

March 19, 2007

Dear Zimbabwean Friends,

What an incredible blessing it is to be able to write you from this soil here! We have put down our roots, only to now be packing for departure. We are beginning this process first in the village with our huts where everything must be put into trucks until the next trip. The serious packing of suitcases will occur after a few days spent in town with the team's wrap up of purchasing, record keeping, and final meetings. We have been able to accomplish such a great amount in a short time, moving daily as the sun rises continuing throughout the day to tackle a variety of things.

I want to give great acknowledgement to the team that has met me stride for stride since I arrived, keeping up with my schedule, not grimacing, whining, or looking uninspired, and grasping the imperative nature of why we must move at the pace we do:

- ◆ Fredreck, our newly hired nurse, met us at the airport and has been part of keeping things on a good positive track, continuing to reveal tasty morsels of his ever-expanding understanding of life and spirituality as he undertakes exploring new physics and how that fits with his conventional university medical training. Watching his growth in this regard is genuinely heart-warming and such a catalyst for all the rural people he is meeting daily.
- ◆ Benita, who has been on the job training this entire month as my Executive Assistant, is also Fredreck's wife. She has been diligently working with everyone to hold together all the threads, tackling a tough job of multi-tasking, bridging into the American mind, and holding that extra-professional edge. She is expected to continue as my right-hand here, carrying out those many things which require that extra attention to detail. She is one of our recently sponsored students through the Jangano project and is just finishing her degree at University of Zimbabwe. As we arrived, her final term was just starting and then the teachers were on strike, so we have been blessed with time together. We were able to meet her family in Dewedzo and can feel the connection between her desire for excellence and her background. Her mother is an herbalist there, growing, selling and treating local people with herbs. (This may develop into a training opportunity for Nhimbe!).
- ◆ Tinashe, our driver and Fredreck's brother, has been keeping us on time and on the road, always blending his humor in at any potential moment to keep everything rolling smoothly. Keeping our intense day-and-night schedule, and the humor, both require great timing - which he is on top of. He has been a great friend to John as well, as have all five brothers in this family. They ask poignant questions, querying of John's 86 years young mind, wondering about life, the Universal laws, and the world at large. It's been fascinating to be part of a culture that holds the elders with such respect.
- ◆ Collin, who came with the vehicle contract, continued to be a big help, and has been enjoying the month with us. Usually he is part of the city's combie (mini-bus) services. He has contributed to our work and that has opened up opportunities for him to ponder outside the mainstream norms.

John and I are very grateful for this great team watching out for us, and the projects, at every turn. Two others who need mentioning here are Mary and Hilda:

- ◆ Mary joined us on the 4th of March and it seems like she has been with us for years. She has a knack for being an ensemble player immediately and being like the knife accompanying the fork and spoon. She is a professional photographer and has been on a photo-shoot each and every day filling the frames with children, the guts of the project, and her love. She is also a member of the Anzanga marimba band in Seattle. I am so amazed at how someone can come out of nowhere and be such an easy fit. Her instinct to come and join us and offer herself to this work has been a blessing to us, unfolding a wonderful journey for us all personally and also professionally for the project. Anyone who can make me feel like I am easy to work with must have a huge heart, and an enlarged mind, being able to keep

the big picture in view. I have such demanding requirements on my life that I am so very grateful to find the brilliance shining forth from others willing to stretch themselves that extra mile with me. Thank you Mary for the much needed companionship and easy harmony that came with the focus.

- ◆ Hilda is my sister here and stays with us while in Mhondoro. We hire her to cook and clean for us. She has been doing a great job and now after several years, has developed a fine sense for those American international dishes (our food preferences really reflect that melting pot from which we come). Of the family members here, she is the main one we get to spend time with and we truly appreciate the exchange. She has some special gifts from Spirit that bless our meals. It is really hard to explain how everything she prepares has this extra taste of goodness to the palette – I have really learned experientially from her cooking how love is an ingredient in the meal...it comes through curiously so on a feeling level. She was part of why I felt confident that John could safely enjoy time here.

ECONOMY

We heard that the exchange was at 5,000 zim to US \$1 when Mary arrived a week before us. Now as she is leaving, it has reached 12,000. (Remember this is really 12 million in the truth of inflation, as the last 3 zeroes were removed last August because too many mistakes were being made.) There is nothing to do for our people here, other than education to help them understand what is happening.

