



“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.” – John 14:18

Winter 2012

“I will put my nose in the dirt so the kids can stand on my back” – Chief of Chiefs Papa Thoma

STORIES OF DR CONGO

Adam Bedford, International Volunteer (UK), Zambia RST

Adam visited the community of KiSunka, DR Congo or “the lost community” as it is called being deep in the bush. Before Hands began working in the community, there was no clean water. Water was accessed from a lake that was used for everything from bathing to cooking and people were very sick. There were no schools. It was 12km to the closest school and clinic so people did not go to either. Adam attended the one year celebration of Hands working in KiSunka; the past year has seen radical transformation.

Today, 75 children are supported. Five community schools have started which means there is now a school within 2km of every child! As he made his way to the celebration, Adam saw 60 kids singing and dancing towards him – 220 people came to the celebration! Adam’s highlight was witnessing the community chief humble himself to the children. In

DR Congo, the word for chief in Swahili means king. The chief in KiSunka, Papa Thoma, is called the “Chief of Chiefs” or “King of Kings” and is revered as such. Adam stressed that this man, who is the most respected in his community, is also one of the most giving and sacrificial. At the celebration, Papa Thoma said to the crowd, “I will put my nose in the dirt so the kids can stand on my back”. When the community based organization (CBO) started in KiSunka, Papa Thoma was asked to be the CBO Coordinator because he is considered influential and has such a servant heart. He turned down the position and said, “I just want to be another Care Worker. I want to visit the children in their homes.” He has the most money, and the nicest home but he shares it all with the kids. His example inspires others to be like Jesus.

Adam relates this experience to the story of Nehemiah; a story that Hands at Work has focused on this year.

Adam spoke about how Nehemiah had a party after he built the wall around Jerusalem to protect the people, much like the celebration in KiSunka.

At the celebration was a girl named Ilunga whom Adam had met one year before. Ilunga has a caring mother, but without any income her mother is completely unable to provide the basic things that Ilunga needs, most especially healthcare. At the party in KiSunka, Adam saw Ilunga smile for the first time.

Read more about Adam’s experience in DR Congo and his calling to Africa as a volunteer with Hands at Work on his blog, Hope Journals.

Contributors

Beth Baxter
Adam Bedford
Belchambers Family
David Bentley
Lynn Chotowetz
Catherine Clarkson
Jed Heubner
Fortunate Kunene
Vusi Mabuza
Tyler Ralph
George Snyman
Dan Waspe
Carleigh Wegner

2012 TEAM SEASON

This year saw many teams at the HUB, Kachele Farm, and in our Zambian, Malawi, South African, DR Congo, and Swaziland communities. From across the world, we were blessed with many servants!

Australia

Hands Australia, South Africa & Zambia
McLaughlin Family, South Africa
New Horizons Church, South Africa & Zambia

Canada

Beddington Church, South Africa
The Bridge Church, South Africa
Hands Canada, South Africa & Zambia
Rock Church, Zambia
Vancouver Island, Malawi
Westside King's Church, Zambia & DR Congo

UK

David Newsome & Friends, Swaziland
Emmanuel/Trinity School, South Africa
Eternity/Liberty Church, South Africa
The Forge Church, Zambia
Greenfich, Zambia
Locksheath Free Church, South Africa
Link 4 Life, South Africa

USA

Immanuel Baptist Church, South Africa
Jed Heubner & Family, Zambia
Manos Para Africa (Puerto Rico),
South Africa/Swaziland
Nurses for Africa, Zambia
Sam Shin & Friends, Malawi
Zion, Zambia

We continue to thank God for the people he sends to us. We ask for your prayers for those who have had their hearts changed through their time in Africa and for those who have yet to arrive.



