

# HANDS ON DECK

November 2012



**Hands at Work**  
A F R I C A



*“While in the car on the way there, a part of me is thinking I want to go - but part is thinking I don’t want to see” – Tommy Malster*

## STORIES OF NIGERIA

Catherine Clarkson,  
International Volunteer (UK),  
Partner Communications

Tommy Malster,  
International Volunteer (UK),  
Project Accountant (Malawi,  
Nigeria, DR Congo)

Tommy recently visited the community of Badia in Nigeria, a slum in the midst of the city of Lagos which has a population of 20 million people. Badia is one of the most vulnerable communities Hands at Work supports. “While in the car on the way there, a part of me is thinking I want to go - but part is thinking I don’t want to see”, said Tommy. Badia is often flooded and people live amongst the dirty water, pigs, and piles of garbage. When Lynn Chotowetz, Operations Director, and Tommy returned from visiting Badia in October 2011, they challenged

the Hands at Work family at the HUB in South Africa to personally support 50 of the identified most vulnerable children in 2012, and the Hands Family answered this call. This year, Tommy had the privilege of experiencing first-hand the transformation that is happening through this support and the amazing grace of God. Tommy was amazed by one of the Care Workers in Badia, Sylvanus: “He is a real servant. He is the epitome of what a Care Worker should be. He told me there are still hundreds more children who need to be cared for”. Sylvanus wakes up early each morning to collect children from their homes and take them to school and at the end of the day, he takes them back and visits them in their homes.

In preparation for her first trip to Nigeria, Catherine hoped to meet a young boy named Victor whose story of life in Badia has been shared with the Hands Family. Victor is 8 years old, and before being cared for by Badia Community Based

Organization (CBO), he had never been to school. After his father passed away, his mother was forced to work in a brothel to support him - but that was never enough to afford the fees for his school enrolment. Victor was never known to interact with any children other than the four siblings squeezed alongside him in their makeshift shack. Now, Victor has been enrolled in school and receives a meal every day. He even plays with other children! “Victor has been given a lifeline – not just a meal each day or a place in school, but real hope for his future”, said Catherine. Look out for future stories in Hands on Deck on her first trip to Nigeria where she will be working with the Lagos Service Centre and meeting some of the most vulnerable children we advocate for.

Beyond Badia, Tommy saw the great vulnerability of our other Nigerian communities, but he also saw how God is bringing hope to these places. Tommy spends almost every day volunteering behind a laptop in the office of the Hands at Work HUB in South Africa, and this trip was an opportunity to see his daily work in action. His communication is so often over a mobile phone or an email, but on this trip he was able to work directly with Peter, his wife



## CONTRIBUTORS

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Catherine Clarkson  
Locks Heath Free  
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Tommy Malster  
Anna ‘Oumie’ Snyman

Moji, Toyin, and Taiwo - the Nigeria Service Centre Team. He spent time mentoring Toyin in bookkeeping, and planning Service Centre operations with Peter. A major highlight was the successful purchase of land next to the Community School in the community of Ilaje. This has been a priority for a long time and the confirmation of the purchase means education will soon improve for the children of this area. Currently, the school floods for 3-4 hours everyday, but now renovations can begin! Tommy witnessed how Peter's dedication to mentoring teachers in Christianity is transforming the teachers and the children at each Community School. He also saw Peter's great passion for education as Peter was up at the blackboard giving a lesson within five minutes of walking in the classroom!

A special reunion was given to Tommy in Ilaje. While on Home Visits, Tommy saw Esther, a friend he first met in 2011. Last year, Esther had lost her husband while she herself was dying of HIV/AIDS. On this visit, Tommy walked into the Community School in Ilaje and heard, "Tom! You're Back!" Esther gave Tommy a big hug and he could instantly see the transformation in her life. Through the support of the CBO, she has help in caring for her three children and she is alive, healthy, and a teacher at the Community School. God continues to transform Nigeria through servant hearted people who have answered His call to care for one another. Please pray for the children and volunteers of Nigeria to have the love and hope of God in one of the most vulnerable countries in the world.