Our friend who works at a prestigious secondary girl's school in Harare is making only \$100 US because the rates do not continue to keep up. This is a private school and her salary would normally not be this low as she is educating the cabinet minister's daughters and others from wealthy homes – she was forced to stop teaching in the government schools because of the pay, several years ago. I heard that the current rate for a government teacher is only 90,000 zim (yes, you got that – at the current parallel market that is \$7.50 usd per month). How can that be? No wonder there have been strikes with teachers not coming to class, not grading final exams, and being so disheartened about their chosen profession. Most jobs require transport to and from. Recently that was 2,000 zim to get to another part of town. In the case of a teacher, 4,000 per day at 20 days in the month is 80,000 and they are earning 90? Is this for real? This is unprecedented in this country.

Everyone who works with us and gets paid for their hand crafts, their services or a bonus is told the same thing as I pay them for their contribution. I explain that they must use the money immediately to invest in food, bricks, or some “thing” right away. By next week the money is worth little. The average person doesn't understand what is happening...it's like watching the water get higher and higher and drowning - perplexed by it all. What they do understand is that they can't pay school fees, can't feed their children, and can't find adequate medical care. Our lead preschool teacher said buying maize and putting-it-by was a good plan because of the current drought, they will then have something to eat in the winter. The maize crops are about $\frac{3}{4}$ grown and looking nice, but then turning brown due to lack of rain.

DONHODZO HEALTH CENTER - CONVENTIONAL

Everyday people come to seek help in our developing Health Centre. We are only beginning down this path but what is offered is so much more than what is found locally. Our registration as a clinic is awaiting final approval by the Ministry of Health. We talked to the Chief as we were leaving the villages about this. He felt he could put together a meeting with some non-political leaders and help move the wheel. When approved we will be able to expand in the conventional medical lines:

- Residents needing ARVs (monthly anti-retroviral for preventing HIV from turning into AIDs usually given when a person reaches a certain point of ill health) will be able to purchase them from us at wholesale prices. Currently they take a bus to town and back (about US \$5-6) to buy them. We will save them time and money. A year ago our preschool teacher said she paid 9 million for hers and when

I asked in town they said we could buy them for 5 million (This was when the exchange was not quite yet 1 million to 1). That is significant.

- The New Start program (funded by PSI) is waiting for us to be officially registered. They offer free HIV testing and counseling and will be carried out as an adjunct to the Health Centre. When Fredreck did a medical village survey, visiting each family registered with Nhimbe, he found only 3 people admitting to being HIV positive...we know that out of 1,000 people that number must be incorrect. We know of several who are being looked after through the Home Based Care program that the Chief is responsible for – it is like a hospice program and each trip we buy supplies for the Chief to use in his region of 56 villages so that this Home Based Care program has betadine, gauze, calamine and gloves.
- There are many organizations that will help us, as well as a local doctor who will visit regularly to ensure the rural clinic status. Being registered will make a big difference for the Health Centre.

DONHODZO HEALTH CENTRE - ALTERNATIVE

The primary Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) approaches we are currently employing are very exciting. These methods require no drugs – many of which are either unavailable or expired.

- NMT: I have been using NMT (see www.nmt.md) Neuro Modulation Technique here since my first training in 2002. As the development of the technique expands and evolves and my own practitioner skills improve we continue to see increasing successes, often quite amazing results. NMT is “a natural” here as the people’s healing techniques are spiritually based, so underlying their modern entrainment to ask for tablets, they are very receptive. When I return to the states we may be able to continue the remote treatments we started in November 06 although the logistics are complex. Fredreck was offered full training in NMT by Dr. Les Feinberg, if we could get him to the US. We raised the funds, created a 4-month program including mentoring by many doctors interested in helping him during his stay. His visa was denied by the US embassy. They were concerned that he would not return to Zimbabwe once he left, since there has been a continuing exodus, particularly of health care professionals, which are so desperately needed. So after this brutal reality sunk in, Fredreck and I have been studying together at every available moment using the manuals, DVDs, and the patients on hand. He is doing great grasping it all but it’s a leap from where he was trained. I need to get him further materials. (Please let me know if you are coming to Zimbabwe and could bring him his training materials! We can’t count on the mail!).
- Molecular Enhancer: We have a multi-wave oscillator that we have been using here for some time (see www.dandial.com) that was made by Dan Dial in Washington. With little opportunity for good conventional approaches we were looking for the least expensive and most immediate solution to the situation. The molecular enhancer is particularly useful for chronic conditions. The main people we see coming in daily are the elderly who feel its rejuvenating effects. They walk quite a distance to be able to sit with the machine for ½ hour or so. Various other conditions have benefited include tumor reduction. It runs off the solar panel, requires little overseeing, and provides relief in this otherwise difficult circumstance with no interventions available. It has the effect of re-charging the “battery” in each body cell through the oscillating current and giving them such a lift that they can then proceed to kick into their natural immune response.
- Massage: We have been planning to incorporate the use of massage for quite some time. After getting a massage in Harare during my October 05 trip, I was definitely seeking the opportunity to find the right person for the job. My masseuse was clearly trained very well, and had a great manner to offer the help. She gave me an estimate at that time of \$700 usd for the 6-month college course. We have found out that now it is closer to half of that. And, like one miracle after another, the right person for the job, appeared out of nowhere. I couldn’t have looked less. There she was, Abigail Muchiriri, married to one of Fredreck’s brothers. She has wanted to learn massage for quite some time. As a hair braider, in the typical hairdresser fashion she would be hearing the person’s personal story (I think hairdressers and bartenders have a lot in common that way.) and feeling a desire to do more than

