



April 22 2006

Greetings from Zimbabwe!

As with every time I arrive in this country, I find a deeper and deeper connection to the culture, the land, and our common bond of the human spirit. It doesn't matter who the people are, whether the indigenous Shona who brought me into their circle, or the Caucasians or Arabians, who have since become aligned with our  Ancient Ways purposes, the whole of the commitment towards our aim is strong. All of the people regardless of race or religion are in a holding pattern with us as we persevere, and we with them.

Much gratitude fills my cup and overflows my boundaries as I take pen to paper, and bless you for your part in all of this. Without your interest, financial support, and purchase of village crafts, I would not be here in this capacity, the rural people would not be uplifted by our efforts, and we wouldn't be focused on the future with great hope, definitive plans, and confidence in the evolution towards our goals.

THE FIRST WEEK

It has been a source of great joy to see our Nhimbe villagers looking happier and healthier. Although we have sent food, it has been relatively minimal. The World Food Program has brought them food twice since January (e.g. bulgur, peas, cooking oil), and our lots would be considered a supplement to that. The significance of this food aid is seen in their faces. That just-under-the-surface tension is banished, even though survival is clearly still an issue. The creased foreheads from thinking too hard about the future are softer lines. The light of hope in their eyes is brighter, knowing that their children will eat better today. Thank you for your generosity over this last year as it makes a tremendous difference.  We have ordered another lot of food (maize meal, corn/soya/vitamin blend porridge, oil, beans) to be delivered this next week for distribution on the following Sunday, although the residents (near 1,000) are unaware of these plans. We work to keep a low profile in this regard.

Upon arriving I was blessed to have Sheree Seretse, an old friend, well-known musician/teacher and leader from Anzanga, also incoming at the airport. We were able to take her home to the rural area for a couple of days. There we adjusted to the travel and altitude. Sheree was able to meet all of her sponsored children, their parents, as well as a recent graduate. It was a tremendous experience for me to share in the linking of their hearts and minds. It's that person who offers the children the possibility of a different future that flips the switch to "on" and generates the electricity. We just lay the wire. Sheree's stay was short but she was able to witness some of the seeds being planted, the work being done, and the dreams being fulfilled.

My time has been packed with meetings with each of the people in their Nhimbe departments. School is out now until May 9th. Easter holiday closes most businesses until the Wednesday after, so I stayed in Mhondoro for the first week. Everyone brought me up to date on the progress and events of the last few months.

THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS

📍 In February, there was an earthquake here registering fairly high on the Richter scale (7.5 in Mozambique). We don't have statistics on the damage around the villages, but mom's well was completely destroyed. It's now a huge gaping hole in the ground. There are 4 or 5 women (age ranges 25-45) who daily walk ¼ mile to the nearest well and fill 5-gallon containers, returning with them filled and balanced on their heads. I am still able to have a morning bath, filtered water to drink, and water for my kitchen, but am being far more frugal than before when a good well was a few steps away. We are fortunate for this nearby high quality water source, as around 90% of the people have no well! (About 90% also have no toilet.)

Just a few short weeks ago there was a serious break in at the Nhimbe Community Center. Many project supplies and gifts from recent visitors were stolen, leaving the doors and cabinet locks broken and giving our community quite a blow. The staff made great efforts to quickly repair the damage to the premises, follow-up with police, as well as console the residents about the traumatic situation, so as to not leave things in disarray. Four men had carefully planned out this offense and got away with many things. The police at multiple levels (from the local constable to the CIO, which is like the CIA) have been involved and a very few things have been found. Some books and school fabric was located in a nearby village. They took some food from the preschool but left most of it, and the cooking utensils, for which we are grateful. We are now continuing to re-purchase supplies so that the preschool will be ready to open on May 9th.

VILLAGE HEALTH

There has been an outbreak of scabies particularly amongst the school children, although many adults are also affected. When I heard it was a problem I suggested they come for a group NMT session (see www.nmt.md). I also had some essential oils with which to work that had cleared the problem for my sisters and me in the past. In conjunction with our Health Station Aid, who has been trained by the government as a Village Health Worker, I thought we might be able to do something. I was floored when over 60 people came. Infants to the elderly were under attack by this minute bug. I'm not particularly trained in first aid, just use some common sense methods, and so was stunned by the serious nature of their skin conditions. From the simple small itchy bumps to the

worst weeping wounds, the mites were irritating them all. I had no idea how bad it was, and neither did anyone else.