## ZAMBIA TRAVELS

Anna "Oumie" Snyman,  
Intercessor

Anna "Oumie" Snyman is the mother of our Founder and CEO, George Snyman, and now lives at the Hands at Work HUB in South Africa where her gift of intercession calls God into the lives of all volunteers, Care Workers, and vulnerable children. The entire Hands family rejoiced when she recently had the opportunity to travel to Zambia:

"I couldn't believe I was going. I mentioned it and three days later, I was going!" Oumie said God gave her one of the greatest desires of her heart when he made a way for her to go to Zambia. Having never been to Zambia before, the whole journey was an unexpected adventure. Describing the ferry she took to cross the Zambezi River she said, "As far as I'm concerned, a 'ferry' is a small boat. This ferry had trucks right on it! I seriously considered hitchhiking". She was blessed with her first visit to Victoria Falls where she was amazed by the size and sounds of the incredible waterfall.

In Zambia, James Tembo, Zambia RST Coordinator, walked with Oumie in the community of Zimba. She was touched by a group of local people who were building a house all on their own. She also met two people she previously knew only through George: Hilda and Charity. Ten years ago, as George walked across Africa, he came across a lady who took him in

to her church where the congregation prayed that he would go out and tell others about Africa. This lady's name was Hilda, and George did not see her until a few years ago when he was in Zambia for Hands at Work celebrations. George was in Zimba, walking through the village, when he saw Hilda! He brought her to celebrations and she has since been a Care Worker at Zimba CBO. One year ago, George came home from Zambia with a photo of a three year old girl named Charity. She looked like she was only one years old and George knew she was close to death. She was neglected by her family and her gogo could not care for her properly. Oumie prayed for Charity. On this trip, Oumie met Hilda when she went on Home Visits with James. When they arrived at the Community School, Oumie met Charity. "She was healthier, she was laughing. Now she looks four years old!" Oumie said, "Hilda is a lady of God who has adopted her and cares for her so much." Oumie saw the transformation Zimba CBO is making in the lives of vulnerable children. She saw how wonderful the Community School is and how the children have a safe place to go each day and be fed and filled with joy.

While visiting, Levy took Oumie to see where he was born and where he met George – events in God's perfect plan that shaped Hands at Work. After this inspiring trip, Oumie said she fully trusts God with her next desire, "Next trip – Nigeria? Who knows!"



Team member Jo celebrating our Belfast Care Workers.

## UNITED AND LOOKING INWARDS

Locks Heath Free Church  
(UK) Team

A team of six from Locks Heath Free Church in the UK spent a week in South Africa visiting the community they are partnered with, Belfast, and the surrounding communities.

Holly, 15, said her week was a rollercoaster with many emotional highs and lows. The Care Workers in Belfast were so grateful for the team coming to visit; on the last day with the team they broke into song, thanksgiving and prayer. Holly suddenly felt a deep connection between the team and the Care Workers. "They were so grateful. They started singing and praying. We were united with them in shared emotion. It was so lovely, just singing with them, dancing, praying." Holly was also struck by the youth group in Belfast and the commitment of the youth leaders. Back in England, Holly is a junior leader at her church's youth group. She said, "A lot of them [Belfast youth] are the same age as me. In England a 15 year old who you just met would eye you over, but here they opened their hearts and

arms to me. They could have said 'we don't want to know you' but they didn't. I sat in on their youth leader meeting and learned how much they do. At home I serve as a leader once a week - here they go to each other's homes all the time to check on one other."

Peter, the team's co-leader, continued to be transformed by South Africa five years after first coming. He felt many themes placed in his heart on this trip and said one word kept coming back to the team: Amazing. He felt challenged to look inwards, at our own human selfishness. "We need to say, 'How am I reflecting Christ in my life? Quite often I stop at the first commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matt 22:37). I need to remember the second is 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. I have seen these commandments work together in action in the Care Workers we have met. They love their God and their community with everything they have." Peter also reflected on the transformation in Belfast over the past five years and the ownership the Care Workers have for it. "It struck me to see what a

permanent part of the community Belfast Home Based Care is. It's theirs, it's established, rooted and it's not going anywhere." Peter saw how the transformation in Belfast is happening in the most unlikely of places and reflected on Romans 5 and God's promise to have peace through Jesus, knowing that even suffering produces hope. "Five years ago when I walked around Belfast there was a sense of the devil being there and now it's gone. Through faith in God and hope, even the boys in Belfast are rising up and looking past cultural norms to care for their community."



Team member Peter and one of our youth in Belfast.



Belfast Care Workers and children enjoying a game of football.