

Mwandi OVC Project Newsletter



Fiona Dixon-Thompson AM, Assisted Volunteer in Mission

Mwandi United Church of Zambia Orphans & Vulnerable Children Project

PO Box 70, Mwandi via Livingstone, Zambia, Africa

Email: uczovc@gmail.com

Blog: mwandiovcproject.blogspot.com



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Dear Friends,

I am so sorry it's been so long in between newsletters. It's been a crazy year for our family so far, once we have moved to Malawi we will be together and that will be more settling for all of us.

I was in Australia with the girls for five weeks, when Rury started his new position with World Renew on 2nd March in Malawi. After looking at over 20 houses, he found us one in a good area and we wait to see what it is like. I trust my husband's judgment.

It was lovely for the girls to spend time with family and catch up with some friends and meet new friends in Australia and I really needed the time away. We returned to Zambia along with my sister and niece and nephew, mid-April. They spent two and a half weeks with us in Mwandi and so did Ruairidh, we went to Chobe and Namibia together which was a really special time. It was wonderful having "Da-da" (Rury) and my family in Mwandi. Rury and I have spent so much time apart from each other this year, Cora is convinced her father lives in a phone. Good thing I have Skype on my phone, which has been the life saver.

My Mum and Dad arrived a few weeks after Rury left for a three week work trip to Canada and they have enabled me to spend time at work. My Dad has been installing a filtration system at the hospital and putting up a 20,000 gallon tank with an ultra violet water system for the hospital water. Patients will be able to drink clean water and it will be an amazing support to the theatre and other departments over the hospital compound. Mum is busy running after the girls and keeping them occupied.

Lucy turned four in late February; it's hard to believe she is that age already. Cora was 18 months in March. Cora and Lucy are like chalk and cheese, except for the level of loudness of their voices. Cora's bright red hair seems to be getting redder each day. Lucy is so excited about our move to Malawi. She knows that she will be going to a new school and have ballet and swimming lessons.

We are currently packing and poor Cora isn't coping with all the boxes everywhere around the house. It has taken us over a week and thank goodness Mum is here to help. God is certainly keeping us strong physically and mentally through this emotional time.

We are leaving our furniture in the house here in Mwandi so we asked Pascal to make us some new beds for the girls and bookshelves for our house in Malawi. We negotiated a truck from Lusaka and it took 3 days to get from Mwandi to Lilongwe. Rury and Bevan travelled with the car

and Charles travelled with the truck. Charles now has a passport, he was so happy to be finally able to travel to Malawi.

The rest of us will fly up to Malawi this week to help set up the house, un-pack and start our new life.

We have a little puppy that walked into the OVC Project one day. He is now our “watchdog at the house”. We shall see how “Kelly” goes. He was full of lice and fleas and came wandering into the OVC and we fell for him. After five baths and lots of tick and flea powder, plus a rabies shot, wormer and food he came to life.



Our latest 40ft container arrived only a few days after we returned from Australia. We couldn't get the semi-trailer into the OVC grounds so we had to unload the truck outside the fence. We used our OVC truck and trailer to unload from the semi-trailer and stored most of the items in the recreation centre. With about 10 members of staff, Edward, my sister and family and Rury and I



we were able to unload pretty quickly. We were able to resurrect container 2 (with a lot of hard work) from after the fire, and we were able to use that container for the clothes and blankets. The container had to be dropped up near the hospital about 100mtrs away from OVC compound and it was somewhat exciting to see how a 40ft container is dropped off a semi-trailer -" Mwandi style".) The container will be taken to the farm once we can hire some tractors from the saw mill in Sesheke to drag it to the farm. It will be a huge help to the farm as there is such little storage there.

What a God send the container is to the project and other programs on the mission. The hospital has really appreciated the medical and surgical items to help with visiting surgeons. The school very much appreciated the desks they received. We will be able to distribute clothing to the community soon. Our community wishes to thank all who gave, packed and sent items and money. It's such a great blessing for the project and community.

Very exciting news for the project, we have employed an Administrator at the OVC Project - Edward Samadder and his family has been sent to us from the United Church of Zambia Synod. Edward will take on all the admin work I do at the project. Edward is from Bangladesh and is a social worker. His wife Marina was here for 5 years in early 2000. They have 2 children and Edward's mother lives with them also. They arrived in late March and are settling in. I have spent a lot of time training Edward, he is a hard worker and will really enjoy all the challenges the job entails. I know he, along with Pastor Mudenda and the other staff will ensure that our programs will work well and even grow with his ideas and experience.