BACK AT HANDS

Jed Heubner, Volunteer US International Office

Jed is back in Africa! He and his wife Brooke were in Africa with Hands at Work from 2007-2010. Before leaving they visited Chisamba in Zambia where the Heubner family now supports 70 children. In August, Jed returned with his mother Pam and father Wally to the HUB in South Africa before going onto Chisamba where they met more family and served as a team for ten days. During team season, Hands has seen the true blessing of family teams and how God works through them to build up our families in our African communities. Jed told us about the many ways Hands, Africa, and God has changed his family's lives back in the USA. Jed's grandma went on her first mission trip to Guatemala at 87 years old! Brooke could not come on this recent trip to Africa, but was here in May for celebrations and volunteers for the US International Office for Hands. Jed and Brooke were recently licensed for foster care and now await the call to care for a child. Jed said, "We want to care for the disadvantaged in our own community." They recently joined a small church run only by volunteers. Brooke is now on the parish council and she will soon be sharing her stories about Hands and Africa in church. This family has truly found ways to live out the Hands vision in their own community – please keep them in your prayers.

THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Fortunate Kunene, Clau Clau Service Centre Coordinator, South Africa

Ses Fortunate tells the story of one of the most vulnerable children – herself. As a child she grew up in an abusive neighbour's home while her father was off working in the Johannesburg mines and her mother was travelling to find employment. She has been bravely telling her story to her Service Centre team, Community Based Organizations in Clau Clau, and to visiting international teams. Ses Fortunate is changing and challenging her community with her story – reminding us all that we work for the most vulnerable children who depend on Care Workers to visit them and love them and be someone they can confide in when they face challenges that others may ignore or dismiss.



ZIMBABWE

Tyler Ralph, South Africa RST and George Snyman,
Founder and CEO

“How often do the care workers do home visits?” “Everyday.” This was the response received in Zimbabwe from Pricillah, Skukuva Community Based Organization (CBO) Coordinator. Tyler says Pricillah knows every single child’s name being cared for by Skukuva Home Based Care. Tyler travelled with George to Zimbabwe to visit both Skukuva and Honda Valley where they attended the community dedication of a new CBO Building. At the dedication, a gogo spoke and said she remembers when the Care Workers were children. She said she knows the community and has seen the great transformation over the years.

George was also impacted deeply by his time in Zimbabwe. He visited gogo Esther who has at least ten orphans in her house. Outside of her house each night, George would sit with about 30 teenage boys and tell them about the world. He also met a boy named Alfred while walking with Pricillah.

Alfred is a boy of 12 who has HIV/AIDS. George says, “He is busy dying – he is skin and bones. He sat with his head in his hands looking at me and I could tell that he saw right through me. Alfred had trouble breathing, he had been thrown out of school, he had no money, no food, no medication. He had no friends.” George wondered how you say to this boy, “Jesus loves you”? George was desperate for the Holy Spirit to give him something to say. He said, “Alfred, I’m sorry. My father sent me here.” George put up his fist to “fist-pound” Alfred like teenage boys do. George said he’s never fist-pounded anyone, but Alfred’s hand met his and instantly Alfred’s eyes lit up – Alfred knew he had a friend in the world. Tyler heard him telling everyone, “I have a friend!”. After leaving, George was speaking with Farai on his phone while Farai was with Alfred (getting him medication) and asked to speak to him. Alfred said into the phone, “I’m cool, Mr. George”. Before leaving, George went to Alfred’s home again and it was like a different place. Alfred’s mother was so happy – she insisted he come in. People came from all over to visit. “There are beautiful feet in Alfred’s life”, said George. A few weeks after George and Tyler met them, Alfred and his mother passed away.

SWAZILAND UPDATE

Tyler Ralph and Vusi Mabuza, South Africa
and Swaziland Regional Support Team

Tyler and Vusi have been supporting our Community Based Organization (CBO), ASB Home Based Care, in Swaziland where God continues to transform the lives of our vulnerable children.

