

# HANDS ON DECK

Sept & Oct 2012



**Hands at Work**  
AFRICA



*“Care Workers in DR Congo are living in some of the most devastated villages on the planet, and yet they are standing up to care for the most vulnerable children.”*

## CONNECTING WITH CHILDREN WORKSHOPS, DR CONGO

Jackie Okindah,  
Africa Training Coordinator

DR Congo continues to be threatened by rebel groups. Our children are hiding in the bush, while gogos who cannot run wait in their huts, all just hoping to survive. Destroyed by HIV/AIDS, poverty, and war (no war since WWII has killed as many people) the Care Workers in DR Congo are living in some of the most devastated villages on the planet, and yet they are standing up to care for the most vulnerable children. These children cannot be healed with just food, education and health. Deep relationships based on Christ are required to heal them. Hands at Work, in partnership with Petra College, is helping to create these relationships through Connecting with Children workshops. Jackie Okindah recently travelled to DR Congo to facilitate the first workshop in the country. “Knowing how to connect with children

through play, understanding their needs, and meeting those needs is basic knowledge that developed countries take for granted. Africa is in dire need of such knowledge,” says Jackie.

Seventeen Care Workers attended the workshop, representing Kisunka, Kikula, Goma and Toyota communities. Each morning facilitators focused on theory, sharing scriptures that display God’s heart for children. They led devotions that helped Care Workers experience healing from their own inner wounds. In the afternoon, Care Workers were supported in outreach where they applied what they had learned and played with children. They played in the dirt, led games, told folk tales and bible stories, and sat with the children, asking how they were feeling. One 65 year old male Care Worker, Papa Jean, shared how his heart was broken as he saw the way children whom he had only known for five days would come to him and want to be close to him – yet when raising his own biological children he had never had a relationship like that.

Jackie saw each Care Worker learn to connect and build relationships with children through play, and she saw their hearts transformed. The significance of this kind of change happening in DR Congo is immense and we must thank God for what he has allowed to happen and continue praying for DR Congo to be saved from its enemies. This workshop surpassed barriers of war, illness, language, and years of oppression. Jackie felt the victory of the Care Workers over their many challenges as they sang each morning, “Go tell the enemy that I am not going to go back – I am going forward to the Promised Land”!



## + CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

Catherine Clarkson  
Tommy Malster  
George & Marj Miller  
Simon Mgwanya  
Jackie Okindah  
Ntokozo Nevermind Phiri  
Daytona & Kristi Swarbrick  
Dan Waspe

# HANDS CANADA EVENT

Tommy Malster  
International Volunteer (UK),  
Project Accountant



Hands Canada team together, Calgary, Canada.

Tommy Malster and Morgan Dalley (who are engaged!) travelled to Canada in July to attend Hands Canada Celebrations. The celebrations were a reflection of the great work our Canadian International Office is doing. Similar to celebrations in Zambia each April, Hands Canada brings the Canadian Hands family together each July. Our Canadian family was happy to have volunteers from Africa join them, and Tommy was glad to meet all the people connected with Hands Canada. Tommy and Morgan gave an operational update on each Hands country. The group played games, ate together, and Morgan even led them in singing 'Akekho lo fana'!

Tommy saw the importance of our international offices being connected and informed of everything happening with Hands across Africa. Stories were shared about current Hands Canada partnerships and Tommy talked about Nigeria where he has travelled and where Hands Canada supports the communities of Apatuku and Elekuru. The board, members, and volunteers of Hands Canada continue to work tirelessly for the vulnerable children of Africa. We ask for continued prayers for them and all our international offices.



## SOUTH AFRICA & SWAZILAND CONSTRUCTION

Simon Mgwenya,  
South Africa RST, Building Project  
Coordinator

Simon coordinates many building projects at Hands and many of us only see these projects once they are completed! What do we build? Why do we build it? How is it built? Learn about this process and the most recent building projects:

### COMMUNITY CARE CENTRES

If a community has no existing building, church, or community centre and the CBO wants to run activities (feeding point, homework help, youth program) that require a care centre, we build one. Discussions are held in advance with the CBO to ensure the building will be used to its maximum potential as we do not want 'ghost' buildings sitting empty, and we do not want to waste resources.

### COMMUNITY CRECHE:

In Welverdiend, a crèche (pre-school) has been built to provide early childhood development to the children of this community. Previously there was only one classroom space at Pfunani CBO having to be shared by both the crèche and all children attending the CBO. Now, while the younger children are learning in the crèche, the other children can be working on homework in their classroom.

### TOILETS:

After Senzokuhle CBO implemented a crèche as part of its community services, the CBO had the need for new toilets. Previously, they only had one adult toilet, but Hands has since built 3 new toilets appropriate for both children and adults.