Our other very exciting news is that we have a new international volunteer to take over from me at the project – the United Church of Zambia are very happy to have an international volunteer in place, at the Mission and Project. Katie Wallis has been visiting Mwandi for many years now and has been a great support to the project for many years. Katie is 31 years old, and lives in Queensland, Australia. She has recently written a book and had it published and is currently doing the book tour. She will start here in Mwandi in January/February next year. I will be back in Mwandi a few times throughout this year but will be here early next year to hand over to her.

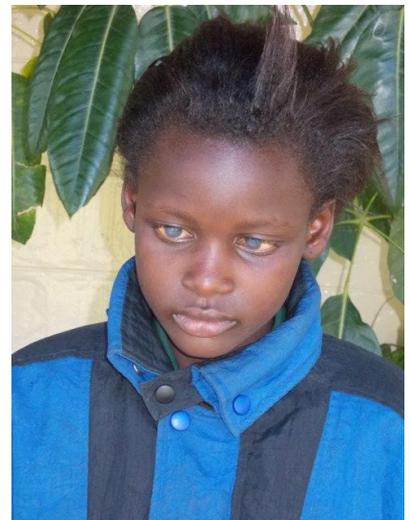
As mentioned before, this is our last week in Mwandi, it's been a weird last few weeks with packing and trying to get the visitors house and our house set up so it's ready for visitors coming this year.

We will be back in July, which will be great opportunity to hand over more to Edward and it will be really important to see how he goes over the next 5 weeks until we are back. I shall continue to work each and every day doing what I can to keep support coming to the project and helping Pastor and all the staff where I can. It will take time for everyone to get me out of their system and work without me around.

Our education support program is going well but we still have quite a few children that are seeking support. It's a very important program and it really does change a child's life. Please contact Sandra Pugsley or myself if you wish to support a child in school this year. Thank you so much to those who have re-sponsored or are new sponsors.

The PayPal on our website www.mwandiovc.com is back up and working so if you have any donations for the projects programs, it's easy to use.

The other day a young girl came to us seeking support for transport to go to an eye clinic in Lusaka to see if they could operate on her nearly blind condition - glaucoma. The mother had been told four years prior to take her to hospital and had never done so. The young girl, now 13 is in pain and really suffering. We were able to send her and the mother, and she is currently in the SDA eye hospital having surgery through our medical support program.



Last week a mother of twin boys came into the office, I happened to be with manager when the family came in and I remember them coming in 5 years prior with very bad cleft palates. The mother couldn't believe I remembered her boys, but it was wonderful to see how good the boys look after 5 years after their surgery. They are healthy and strong and only a little scare when they both had surgery.

The Feeding Program continues to be feed the most vulnerable of the community six days a week. We have been able to remove several children from the program that are too old to attend, and many children have been transferred out of Mwandi village. With many groups in the community who are participating in the micro finance programs we are seeing that a few families are able to support their extended families.



We have had one young girl who has been attending the feeding program for many years called Mwale, she has Cerebral Palsy and struggles to eat, cannot walk or talk but she can smile. We have really struggled to get her family to bring her constantly, as the grandmother has six grandchildren to look after, and a young girl with a disability is hard work. We have given the grandmother a pusher to get her through the sand to get her to the OVC feeding program, the hospital also give the family some Ensure plus as she is malnourished. And when she cannot come to feeding we send home food and multi-vitamins for her. Edward went to visit the family the other day and Mwale has been coming to feeding every day for the past few weeks. Although Mwale is so skinny, she is still smiling and happy to be with her OVC family. She loves the singing, devotions and just being with the other children. It's amazing what nutrition and

love does to one's soul.

Our recreation centre is finally functioning and we have two foosball tables and two pool tables. Youth group kids are really enjoying it. Edward and Pastor Mudenda will be meeting with Church leaders to discuss ways in which the whole community can make use of the centre. We would especially like to start a girl's night. We will eventually set up some computers for the youth to use and learn those skills etc. The Recreation centre will also work as a good counseling facility. Giblet and the team of counsellors are excited about using it for those "problem" teenagers who struggle with talking during counseling sessions. Thank you to all who have supported the building and furnishing of the centre.