International Visitors: Tyler and Vusi travelled to Swaziland with a team of ten from the UK led by David Newsome, Hands UK board member. This team has long supported the work of Hands in Swaziland. The team spent a week doing Home Visits and other activities with the CBO and the Care Workers. On one visit they met two teenagers who were living in two very small one room homes but one had recently burned down and all in it was lost. They were now living in the one room left. “You feel helpless walking into that situation”, Tyler says. “We asked them where they get food and we never got a real answer. They get water from a puddle in the bush where it is not safe to go.” When the team visited the children at the Care Point they noticed a great difference between the children in Swaziland and the children they had previously visited in the more populated communities of South Africa. “It seems like they [the children] don’t know what to do with an adult who wants to play with them”, says a team member.

Health Care for Children: Mhleli is a young boy in Swaziland who cannot walk and has been bedridden as he is cared for by his gogo who can no longer carry him across the rugged terrain. A child-size wheelchair was found at African School of Missions (ASM - located across the road from Hands at Work Hub in South Africa) who not only helped find the wheelchair but donated it to Mhleli! The wheelchair was given to ASB CBO to give to Mhleli and Tyler, Vusi, and the UK team were there when it was delivered. At the time, Mhleli was home being looked after by a young man because the gogo was out at a work-for-food program. The young man did not understand what the wheelchair was. But he carried Mhleli out and put him in the wheelchair and when Vusi starting pushing the chair they both understood what it was. When Mhleli’s gogo came home and saw, she was jumping up and down and clapping!

MALAWI, ZIMBABWE AND MOZAMBIQUE

David Bentley, International Volunteer (UK), SA Vehicle and Maintenance Team

David (more commonly known as “Bentley”), travelled with Sal Hunziker, Facilities Manager, through Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique over five weeks in June and July.

One of their major projects was installing Rocket Stoves at Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to be used to cook and feed children. These stoves are built on site at the HUB in South Africa by Sal with help from the maintenance team. They consist of an oil drum with a smaller one inside – this ensures the whole pan is heated when cooking. It creates a vacuum that when attached to a pipe directs the smoke outside of the cooking area. These stoves also use one tenth of the wood of a normal fire, saving our CBOs and Care Workers money and time. Dave explains, “With this stove it takes 1.5 hours to cook pap as opposed to 3 hours”.

With the stoves strapped to the top of their bakkie, they were off! Dave and Sal anticipated problems at the Zimbabwe boarder and were very grateful when they encountered none. They stayed with Farai, Service Centre Coordinator, in Zimbabwe and visited Pimia Home Based Care in Honde Valley where a new Care Centre was being built. The Care Workers worked with Dave and Sal and Andrew Muronzi, Zambia Maintenance Team, to install two rocket stoves (one big, one small), clear the bush in the area, install a ceiling, make 22 benches, 6 storage shelves and tables, and make their own bricks for a new toilet. “I’ve never seen anything like it”, Dave said. “The Care Workers worked so hard, from 7:30 to 5 every day.” He reflects on the Care Workers singing amidst the construction, “Everyday they would start this way”.

In Mozambique, Dave and Sal had a short rest and stayed with Dara Hillstrom, Mozambique Project Support, and her daughter Neddie. They were then onto Malawi where they got to visit Lake Malawi and Tima Home Based Care in Mgwere at the Dedza Care Centre. Here they stayed with Royie Nazombe, Service Centre Coordinator, and his family. Dave and Sal installed two rocket stoves and despite challenges in getting materials in the area, were able to build 21 benches. Dave told us about the Care Workers at Tima HBC, “The Care Workers were making school uniforms. There was a man who would be the security guard all night and then help us all day.”