working the neck or temples to provide some relief. To say the least, she is perfect for the job. We will be sponsoring her schooling and then asking to hire her at our Health Centre once a week where she will be focusing on the overworked and injured muscles. Maggie Donahue from Eugene is also a masseuse and just happened to be here visiting and so as Spirit would have it, her availability dovetailed with Abigail being in the village so they were able to spend a few days together. Maggie had come prepared to share her love for this wonderful healing art. She left Abigail with full charts, a great book to study, and a special window into the hands of experience, concern for the well-being of her client, and some very personal training. Such a contribution! When you come to Zimbabwe, make sure and look up our masseuse for your own rest and relaxation. Anyone have a good reflexology book to forward to the program?

EXPORTS

We have managed to meet with all interested vendors of crafts from the various villages. We buy these items to support the project from another level besides the donations. Everyone here is very grateful for our purchases as tourism is so much on the low side. Mary captured great pictures of these craftspeople so we can include them on the website, sharing their personal stories. Most of these people we have been working with for years. This year a new basket maker came forward and so we have some of her flat woven wares.

If we want to ship anything using a shipping company, we must go to the bank and get a special form filled out showing how we exchanged our money at the bank at 250 zim to 1 usd. Obviously that limits our purchases and makes for only losses. We basically don't do anything to lose money and so currently are limited to what we can bring in a suitcase. Mary was able to bring many things home for this effort; John and I will also. If any of you are traveling to Zimbabwe and can spare any suitcase space, please let me know because it makes such a difference. Many of the Nhimbe jobs in the villages depend upon us selling products to raise the money to fund their positions. If you have any sales opportunities please let me know as well, either retail store outlets, a table at a well-attended craft show, or your own fund-raising initiative.

We are bringing:

- Sculpture from the Tendai carvers – this includes exquisite serpentine carvings in various colors from the men and women as well as a few of their youth who are learning the family trade. Please see www.ancient-ways.org to see some examples of the carvings in the warehouse.
- Woven baskets from a woman who is new to our project. This is an Ndebele art form and she has married a Shona man who is in our villages.
- Hand knitted scarves from the SGOFOTI (an acronym for “Support Group of Families of Terminally Ill” founded by Ruth Feigenbaum). They are organized to provide counseling, occupational therapy of knitting and sewing, and orphan care for these families. We purchased some of their scarves as an initial effort to support their work in Bulawayo as part of Umgami Wami.
- Embroidered blocks for t-shirts – the Nhimbe textile women are continuing to embroider, staying focused on one particular scene of making peanut butter in the traditional way. The Altrusa organization in Albany Oregon donated embroidery floss for the women's sewing efforts and that was a good stimulus to be busy working this month. These may also be available as blocks for quilters, etc. – if you are interested, do let me know.
- The Nhimbe textile women have also knitted finger puppets and sewn fabric totes in 3 sizes in great colorful ethnic fabrics. We are now well stocked for all your needs!

VISITORS from AMERICA

This trip has been abundantly blessed by visitors from America taking the time to check out what we have been doing. The time spent with Julie and Aimee (mentioned in the first Field Report) was wonderful. They participated in everything we were doing, giving us much feedback and sharing their warmth and insights. We all felt free and relaxed and the Nhimbe residents appreciated their presence. They were able to stay through and be part of the village meeting we had on the 10th.