### CARE CENTRE:

After caring for vulnerable children for years, a Care Centre has been built at Asondle Sive Bomake CBO in Swaziland.

Here children receive a cooked meal and have daily contact with Care Workers. Simon and his team faced challenges getting plaster sand in Swaziland which was necessary to prevent soil erosion. This resulted in the project taking longer, however it ended without any overspending.

### HOUSES AND HOME REPAIRS

For child and granny headed households, homes not safe from weather, homes unsuitable for human living standards (a family of 8 staying in a one roomed house), or not safe from criminals or abusers. Before building a home, Hands first looks at what local resources are available to the vulnerable such as government free housing and community members willing to help. Only when other options are unavailable do we build a house.

#### New Home Standards:

- Best quality in a very basic form that is not expensive
- House must blend in with the surrounding homes in the community
- Involve local community in the whole process:

- Ensure the CBO and local volunteers are involved
- Hire a local builder
- Source material from local suppliers
- Honor all expected procedures that the community is used to (paying levies to the Chief, getting proper correct legal documents, timeframes)

### LONDI'S HOUSE:

Londi is one of our vulnerable children in the community of Mpakeni. She was staying with her Granny in a 2 x 2.5 metre mud house that had no floor, no windows, with no beds, and was leaking like a sieve during the rainy season. In 2007 the local government laid the foundation for a four roomed home but they abandoned construction with no explanation. Hands at Work has now worked with the local community and our partners to construct a two room house with basic furniture.



Dan helping to fetch water in Oshoek community near the Swaziland border.

## SOUTH AFRICA RST UPDATE

Dan Waspe  
International Volunteer (UK),  
South Africa (and Swaziland/  
Zimbabwe/Mozambique) RST

*“The jar of flour will not run out and the bottle of oil will not become empty”* 1Kings 17:14 (Watchword 2011)

The goal of all Hands at Work Regional Support Teams is to support our Service Centres (SC) so they can support our CBOs and our CBOs can support our children. The RST based in South Africa supports two SCs in South Africa, one in Zimbabwe, and the development of one in Swaziland and one in Mozambique.

### TEAMS:

We expected that people coming on teams would lessen due to the economic crisis. However, we have seen the opposite. In South Africa alone, we saw 230 people visit from May to August. They spent approximately 120 days in our communities. And these people were all transformed in some way – every single one. Long term volunteers such as Alicia Ralph, Jo-Anne Snyman, Tyler Ralph, and our SC staff in Bushbuckridge (BBR) and Clau Clau made it possible for all of these teams to understand the heart of Hands at Work.

### GROWING SERVANTS:

A priority for Hands this year has been to “grow our own timber,” meaning, to intentionally mentor and support the growth of one another. The RST has focused on building capacity into those with servant hearts:

**Fortunate Kunene:** Ses Fortunate became the Clau Clau SC Coordinator early this year and continues to grow into a strong and respected leader among her CBOs and SC team. All teams, visitors, and volunteers who have witnessed ses Fortunate in the community have been impacted by her compassion for vulnerable children.

**Sibusiso Mamba:** “Sibu” has been learning from and working with Hands at Work volunteers across Africa for the past year – he spent time with the Zambia RST and is now in South Africa. Originally from Swaziland, Sibu was caring for orphans in his home town before we met him. He is now walking with the SA RST and Clau Clau SC to learn about their operations.

**Audrey Sibiya:** Ses Audrey has moved from Field Coordinator to BBR SC Coordinator and has been described as, “The mother of all BBR. She really does connect with the children on their level. She knows so many of them and still takes time to visit them herself in each community. She calls them her own. She has dealt with really difficult situations in each CBO and yet continues on. She speaks about

Hands from her very core. She is a leading example of ‘beautiful feet’”. Ses Audrey says even on hard days, she and her team look to the children. “We see the child and ask God for the strength – in Isaiah 43 God says through all challenges I will be with you. If the kids are happy, that is all that matters.”

**Ralph Tjia:** Ralph is currently working at Belfast Home Based Care. He has lived in BBR all his life and served his community of Belfast for years, caring for the children and youth. He now coordinates the Belfast youth pilot program four days a week and is learning about SC operations two days a week.

### STRENGTHENING THE RST:

Another priority for 2012 was not only training those working in our SCs, but deepening our relationship as an RST with them. To do this, we needed to have strong leaders within the RST who understood our SCs and communities.

**Simon Mgwenya:** Simon was once a volunteer with Masoyi Home Based Care and has been working with Hands at Work for over 10 years. He was previously the BBR SC Coordinator. Having him on the SA RST has grown our capacity as he coordinates all building projects and answers questions about everything!

