

Mwandi OVC Project Newsletter



Katie Wallis ~ International Volunteer

Katie's Blog: katowallis.blogspot.com

Mwandi United Church of Zambia Orphans & Vulnerable Children Project
PO Box 70, Mwandi via Livingstone, Zambia, Africa

Email: uczovc@gmail.com

Web: www.mwandiovc.com



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Greetings from beautiful Mwandi!



I have been in Zambia for six weeks in my new position of 'International Volunteer' and have one or two things to update you all on. Firstly, a massive thanks to all who have been in touch with me to offer encouragement since I arrived. I've been acutely aware of the size of this community that I've stepped into, with messages arriving regularly from all over the globe!

Fiona would normally give you all an update on her family at this point, so I'll go ahead and do the same. My family is small. I thought it would just be me over here, but have inherited Kelly the dog to keep me company. I've never had a pet before so Kelly and I got off to a bit of a rough start. He got locked in a building at the OVC overnight in my first couple of weeks here when he fell asleep under a table and I didn't notice he hadn't followed me home. Then not long after that he spent some minutes locked in a shipping container when he snuck in behind me and, again, I didn't notice. So... Kelly has had some adventures... but I'm happy to report that he is alive and we're doing well :-). After both of his lock-in adventures he exited with his tail wagging and a big smile - well, maybe a grimace, I'm not sure. All of this firmly suggests that I probably shouldn't have children.

Dr Tom Irons and his wife Carol travelled to the project with a team of eight (four residents and four medical students) to run their annual clinic with our kids and staff. The clinic operated in partnership with our counselling team (led by Giblet) and Dr Tom was incredibly happy with the professionalism and dedication of our OVC staff. Medical checks were extremely successful, with only a few children needing to be referred for additional medical care. This is all a wonderful reflection on the success of our nutrition program.



Uniform distribution has been happening over the past couple of weeks. It's complete insanity in the recreation centre as the team work to get people in and out as efficiently as possible. **Our education sponsorship program** continues to be vital and Sandra Pugsley would be delighted to hear from anyone willing to change a child's life with the gift of education. She can be contacted by email at sandrapugsley@gmail.com. Sandra would like to thank those who have already paid for their sponsored children for 2015 and remind

you all that we always have students (primary, high school, special school and university) on a waiting list who are ready and willing as soon as funds become available. Sponsorship for lower primary school students begins at just \$90/year.



Construction continues on the stores building. Pascal and his team are currently installing the ceiling and it is coming along nicely. Bricks have been made and construction will begin this year on several flats. The flats will serve as an income generator for staff salaries when they are rented out after completion. All these projects are exciting and are integral to the project's sustainability goals. In other construction news, I miraculously rewired the plug on the electric kettle in the visitor's house last week. It's probably only the fifth time I've ever held a screwdriver and, hence, I'll be leaving all construction related matters in the hands of other people in the future:-)

February and March are busy months for visiting volunteers. Two friends of mine from Australia are busily helping out with the stores construction and organisation of the shipping containers, as well as spending time with the kids on feeding. A group of three Americans are here also leading devotions with our staff and volunteers as well as connecting with the teaching ministry of Pastor Percy in the village. Toby Hudson has returned to help finalise the renovation of the farmhouse where missionary vet Paul and his family will be living when they arrive this week. We have a wonderful house set up to accommodate visitors to the project, so if you have any inclination at all I would encourage you to come and be part of this community.

We're incredibly thankful to have seen some good rain in the past week. Maize crops have been suffering and we can only hope and pray that continued rain will help to provide some food security for families for the year ahead.



The feeding program continues to operate serving the most vulnerable children in Mwandi. I am inspired daily by the team of volunteers who come to play their part in being the hands and feet of Christ. I'd like to take a moment to introduce you to one of the kids in our feeding program. Nalishebo was thirteen years old when she was found outside the feeding hall crying with her friends. She is a double orphan, HIV positive, and has an intellectual disability. Life was already pretty tough for Nalishebo before the horror of what was happening to her was discovered.