There were also three women from Eugene Oregon who were visiting the rural Nhimbe area: Janis Weeks, Lynne Swift and Maggie Donahue. We didn't spend much time together but saw each other coming and going for a few days. Janis was visiting hospitals and clinics in the area and so will have a first hand experience of what we are facing here. Lynne saw many people whom she met during her trips in 2000 and 2001 when she came to help Nhimbe. She was also able to meet a couple of her sponsored children and spend some time inquiring into their needs. That is profound for the children to get to meet their sponsor! The idea that someone cares that much becomes much more real. Maggie guided our new masseuse Abigail through a couple of massages leaving many wondering what this new type of treatment was going to do. Maggie was my first marimba teacher and so it was wonderful to finally see her here. I have needed to share in some other way than writing in Field Reports.

MUSIC PROGRAMS

When I explained about our organizational chart, I left out an important piece of the learning here. The latest boon to the Nhimbe project is the marimbas. When the three women from Oklahoma came last June to create a cultural exchange, we picked up children from each school and brought them to the Community Center. Cindy, Lani and Stephani spent the afternoon with these kids and started a trend that is a happening thing. There is now a group of more than 36 children and young people that show up regularly to study the music of Zimbabwe on marimba (yes – there are only 6 marimbas)! This is such an incredible turn of events. We have been blowing on the coals since the first marimbas were brought on the wedding trip in late 2000. Various visitors from Washington, Oregon and Colorado have helped inspire the residents as well, but that dedicated focused time in June really pushed the desire to the surface. It's such a huge success and a very important piece of Nhimbe's educational offerings. I was very excited and pleased to see that this month's OEA (Oklahoma Educator's Association) statewide newsletter "The Education Focus" had a great article written about their trip to Africa on pages 6 & 7. See www.okea.org/EdFocus/2007/EdFocusMarch07.pdf to read the article. The grant that brought them here also helped them to go to Zimfest. I hope the granter knows what an impact was made - grants can be such a great catalyst for good!

The marimba group has asked for the instruments to be repaired, as well as wanting some uniforms for performing. Anyone have a special place in their heart for a young marimba band and interested in sponsoring this special need?

The Jangano project also has a music program development. Fungai will be teaching mbira in the schools in the Dewedzo area. Fradreck is donating the making of the instruments with the materials that Erica Azim has contributed to the cause. What a great project to help these rural children remember their heritage and develop as musicians! Thanks Erica! Erica has been very supportive of my efforts since the inception in 1999. She was at that Soul of Mbira concert in Eugene where Cosmas and I brought our previous talks to the floor with seriousness and the rest is history.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Our library is continuing to develop in a myriad of ways. Our friend at the secondary girl's school has been the receiving address for many books sent by someone with a grant in Colorado. All the shipping has been paid for! These books have helped to develop our library in a broad way. Altrusa also donated towards the purchase of Shona library books which are sorely needed. We are in the process of

purchasing those now. Also our tutor has requested to participate in a correspondence course in psychology to further her education and so we will sponsor her for that. It's really inspiring to feel so much growth.

The Preschool has installed playground equipment for the little ones! We have had a simple teeter totter for quite some time as well as tires to play on, but the most recent development is the most rewarding to watch. There are swings, a slide, and a merry-go-round. All of these are built for small bodies and quite the right size for preschoolers. Charles Muungani, our Nhimbe Project Manager, worked on this through installation and found us a super deal on its construction and delivery. Hearing the children laughing and playing with glee is really a fine experience.

We have changed a policy for the preschool registration. We have opened the registration to any of the villages in the area. We are taking the applications for this enrollment to allow our staff to choose the families that will best participate in the Nhimbe philosophy. If all goes according to plan we will be taking on a large spurt of growth. With so many things in place (e.g. like the feeding, materials and supplies), and the preschool teachers anxious to share their school with more children, it seems like the right step forward. I feel that the preschool opportunity is having a very great influence on the long term lives of these children. I only wish we could move on to the next level of learning and help them with their primary education.