**Vusi Mabuza:** Vusi previously volunteered with Masoyi Home Based Care and is now a leader on the RST in many aspects. Vusi coordinates everything from de-worming clinics to trips to our remote CBOs such as Oshoek and Swaziland. He speaks ten (10!) languages and has built a deep relationship of trust with our SCs.

**Busie Siyata-Jones:** Busie has been volunteering with Hands for over 10 years. She started the Young Moms program in Masoyi and was the Clau Clau SC Coordinator until earlier this year. Now on the SA RST, she is always the go-to person.

South Africa RST Update continued...

She brings years of experience and leadership to our team and she is filled with deep knowledge and compassion for the work of Hands.

### YOUTH SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT:

Youth Programs are going to become a major part of the South Africa RST's work over the next five years. Ashley Humphreys, International Volunteer (CAN) and Ralph Tjia, Belfast Home Based Care, have been working with the youth pilot program in Belfast. The transformation in the youth leaders in Belfast has been drastic. Ashley and Ralph have witnessed the youth group change

from a group of shy teenagers to a confident group of leaders who are driving each other to care for their community. The youth have initiated going on Home Visits with the Care Workers so they can understand the extent of the need in their own community. Even though these youth are the most vulnerable in their community, they want to help others. Ashley and Ralph have been amazed by the power of God in these youth's lives – "We thought we were there to lead them – but now we feel challenged by them to do more, to be more compassionate".



Never at Paul Kruger Gate, Kruger National Park



The lions that Never had been waiting his whole life to see.

### MY FIRST TIME IN KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Ntokozo Nevermind (Never) Phiri, Maintenance Assistant

If you have travelled to South Africa and to Sanderson House and Farm near the HUB, you have probably met Nevermind, or Never. Never specializes in carpentry, but works on many things on the Maintenance team! If you have travelled to South Africa, you have probably also been to Kruger National Park. Never has lived in South Africa his entire life, but had never been to Kruger until an international team took a day trip, and Never went too. The trip came at an ideal time as Never ecstatically explains; it helped him relate to a new feeling of freedom:

"I was so glad to go, this was my first time. I am the first person in my whole family to go to Kruger. I called to tell them! I wanted to see a lion and elephant in person my whole life – not on TV – in person! I was so excited. I saw elephant, lion, buffalo lion cubs... I am so happy and grateful to Herman and Nico and Stephen who gave me the opportunity. It's like I was in a cage but now I broke through the cage and I'm free now".



Members of the South Africa/Swaziland Zimbabwe RST Team uplifting the Welverdiend Care Workers in prayer.



Heritage Day performance by the youth in Belfast, South Africa.



George and Marj Miller, Parksville Fellowship Baptist Church, Canada. Sophie von Grundherr, Zachaeus Church, Germany. Byron and Diane Chan, Westside King's Church, Canada. Jenna Chotowetz, Major Community Catholic Church, Canada. Chris MacLeod, New Horizons, Australia. Daytona and Kristi Swarbrick, Christchurch Vineyard, Canada. Christa Roby, The Bridge, Canada

## INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

### Community Stay, Oshoek, South Africa

New family members joined Hands during the September intake and we were blessed with ten international volunteers who have come to serve in Africa. As part of the orientation process, these volunteers spent a lot of time in communities in South Africa learning about Hands, our CBOs, and our Care Workers. They also spent a weekend (4 days, 3 nights) living with a family in one of our Clau Clau communities, Oshoek, near the Swaziland border. The experience of this community stay is a way for volunteers to deeply understand the level of need in Africa.

#### THE SWARBRICKS:

Daytona and Kristi stayed with a family of 4 – Mother, 40 and her three children under 8. Their father passed away in 2006 and three older children still live in Swaziland. When Care Workers found this family the mother was lying by a stove and dying. She is now receiving treatment and doing very well. Daytona and Kristi slept in a mud hut, in a very small room under a rotting goat carcass. But any discomfort ended up being very minor in comparison to the relationship they built with this

family. "They called us Auntie Kristi and Uncle Daytona – I connected so strongly with the mother", said Kristi. Daytona learned about the power of one moment with God: "The youngest boy, 3, was playing in a garbage pile. I tried talking to him but he wasn't interested. Then I could see he was building a road from the dirt – so I started helping him. I started making up a song about the road we were building and he started singing in Siswati. Then he started singing "Five little monkeys" in English – I knew that song! So we sang together, and he smiled. Through the whole weekend I was thinking about a song based on Psalm 84 and how it says 'better is one day in your house than a thousand elsewhere'. I struggled during the community stay and wondered if that's really how I felt. But, by the end of the weekend, I knew that it was about being in God's presence and saw how he dwells in each and everyone of us. It was so much better to spend time with this family than to have done anything else."

