

HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE THIRTEEN



Hands at Work
AFRICA



When we come up against opposition we must surrender and be an example of Jesus. – Marc Damour

NIGERIA

Marc Damour, International Volunteer (CAN), Project Support Leader

In February, Marc travelled to Nigeria for two weeks to visit Community Based Organisations and our Service Centre team. He was encouraged to see Toyin growing in her role as Bookkeeper, and the great blessing Taiwo is as Administrator. Marc had time to connect with Peter, Service Centre Coordinator, and his wife Moji, talking about life, church and community. He worked with the team through plans and priorities for the years, and together they met with local community leaders.

In one community, Marc met a young girl named Miriam who lives with her older brother Joshua and her mother Florence. Her father has passed away. She lives in a dilapidated mud brick room. She does not attend school because the government school 100 metres away is not fully staffed. It is only open two days a week, and the

local community school is too far. Her Care Worker, Steven, visits her and brings her food. One challenge is how vast Miriam's community is. Another is the way persecution manifests in poor communities where leaders fear what will happen if we educate a child like Miriam. They fear she will make new decisions about marriage and work. When a community becomes empowered, their leadership becomes threatened. This is the challenge Peter, his team, and Care Workers like Steven face every day. In considering how we move forward in a country as broken as Nigeria, Marc was inspired by this quote:

"We are not the healers, we are not the reconcilers, we are not the givers of life. We are sinful, broken, vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for. The mystery of ministry is that we have been chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for

the unlimited and unconditional love of God." – Henri Nouwen

Nouwen reminds us that each person serving the most vulnerable children was chosen to do so, and we do not know why. When we come up against opposition we must surrender and be an example of Jesus, asking God to build our character through these situations. "We will keep meeting with community leaders," Marc said. "Seeds are planted and a growth is happening. There is hope for Miriam."

+ CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

Lynn Chotowetz
Herman Cloete
Marc Damour
Dave, Paul & Wendy Rowe

AFRICA OPERATIONS UPDATE

Lynn Chotowetz, International Volunteer (CAN),
Africa Operations Director

Hearing about the positive state of our work in communities in Nigeria, Lynn recalled the earlier years when those communities were despondent and broken and no life was evident in them. There were many voices and reasons suggesting Hands should just give up on those communities. Yet a number of people chose instead to hold onto hope. "There were glimpses of hope suggesting what was possible in these places everyone else was writing off - and we hung onto those," Lynn said. That faithfulness somehow became a gateway for God to do His work. There is a lesson here for all of us: Everyday, in the midst of so many reasons why our work will not succeed, we need to hold onto hope, and focus on why we can serve and love the most vulnerable, not why we cannot. It is a discipline, and we can start participating by praying for all those out there now in the midst of tough situations.

Maranatha Workshops are ongoing across Africa: in Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Our Regional Support Teams continue day to day to look at the wall of protection around our children, find the holes, and work on fixing them. Exchange visits are happening between Zambia and South Africa to support the team at Kachele. Construction teams are going to Zambia from South Africa and Canada.

It is exciting, but the day to day work is often tough. People on the outside only get to see our highlight reel. But we are called to live out the full thing every single day. Do not be distracted by disappointment, it will not bring life. If you want to be used by God, have a discipline of hope.



(Top left) Caiver, Sal, Simon, Stephen, George, Jaap, Herman, (Bottom left) Andrew, Never and John.

FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE TEAM

Herman Cloete, Maintenance,
IT & Fleet Manager

From mowing the grass, to building houses, to being some of the best worship singers at Hands, our Hub Facilities and Maintenance Team works extremely hard, and has fun too – meet them all:

Sal "Happy Feet" Hunziker
AUSTRALIA
John "Bishop" Mapanga
SOUTH AFRICA
George "Jungle Man" Miller
CANADA
Stephen "Stevie Wonder" Jones
AUSTRALIA
Caiver "Buccs" Bishop
SOUTH AFRICA
Andrew "Brother" Muronzi
ZIMBABWE
Bethuel "Stretch" Mkhabela
SOUTH AFRICA
Never "Don't worry, be happy" Phiri
SOUTH AFRICA
Jaap "Shorty" den Hartog
NETHERLANDS
Herman "Hermanator" Cloete
SOUTH AFRICA

They are stretched thin with many projects, and yet this team works day by day, rain or shine, to bless the many people who live and work at the Hub. Please pray for them to be safe and healthy in their often hazardous work, and for peace despite the stress

from their many projects. Pray for protection of their families and homes that they leave so they can work on our home before their own.





ROWE FAMILY IN AFRICA

Dave, International Volunteer (UK), Paul, and Wendy Rowe

Dave had the blessing of his parents coming to visit from the UK in February. As a family, the Rowes experienced the hope that is brought to the hopeless when we leave our comfort, and come to Africa ready to hear God's voice.

Wendy said that arriving in Africa, "felt like coming home to home". She and Paul were grateful for the openness of both the Hands Family and everyone they met in the communities. "I have a better understanding of how the CBOs work, it was a revelation to see for myself and I really appreciate it," Paul said.

The Rowes were touched by the willingness of all volunteers and Care Workers, and the challenges of our vulnerable children and their families.

"It was very emotional on many levels", Wendy said. They visited a sick gogo and grandfather caring for four children. "What happens to the children when the grandparents are not there anymore?" Paul and Wendy met Lodrick, who Dave stayed with on his community stay during his orientation in February 2013. At a Monday morning prayer meeting, Wendy was shocked by the stories and photos shared from Mozambique.

Dave said, "I had not realised the power my parents coming to visit would have on the relationships I have made. When my parents met Lodrick and the Care Workers it was incredible to say, 'These are my parents. I told them about you, and now they've come to meet you!'"

Dave continues to serve with Hands here in South Africa. For Paul and Wendy, they return home transformed. "Now we're going home and wondering what God wants us

to do with what we have seen and heard," Paul said. "My children are away, I could retire into my workshop and be happy. But now there is a sense that is not what God wants me to do." The Rowes ask for prayer as they seek to do not what they would love to do, but what God wants them to do. They are ready to seek boldly. As Paul said, "It's dangerous to say 'Lord, have your way.' But it's good."

Remember to join us for 40 Days of Prayer. March 12th to April 20th. You can download our prayer guide from our website.

"But don't just listen to God's Word. You must do what it says."
James 1:22

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www.handsatwork.org/hod

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