In March we received money from the Czech Republic Embassy of Zimbabwe to build another piggery and Bio gas plant. Since we purchased the South African pigs, the herd has multiplied to over 90 and is ever growing. Bevan Hancock from Eyre Peninsula is back to help construct the Piggery and Bio gas plant and also help train and encourage the guys at the farm. The staff is doing a great job and with Bevan's farm experience they can only learn more and have more courage to be better at it.

Our chickens are laying a good percentage of eggs and six of our dairy cows had calves so we are producing more milk at the farm.

It has come in very cold here just this week. We are planning to distribute 750 blankets this year. The blankets, brought in Livingstone are only \$15.00 each and the social support committee members select which children in the community are to receive a blanket and guardians must come in with children when they collect and sign for their blanket.

Our counsellors completed their extra training early in the year and they are so appreciative of that training. They have really grown with confidence after the training. We want to send another lady to training - Mary Simasiku. We feel she would be a great counsellor, as she is a humble woman and great with children. We need some support to send Mary on training - \$600.

Fire damaged building - I have organized loads of stones, conforce wire, and cement for the construction of the main store room. We are just finalizing plans and once the small paint shed is complete then the final stage of the stores department will be started.

We have received great support for our fire fund and we thank you all so much. We received money from the Zambian Insurance company and that was a great help. I am so overwhelmed at the financial and prayers of support we have received from many friends around the world. I feel so blessed and humbled to know how many people love our children and our project.



Stores department - We are currently building a separate small building for our flammable items for the project. We are building it well away from where they grow the vegetables along the side fence. We don't have many flammable items at all, but if something was to happen there is no other buildings close by that it would affect.

For the past few weeks we have been busy with our annual building maintenance - repairing any cracks and painting. The counseling centre looks great and even the visitor house was among a list of buildings which was up for new paint work.

I will still be working hard for the project for a long time and spend many hours each day keeping in touch with staff and answering emails and working on project proposals seeking support for the project from all around the world. With UnitingWorld Australia ending their support in a few weeks' time we need to find other supporters to keep our project running. We are working hard to keep our income generating programs running locally but we need support so we can support our children.

So many lives have been touched through your support and we thank you sincerely for your continuing generosity and love. The children continue to grow stronger - mentally, spiritually and physically. We appreciate your prayers and support.

Thank you all so much for your love, support and prayers to the project and our family. We would not have coped if it wasn't for your support and the Grace of God.

I shall be in touch next time from Malawi, but I am going to ask some of the OVC staff to start writing some news from Mwandu for you.

Grace and Peace
Fiona, Rury and girls.

Prayer Points

- Our family during the packing and traveling to Malawi
- Continued support to be available for the project
- Children to remain warm and secure during the winter months
- Edward and his family to feel part of the Mwandu community and OVC Project work place
- Katie as she prepares to come to Mwandu in early 2015
- OVC staff and volunteers

Support needed

- Feeding program
- Blanket appeal for 750 blankets @ \$15.00 each
- Building maintenance - paint and labor on all buildings \$1200.00
- Quarterly email connection fee \$650.00



Mwandu Education Sponsorship Program C/- Sandra Pugsley

PO Box 487
Nairne SA 5252 Australia

Mobile: 0400 881 942
Email: sandrapugsley@gmail.com

Fiona/Mwandu Support Team

PMB 58
Port Lincoln SA 5607
Phone: (08) 8684 2065
Web: www.mwanduovc.com
Email: fionamwanduteam@yahoo.com.au
Email: mwandusupportteam@gmail.com

Please make ALL Cheques Payable to Port Lincoln Uniting Church Appeals – Mwandu

Banking Details – for Direct Deposits
BSB: 735 067 ACCOUNT NO: 071 222

Westpac Bank (Port Lincoln Branch)
46-48 Liverpool Street, Port Lincoln SA 5606

Account Name: Mwandu UCZ OVC Project
Account No: 015 0454 086 000
Branch No: 061 018
Swift Code: SCBLZMLX

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS:
STANDARD CHARTER BANK
LIVINGSTONE BRANCH
MOSI-O-TUNYA ROAD
ZAMBIA, AFRICA