We set up washing stations with both soap and the salt water disinfecting solution. As our staff observed the magnitude of the situation they also commented that they didn't realize the severity until the children took off their clothes. We talked a little about hygiene and completed some NMT to boost their immune systems. The essential oil was only a drop in the bucket to what was needed. As we have returned to town, we proceeded to the pharmacy wholesalers to purchase some basic gauze bandages, iodine, calamine, and a solution used to treat scabies here called benzyle benzoate. 📦 Its clear we need to do more education as well because the mite is similar to lice in the way it hides in bedding, clothes and hair. Our Health Station Aid will now be able to treat the residents.

This Friday, she is also testing for bilharzias, as it is again a problem. We tested and treated in 2004. The parasite schistomiasas is found in standing water and once within a human creates a condition of cloudy thinking, fatigue, and blood in the urine (making the testing easy), so children for example can not focus at school when infected. The children pass through a small creek to get to school and so are exposed regularly.

Another serious medical concern is something I can't diagnose, as I've never seen it in the US. Many people have open skin sores on the feet, ankles, and legs, as well as on the face and upper extremities. These look to be 1/8" deep and the size of a dime although usually oblong in shape. These are just open holes on the skin with no blood or obvious infection. The pharmacy had no name for the condition but knew what we were talking about. They use hydrogen peroxide to clean and dry it out and that's it. I've seen skin sores for years here but it seems to be worsening. Three members of the immediate family showed up with the problem, when they heard I was treating a dog bite with basic first aid. Since malnutrition is such an issue I'm sure that is compromising their bodies' ability to heal whatever it is. Washing their wounds in unclean water is also an issue. 📦

Our Building Manager, who is also in charge of Security, was bitten by a dog. It left quite a foot wound. He went to the closest clinic and was told to go elsewhere as they have no supplies. He proceeded to a second clinic and was told to return home and wash his wound with salt water, which is the standard recipe for cleaning wounds. I could understand the clinic not being able to afford bandages and medicines but was struck by the desperation here, as they didn't even have salt to show him how to properly clean his wound. He did get a recommendation to travel further to the rural hospital where he is receiving injections for rabies. I pray they are using sterile needles.

Ironically as my attention is being drawn to the many urgent and basic medical needs, I have just met a young man from our villages who is graduating from his last year at the University in Harare in nursing. He volunteered and helped with the scabies treatment program and was fascinated by NMT, feeling a new level of self esteem that intentional healing is a valid frontier. I would like to employ this young man upon graduation, eventually getting him NMT training, as there is great hope for our area with this plan. It would only be around \$150 a month to add him to our team but that is another \$1,800 a year to our existing \$10,000 per year budget for wages here. Anyone have any ideas on how to raise funds for this purpose? Our residents deserve health care! There must be some organization, group or individual interested in helping us to set up a basic health program here – it is such a deplorable situation with no end in sight as it stands now – a little aspirin isn't really the solution. 🗑️

EDUCATION

Since school is out now for their break, the children will be receiving the letters you sent at a general meeting on Saturday (since there is no school I will be unable to get their updated photos until later in the year – please be patient). I have been privy to their rehearsing for this big affair sharing traditional song, dance, and drumming in gratitude for all Nhimbe is doing for them. Hopefully, I can tape the children's presentation. There are two women who have been working with them for quite some time preparing for this gathering.

We are out and about in town purchasing uniform fabric for the sponsored children (about 75% of the children in the Nhimbe villages are now sponsored so it is quite an investment), yarn for finger puppet creation, and ethnic fabric for purses to be made here and exported. Fabric prices have increased substantially as the cost of doing business continues to escalate.

CURRENCY

Last I heard, the bank rate is Z\$99,000 and I hear that the street rate was over Z\$200,000 to 1 USD. When we started the project in 2000 the bank/street rate was around Z\$ 38/42 to 1 USD. Considering that a lower income salary is around Z\$4,000,000, check out the food prices:

Olive oil, 1 liter, 1,800,000 🗑️

Eggs, 1 dozen, 288,000

5 Apples, 550,000

Box of oatmeal, 450,000

Tangerines, 95,000 / kg

Honey pint 395,000

Onions 330,000/ kg

Potatoes 90,000 / kg

Mozzarella cheese 490,000

Peanut butter pint, 324,000

Even though a person can spend millions of Zim (over 36 million to purchase medical supplies, and over 196 million for uniform fabrics), most people barely have high school equivalency, but they are all coping with the zeroes. It feels like the Monopoly game to many. Everyone has to have a great sense of humor to survive these times. People laugh at the outrageous increases every week but it is laughter born of dismay, embarrassment, and utter confusion at how to proceed to prepare for the next day.