BELCHAMBERS FAMILY

The Belchambers family, from the UK, visited the HUB and communities in South Africa in August 2012. Anthony Belchambers, with his wife and three daughters, said they have never seen ‘hardship mixed with real faith and praise’ as they have here in Africa. “God is really at work in the poorest of the poor”, said Anthony. The family said they had many ups and downs, tears, and a realization that they need to rethink their life at home. The Belchambers’ are involved with HopeHIV, a long-term partner of Hands at Work. Anthony and his family wanted to come to Africa to see the impact that the partnership between HopeHIV and Hands at Work has had on the ground. Anthony’s daughter Olivia, a singer/songwriter, sang her song “Do you know?” - a song written from an African child’s point of view about their life. The song is HopeHIV’s theme song and all proceeds go to HopeHIV (To buy a copy of Olivia’s album, please email kasia@hopehiv.org). The family plans to give a presentation about Hands at Work to their church and tell others about the understanding they found here in Africa that they never had before. Anthony said, “How can we bottle this and take it back? When you get back it’s so easy to let this become a memory. What are we going to do about this? I can’t forget – I want to come back”.



YOUTH SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa Regional Support Team (SA RST) and Service Centres

Exciting progress has been made on our youth support and development pilots in South Africa in both Bushbuckridge and Clau Clau. George has said, “We’re competing for the hearts and souls of our kids against a thief’s purpose that is to steal, kill, and destroy.” The youth of South Africa are in dire need of support and love – either we get their hearts, or we lose them. Dan Waspe, SA RST, recently stayed in the community with Jealous, a young boy who lives with his 15 year old sister Fugile in a shack. They have no father figure. Dan thought he would go stay with them to be a dad for a few days, but what he experienced changed his life and the way he thinks about South Africa. He saw Fugile’s extreme vulnerability as he watched men come into the house and try to take advantage of her. Men and boys tried to assault her right in front of Dan. “I chased them out – I broke all the rules about staying in the community”. Fugile’s older sister who stays elsewhere came over and pointed out to Dan the homes of the other women her husband sleeps with and where his other children stay. Dan said, “Fugile needs a dad and

mom and someone to say no for her – Jealous is going to grow up thinking this stuff is okay.” Stories like this continue to show us that youth support and development is the greatest need in South Africa. We have to build up the self-confidence of our youth and give them love when they have none.

Carleigh Wegner, International Volunteer (Canada), began working early this winter on Hands at Work’s response to the crisis our youth are facing in South Africa. A pilot program for youth support and development started at Belfast Home Based Care in Bushbuckridge in May and Carleigh has served as a volunteer with the South Africa Regional Support Team (RST) on this project. This pilot program began when Ralph, a 19-year-old cared for by Belfast Home Based Care, attended a youth camp at Sanderson House near Hands in December 2011. When the camp ended, Ralph approached Hands at Work to continue the work the camp started in the hearts of the many youth in Belfast. Since then, Ralph has been supported by international volunteers like Carleigh and a group of students from Venda University working on their practicum in Youth Development. These university students have been associated with Hands for many years: they were once youth cared for by Masoyi Home Based Care and then became a part of the Forward Education program which

assisted them in applying for and being accepted to university. Now in their final year, their stories and experiences inspire the children in Belfast to have hope for their futures.

Hands at Work hopes to create a Youth Development Model out of this pilot project in Belfast. In keeping with our Core Values and ensuring this program is locally owned by the community, the youth in Belfast have developed their own goals and a basic structure. The goal is to create a safe place for a steady and committed group of youth and youth leaders (identified by Ralph) to attend. The current structure consists of a Support Group on Wednesday afternoons where the youth meet after eating their meal and talk about challenges in their lives – each week Ralph and the leaders provide a topic for discussion. Leaders Meetings are held on Thursdays, where the youth leaders meet to discuss what it means to be servant leaders and to gain leadership skills from Ralph and other community leaders. On Saturdays, the Youth Group is held and each week consists of song, prayer, devotions, games, small group time, projects, and more. Over the past months, Belfast youth have built a garden with international teams, held a talent show, and had facilitated discussions around challenging issues they face such as body awareness, sex, pregnancy, self confidence, HIV/AIDS, and more. A second pilot program has begun in Senzokuhle in Clau Clau with a group of enthusiastic youth who want to support their peers and their community.