Nalishebo opened up to project staff and told them that she was being gang raped in the village, with up to six men "using" her one after the other. The men were paying her grandmother, which is why the nightmare was continuing for Nalishebo. A visit to the police station provided no relief in the situation, with police declaring that they wouldn't take action unless the family requested them to. Initial visits with the family also proved fruitless, with them stating that Nalishebo had to pay her way through life, and so this is how it had to be.

Prayers were answered in the form of an aunty who returned to Mwandi to care for Nalishebo and eventually took her to Namibia to live for a short time. Nalishebo has been the recipient of intense counselling from the team at the OVC and some of her wounds are

slowly healing. There is a long way to go, but a wonderful step in her journey towards healing is that she has been accepted into St Mulumba Special School. She went to Choma a few weeks ago to begin school in a place where she will be loved and nurtured, and receive the education that every child has a right to. We are seeking support to cover the cost of Nalishebo's education. Again, Sandra Pugsley would love to hear from you if you can contribute to this story of healing.

This is just one story in an ocean of many. I can't fathom the depth of pain that some of our kids have been subjected to... but I can rejoice in the hope that they have. They teach me daily how to live with joy in the face of disappointment and peace in the midst of turmoil. I urge you to hear their stories, learn from them, and be a part of the journey.

Over the coming months we will be expanding our communication efforts to bring you more stories and insights from Mwandu. In addition to the newsletter, I will be blogging at katowallis.blogspot.com. If you visit this site you can enter your email address and subscribe to my blog. Whenever I post an update it will be delivered to your inbox automatically. The blog holds my personal reflections on life and, as such, will have a heavy focus on what I'm learning and discovering in Mwandu. I'll also be using it as a tool to introduce you to some of the staff and kids I have the privilege of working with every day. Further to this, we will also have a facebook page set up in the coming week. This is a great way for you to see snapshots of every day life at the project. So, if you are a facebook user, keep an eye out for us (Mwandu UCZ OVC Project) in the coming weeks and give us a 'like' and share our page with your friends. If you're not a facebook user, perhaps now is the time!



We have purchased 500 point of lay hens to keep up with egg demand. And today loading 40 pigs to send to Lusaka butchery. As they love our pigs and give us a very good price. On the way back we carry a months worth of stock feed. The farm has over 200 pigs. A wonderful income generating project.

Blessings to you wherever you find yourself today...

Kt xo

The project is seeking financial support for the following items:

- General Education Sponsorship – from \$90/year
- Sponsorship for Nalishebo's education (please contact Sandra)
- UPS for Edward's computer - \$220
- Major service on the Ford – up to \$2000
- Starter motor for the truck - \$500
- Truck tyres - \$200/each
- Internet - \$230/month
- Fuel - \$300/month
- Electricity for project - \$200/month
- Salary for pre-school teacher - \$3500/year (or any part of)

We would appreciate your continued prayers, specifically for the following:

- *The planning of our year ahead (programs and budgets). The manager, project administrator and myself will do this over the coming month or two in conjunction with the community and the United Church of Zambia. Please pray that we would use our resources wisely to serve the Mwandi community.*
- *For our sponsored students as they begin their year.*
- *For all involved in construction at the project.*
- *For our staff and volunteers to continually grow in confidence in their roles as they take up ownership over the project.*
- *For all of our children on feeding – that they would know they are loved by many.*
- *For our financial needs to be met - for those of us on the ground here to be creatively inspired about new ways in which we can use the gifts and skills from our project to generate income.*



**Mwandi Education Sponsorship Program
C/- Sandra Pugsley**

**PO Box 487
Nairne SA 5252 Australia**

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

Mwandi Support Team

C/- Pt Lincoln Uniting Church
PO Box 191, Port Lincoln SA 5606
Phone: (08) 8684 2065
Web: www.mwandiovc.com
Email: fionamwanditeam@yahoo.com.au
Email: mwandisupportteam@gmail.com

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

**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: Mwandi 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**