#### THE MILLERS:

George and Marj stayed in a child-headed household with a family of four children. The head of the family is Lungile, 21, who cares for her siblings who are 15 and 4, and her own baby son. Marj was struck



Daytona and his new friend. Oshoek, SA



Marj, George and their family, Oshoek, SA

by the life of the 15 year old boy, Simpiwe. He looks 11, and his life is just about survival as he walks through the bitter cold of Oshoek each day to get water and wood. Marj said, "I have two sons and was blessed to connect with Simpiwe. He is so tender and nurturing. This was a turning point for me. I went from being an observer to being part of the family. Simpiwe said to me 'after we eat, daddy and I go to the forest' and he meant George. It takes hours of Simpiwe's day to get fire wood to feed and warm his family. He is very small but he does it willingly. I could see it's a natural instinct for him to care for the youngest two – he shares everything with them. It's a blessing and a heartache to see the challenges they face everyday. But they have a Care Worker, Nesta, who checks on them all the time. She is a gogo and yet she was out playing soccer with the kids. It gives me hope to walk away knowing God is building up families who are broken with the love and care of these Care Workers. He has a plan and we can trust that. And we can pray. The family blessed George and I in a way that we could never bless them. When we left Lungile was so selfless – she gave us a letter saying "we are a family" but it also said she wanted us to go out and care for other families like we had cared for hers."



Mark and some of the kids from the community of Siyathuthuka, South Africa

## STORIES OF PARTNERSHIP

Catherine Clarkson, International Volunteer (UK), Partner Communications

### LOUISE VAN DER MEULEN WASHINGTON, USA

Louise was born in South Africa but now lives in Washington, USA. Her mother still lives in South Africa and attends Church Unlimited where she heard George speak. Louise and her mom realized that although they have both lived in Africa, they had never walked in a local community. Louise came to visit Hands at Work and walked with Care Workers in the Clau Clau community of Senzokuhle. She also spent time at the HUB, learning about Hands at Work, our vision and mission, and living in community. Louise has since returned to the USA where she is raising support and awareness through schools for the community of Oshoek in South Africa. She has connected with the Hands US International Office and connected with Sarah Waldvogel (International Volunteer, New York). The two are now representing Hands at Work in the USA as they spread our vision to others.

### MARK HOUSE TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Earlier this year, Mark was sitting on his tractor on his farm in Tasmania and wondering why God brought him to Africa in 2011. In that moment, his cell phone rang and Shane Lepp, pastor at New Horizon's church, a key supporter of Hands at Work and a member of the Hands Australia team, called and asked him how he was and if he was thinking about Africa. Knowing God was literally calling him back to Africa, Mark left a few weeks later and came back to South Africa where he was a member of our Short Term Team in August. In those few weeks that Mark prepared to come to Africa, he held a fundraiser for Hands. He approached other farmers and local businesses and held an auction where \$10,500 Australian dollars was raised! After his time in Africa this year, Mark deepened his understanding of Hands, raised an additional \$1,500 (to reach the total of \$12,000, needed to support 50 orphaned and vulnerable children) and has committed to raising funds every year, through Hands Australia, to support 50 children in the New Wells community in Luanshya, Zambia. In other recent, exciting news, Mark keeps busy as a World Series Sprintcar driver and in October

he won his first ever feature race victory! Mark (or "Mozzie" as he is known in the race world) crossed the finish line first at Bendigo Bank Arena in Latrobe, Tasmania with the Hands at Work logo proudly displayed on his Sprint Car.

### CITY BUG AND JACQUES ESTERHUIZEN, SOUTH AFRICA

Almost every volunteer who comes to the Hub in South Africa takes the City Bug, a shuttle between Johannesburg airport and Nelspruit. At least once a week you hear around the Hands Village, "Who's picking up at the City Bug?" or "I need to book a City Bug!" Jacques Esterhuizen is the owner and founder of City Bug. After attending a fundraiser held to encourage businesses in Nelspruit to support Hands at Work, and visiting the community of Siphamandla on Mandela Day, Jacques was challenged to support our work. We know that with each of our partners, support looks very different. Jacques said to us, "I can't fund a whole community, but I'll use what I have to bless you." City Bug now provides a generously discounted flat rate to all Hands at Work volunteers. This new partnership is one example of many, where Hands and Work volunteers have sown seeds of understanding into people, which has ultimately resulted in support for our work and lasting transformation for both the communities and the partners themselves.

**HANDS AT WORK IN AFRICA**  
celebrates 10 years  
of God's faithfulness

October 4, 2002 - October 4, 2012.



Click to hear  
a message from  
George