Youth Support and Development programs have the potential to save the youth of South Africa from countless evil forces that they face everyday.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

“We must have spiritual discipline – we must hold onto what we’re doing here in our hearts. It’s a privilege and responsibility to do this work.” – Lynn Chotowetz, Operations Director

African Operations Team meetings: James, Levy, Emily, Marc, Lynn, Robyn, George met in Zambia from August 27 – 29 to talk about Hands operations across all 62 Africa communities. Hands has over 70 people not including Community Based Organizations (CBOs) who are prayed and planned for in these meetings. The team focused on future plans for the Hands’ model, the use of Nehemiah’s wall, teams, RST’s and church networks.

Malawi: In August Levy was in Malawi with Nanci Kim, international volunteer (USA) and Towela, Kitwe Service Centre Coordinator. This was an exchange visit as Farai and Barbara from Zimbabwe also met them there to learn from Levy and the team. The foundation of our work in Malawi is very strong but of course much support is needed. Levy worked with leadership teams in communities, going through The Wall and explaining how we can all work to build up a wall of protection around our children.

DR Congo: As with many of our rural countries, DR Congo continues to struggle with transportation issues. Our CBOs are very spread out and it is difficult for Service Centre staff to spend quality time with each one. We have been blessed with servant hearted volunteers who cycle extreme distances and are willing to continue.

We ask for continued prayers for DRC as our children in Goma are in constant danger due to rebel groups that invade, often without notice. Care Workers are trying to create a feeding point out of a tent to feed the most vulnerable but there is also a struggle to get money into the country to buy food. This causes feeding to be inconsistent day-to-day.

Zambia: The Hands team in Zambia continues to grow and deepen. Marc Damour, Project Support Leader, has been working in Zambia instead of South Africa and will continue to do so as he works with the finance team there. Marc is mentoring a permanent finance team and training new members on processes, forecasts, and much more. Kachele Farm now has cabbages planted and the team continues to trust God in our desire to have a working farm. James, Etienne, and Weston are researching agriculture and crops and are dedicated to this project.

Nigeria: Lagos was recently designated as having the World’s Worst Traffic Jam. This is the traffic jam Peter and Moji from our Service Centre have to travel through in order to get from Ibadan where they live to the Service Centre in Lagos. Despite transportation challenges, Peter has been pushing on to run seminars for CBO’s and Care Workers on Christianity and its foundation of all our work. Toyin, Service Centre Bookkeeper, returned from maternity leave mid-September.

At a community school in Ago Akota, rains have left the school in a major crisis. Built all of wood in a slum on wetlands, the school has been flooding, sinking, and filling with fish as long as five feet. Over 100 children are supposed to be attending the school but currently only 84 can attend as the school can only hold that many before the floor begins to sink. We hope to build a new school in a new location soon.

South Africa: Emily Dinhira and Jackie Okindah, Africa Training Coordinators, have begun Connecting with Children mentoring in communities in Bushbuckridge and Clau Clau. They will become a part of the South Africa RST for the remainder of 2012 as they continue this foundational work in equipping our Care Workers.



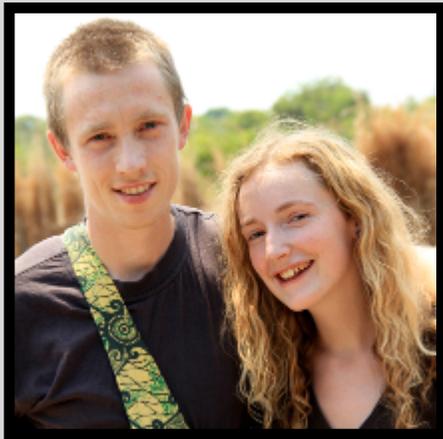
International Operations Team This new team was developed at Celebrations this year in an effort to formalize our international office operations. Every two weeks a Skype meeting is held with Hands members from all over the world – some people wake up early and some stay up late!