VISION

My vision has always been around creating opportunity for empowerment. When I first came in 2000, the needs were so great for shelter, as Cyclone Eline had just struck the month before my arrival, with health issues predominant and educational concerns paramount, that I lost my focus. 🗑️ I was swept into the travesty of the deteriorating economy, the families' struggles with continual funerals, and how to navigate the debilitated infrastructure. Now in our 7th year, I have learned much about the original calling of my heart, as well as the endless black hole of need. For my own restoration of power and healing, I needed to shift focus and remember my sacred kernel of inspiration. Empowerment is an inside job! The outer world opportunities are of significance to enable the embracing of hope, but how one thinks and believes and feels about the future determines the outcome. I've known this but didn't realize that I needed to take more action in this aspect of education with my world. After all, where do I get off? Same place as everyone else I guess - we must each speak our truth and not be shy or intimidated by what people might think. Once that awareness struck me so boldly, I began studying individual empowerment in a formal fashion and am looking forward to continual learning, opening, and sharing in that regard.

Bettie Mitchell, founder of Good Samaritan Ministries based in Beaverton Oregon, another adopted mother of mine, gave me a copy of a book by Dr. Myles Munroe, called *The Principles and Power of Vision: Keys to Achieving Personal and Corporate Destiny*. This book lays the concepts out concisely and I highly recommend it. We purchased it wholesale and brought our crew here copies to read and begin studying. The bottom line in my mind is listening to one's own heart, choosing to hear one's calling, and then to passionately contribute one's talents/gifts to the planet. This is what we all wish for our children but few people find it for themselves. 🗑️ The book has a gold mine of information on the subject!

Additionally, GSM has offered us the option of utilizing their Continental Training Center in Kenya providing our two key managers (Financial/Overseer and Educational Program) with training in this humanitarian work to which they have

dedicated themselves. The Center trains GSM staff from all over the world. All we have to do is get our fellows there for a 3-month course beginning in August. Due to farming priorities, they will only be able to attend the 2 months of August and September.

I will be going through Kenya on my way home to visit this Center and see GSM abroad. I have only observed and participated in their stateside programs, and have only been impressed by the broad-minded philosophy about the work to do in the world. The story of the Good Samaritan tells it all – there is no race or religion involved in aiding another person. It's much like my Moslem friends here who have many self-help projects in the rural area where they are helping people help themselves, sharing their religious point of view without requiring the registering of one's particular faith in God to receive the assistance. It's much like us as well, as we continue in an educational role, and want to make a dent in the consciousness associated with the difficult path of poverty. I am so grateful for the people around the world who care about others and want to help alleviate human suffering – it is a load to be shared.

SUMMARY

After a two-day visit to Mhondoro over the weekend, I will be going to work on our other project here in Zimbabwe for the week, in another area called Dambatsoko. As Cosmas Magaya helps to facilitate the growth of Nhimbe for Progress, Fradreck Mujuru envisioned and is facilitating the Jangano project (co-directing with Fungai Mujuru). We began in late 2005 to work with them. The Jangano project is accomplished in an entirely different region and has no relationship to Nhimbe for Progress. So far, we are sponsoring 50 children to attend the Dewedza schools. We are researching the feasibility of building toilets for the residents of the 4 villages in their area. We are very excited about this new and separately run project as the Nhimbe model has taught us much about how to organize ourselves, keep records, as well as the cultural bridge building to really reach out to each other in an effective and productive way that meets both of our needs. Next Field Report will hopefully contain more details about our Jangano progress.

Until next week – thank you for being there, being interested and concerned about these people, and offering me the encouragement you do! I am honored to be able to work with such a great group of people – that includes all of you who add in your energy and efforts to raise funds, tell our story, and continue to hold our hearts close to your own in prayer, conversation and deed.

Blessings your way ~ Jaiaen