More and more people, residents and Nhimbe staff, are very interested in starting a school for the children. We are currently looking at the financial limitations we are facing. I can imagine building the required structures and buying some of the needed books from our current donations, but am contemplating the ongoing finances needing to pay the teachers reasonably and consistently year after year. Right now, our request for \$35 per year doesn't pay all of the preschool teacher's wages after covering the uniform and picture/letter exchange; some has to come from general donations. That \$35 does cover the government schools sponsorships but that is because they aren't paying the teachers enough. That means we need to find other alternatives to proceed with our long range plans. I really don't want to raise the donation amount. Any ideas? Any group/s or philanthropists interested in helping with this worthwhile project?

We are facing a new trend in the precedence of school sponsorship. The education in the villages has gotten so bad, that several of our residents have sent their children into town to better their opportunities. This means the child lives with a relative there. This is a real problem. The city water is polluted with raw sewage and the crime rate much higher. Preying on the girl children is more common and the city air full of pollution from old vehicles and burning plastics. Unfortunately I agree with the parents that the government schools are inadequate and it is good that they are taking a stand. I would like to see a way clear to begin a school of our own so at least these children do not have to leave home. We are sponsoring these children as they requested help with their school fees...we are not canceling them from the program and are able to gratefully retain that continuity.

Last Field Report I mentioned that children are being fed something for lunch at schools now. It turns out that CRS Catholic Relief Services is the one behind this great assistance. This is a great contribution as many children are not being fed adequately at home.

YOUTH WELL-BEING PROGRAMS

Another absolutely joyous couple of things have been developing here for our youth. Tatenda's boy child program called Machapro (Tatenda is Fredreck's youngest brother), was designed for the education of a new male self-definition through teaching of abstinence and female equality. His goal is the prevention of the spread of HIV and he has some great ideas for "jigging up" the kids. This program is coming along

from a visionary stage into some grounded realities. He has been working with his college friends and created an afternoon of presentations for the children with the motto of Child Development for Community Development which they shared on the afternoon of the general meeting on the 10th.

With Tatenda's help, we have managed to set a girl child program in motion! We are now officially affiliated with Girl Guides (brownies, girl guides and rangers) with 85 or so girls registering. I am so very happy at this development and so deeply touched. As a child I was so fortunate to have so many opportunities, all of which encouraged me to become whatever I was big enough to be. I have been so maxed just keeping things on track on the management level, setting the stages, structures and protocol, that the detail seeding really requires igniting from other sources. These youth programs have developed on their own as the natural fertile response to the cultivated but unplanted ground. These young girls will be led by Voice Muchada who was instrumental in helping in the cultural exchange with the Oklahoma women last June, and has been working with the young people for a long time on a volunteer basis.

KENYA TRAINING for NHIMBE STAFF

Our Project Manager, Charles, and the Educational Manager, Takesure Musarurwa, attended training at the GSM Continental Training Center in Kenya, last August through October. They returned with much strength in their hearts, minds and souls to carry out the work on the ground here. The GSM training is geared towards counseling to assist people to change their lives. They have general counseling methods, as well as for those who are Christians, and those who are of other religious walks. They work with the students whom they sponsor for school, as well as anyone in the community needing help of any sort. They bring practical aid to those in emergency situations. They focus on the recognition of the human being and its wholeness to repair the victim mentality that undermines prosperity and empowerment. Charles and Takesure learned so much. Traveling away from home for that length of time in itself was a huge experience. They found the Kenya climate and diet challenging but surrendered to the process to come out the other side with much under their belt in ways of helping their people. Thanks to Bettie Mitchell who took us under the GSM wing to allow our fellows to participate.

SUMMARY

John has been enjoying the trip immensely. He has found a rhythm that is much like when he is at home. I am racing around doing my thing and he is in his own groove – much like our lives in the states. He has remarked about the cleanliness of the homes he has seen in such difficult conditions. He has been impressed by how the people take such a genuine pride in themselves and their things. He has found it interesting to watch the traditional ways with the donkeys or oxen pulling carts or plowing the field. Some of the roads remind him of cattle trails in Texas from his younger days in the service. Our “roughing it” simply reminds him of Prineville camping which we do any chance we get – we haul water, use outhouses and embrace the clean desert environment, taking in the ambiance of lizards and the like. John seems to be at home here, as anywhere else I've seen him. He is being given many honors from various directions as the elder here and is particularly fond of the conversations he has been having with all of these young men, who want to understand the world.

Thank you to all of you who take time to read this, and care to stay connected to the projects and these people. As always, we appreciate greatly your interest in this passion which has been life transforming for all involved. Let me know if you have any ideas that might help us grow...it's all a process and is nothing without your involvement.

Blessings your way,

Jaiaen