Australia – Carly da Costa
Canada – Lisa Dalley, Chair & Barb Damour, Secretary
Germany – Bernard & Julia Essman
South Africa HUB – George Snyman, Jayme Chotowetz, Morgan Dalley
UK – Nick Lawrence, Beth Baxter
US – Brooke Heubner, Lauren Lee

The objective of the team is to support the International Offices in developing the Hands family and model in each country. The platform that this team is creating is made to enhance both communications between the HUB and International Offices and between the different International Offices. Each International Office has best practices and this team will ensure we are learning from each other all the time! This team is an integral part of Hands at Work and we ask for your prayers as it shapes the way international churches and volunteers work to support the poorest of the poor in Africa.

A YEAR IN ZAMBIA

Beth Baxter,
International Volunteer (UK)



Beth and Ali Baxter have now returned home to the UK after a year with Hands at Work, most of which was spent in Zambia. They supported the Kabwe Service Centre and its ten communities in many ways by working and training others on computers, emails, community profiles, Home Visits, teaching children's games, encouraging staff and Care Workers and more. They also spent time at Kachele Farm in Luanshya and worked with Liz and Weston on maintenance and hospitality. They saw how Kachele is building community: they have now had ladies prayer meetings and two of their own Hands on Deck Fridays. "There is so much growth, things are moving", says Beth. She feels they now have family in Africa and has many stories that touched her during this time.

The Baxter's met David, the CBO

Coordinator in Baraka. He cycles 42km at least once a week to go to the Service Centre so he can get money to buy food for the 50 children at his CBO's feeding point. His home is 8km from the Care Point and most of the Care Workers walk 8km to do Home Visits. David and his wife Judith have ten children and one grandchild. David runs a small farm where he grows cotton and milks cows twice a day. Beth and Ali spent a weekend with David and his family and Beth heard a story about David helping a young boy and his mother. The mother had come to David saying her boy was being lazy and she did not know what to do with him. David asked the boy if he would come work with David on his farm, in the garden. After the boy helped him, David asked if he could go help the boy at his home with his garden. After a week the mother came to David and said her son was a different boy – his attitude had completely changed. Beth saw how David is slowly building into the lives of the vulnerable children he knows and loves. She witnessed his faith and generosity. He killed chickens to eat just for Beth and Ali. He walked 8km to the main road with them when they left just to see them off properly. As it is so spread out, Baraka needs a second feeding point to reach all children in the area. David and his Care Workers are clearing the land and building their own building for a second feeding point even though they do not have the support for food yet. They are building it so that if they

are blessed with the funding, they will be ready.

Beth spent time in Mapalo, an urban community on the edge of Kabwe where 500 vulnerable children have been identified and Hands has been involved since 2003. Here she went on a Home Visit where she met John, a 12 year old boy with leprosy, and Soloma, his grandmother, who has seen 13 of her 15 children pass away from HIV/AIDS. Beth visited with Leonard, John's Care Worker, and John held his hand the whole time. Soloma was so happy to have visitors. John and Soloma walk 5km each day to collect sugar cane to sell. Beth saw how important Leonard was to this family, how Soloma called him and all the Care Workers apart of her family. The Care Workers know John's name and his situation and they visit him all the time. Beth says, "I could see hope there. There is no feeding program so Care Workers are just doing what they can out of their own pockets. We should all be encouraged that these people are doing God's work".

Many volunteers come to Africa with dreams of playing with children. The Baxter's truly understood the vision of Hands and spent hours building capacity in Zambia. They knew that the lives of the children would be changed by the people in the Service Centres and the Community Based Organizations, not the international volunteers. Back in England, Beth is now a part of Hands UK. She and Ali are excited to stay a part of the family and encourage more people to come.