57 102 400 993)

www.globaldevelopment.org.au