

May 2, 2006

My Good Friends,

It's a pleasure to again be writing to you from the bush here in Zimbabwe. This last week has been very revealing in many ways and I am so grateful for this opportunity. They also are so appreciative for the opportunity, or as one young woman put it, the privilege, to participate in this vision. We are all privileged. Our communities' wholeness is brimming with hope for the future, ready to face and tackle problems. They continue to adjust their sights to the target. We all persevere, focusing on a pinpoint of light with our arrows of destiny's calling, honing that like a sharp knife ever ready to be used.

JANGANNO

My week was to be spent in Dewedza working jointly with Fradreck and Fungai Mujuru on our new project called Jangano. The word Jangano is an old fashioned word much like Nhimbe referring to people uniting together to accomplish a common goal for a family, and then when complete, being ready to help the next family. I was to go to the Dambatsoko area for the week, reviewing the Jangano student sponsorship program, evaluating toilet building possibilities and touching down with all the record keeping being done. As Fradreck's mother took a turn for the worse with an ongoing life threatening health problem, it was clearly best to reschedule for another time.

It is highly complicated for the families to make decisions in these cases where the hospitals do not have adequate supplies or resources. How does one decide how to care for a person who is suffering long term when the health care system has ceased to be a viable option? What an internal struggle! Historically, utilizing the medical system has been a solution, so one's patterns dictates that we should seek medical help. And yet, if one is to die, being near family in one's rural home is the prime place. I only wish we could help each other during these complex times instead of just standing by in support.

Fradreck did decide to take his mother home to the rural area and she died shortly thereafter. The funeral arrangements were made and completed this last week. As I have mentioned before, expenses for funerals are very high. Many people receive no head stone here in this country due to the exorbitant inflation. Maybe it takes a few years to source enough funds to buy something simple. If you are moved to send something to help with any of these expenses you may feel free to send them to Ancient Ways, clearly noting the purpose, and we can forward them to the family for you.

What seems imperative to communicate about Jangano is how distinctly different it is as compared to Nhimbe even though it is copying the model program we've been researching and developing for a number of years. Nhimbe has given me much in the way of internal reference points. I now know:

- how to integrate what we have to offer with the needs that exist,
- many of the pitfalls, dangers and loopholes in the approach as it works with the system here, and

- how to help without adding to the problems (this is always a delicate thought-provoking issue).

Both projects are involving Shona people in Zimbabwe. But that is where the similarities stop.

- The people live many hours apart.
- Their history, their climate and geographical constraints are quite contrasted.
- The projects are being managed by completely different people with quite different backgrounds and talents.
- Their traditional music and healing traditions although similar are also different.

Please include the Mujuru's family during this time of sorrow and the Jangano project in your thoughts and prayers. Although Jangano is the new kid on the block, it is quickly proving itself. We are altering our schedule as nature dictates but will be resuming after a short break.

NHIMBE COMMUNITY HEALTH

The bilharzias screening, which was scheduled last week, was successful although not all children showed up for the test. Of those tested, we have a high percentage of villagers that need treatment, totaling over 50. We are sourcing the medicine in town to get these kids back on their feet. Only a few adults were dealing with the parasite, most likely due to the path to school which is impassable without going through the water.

We received the report that many of the scabies cases we treated with NMT and essential oil have improved drastically. What an amazing experience! If time allowed and the suffering was less, I would have liked to study a group with just these natural methods. I saw some of these children and adults for myself. I really must give the NMT the credit as each person only received 2 small squirts of oil which was essential oil diluted with a large quantity of jojoba and emu - quite impressive for group treatment. As usual, my time is severely limited and with only a few days left we are taking an approach that they are able to operate independently without my attention. We purchased enough of the benzyle benzoate to treat everyone.

Friday, close to 70 people showed up for this treatment. They were all told that they must bring a change of clothes to receive the medicine as it can't help without them doing their part. They must also wash all their bedding, clothes, etc to eradicate the pest. Anyone knowing about the standard lice treatment, this is similar. One large difference is that lice is on the head and scabies is everywhere else and you can't see the bug; it is quite invisible. The medicine is expected to work for most people in just one application. Those with the open sores used the iodine on those areas. I've been told that the bilarzias and scabies are even worse during the rainy season.

The other sores on the legs, ankles, and feet being treated, as well as the dog bite, are all healing up nicely. Just a little basic first aid goes a long way. I'm quite in awe as I've never watched such progress before. Because of the nature of living in the rural area, always working in the soil, with little in the way of accommodations, and using water from many sources, I worried that buying bandages and cleaning solutions would not fix the problem, but there has been much improvement with that change. I'm sure the education of being told how to tend a wound has made a marked impression too. Just sharing an emphasis about self-care seems to carry a lot of weight...people are always interested in learning.

FOOD RELIEF

Another shipment of food was distributed last week. I was very happy to be able to be here and view this for myself. We were only able to buy 1 ton of maize meal, 1 ton of corn/soya porridge, 1 ton of beans for these 1,000 or so people. That means that each person receives 1 kg, or 2.2 pounds, of each of the items. We also bought 1 bottle of cooking oil for each of the 300 or so families. That isn't a great deal of food, but is so much more than nothing, which is what they have in the field.

The maize that should be being harvested now is not there for most people. The heavy rains in October destroyed most crops. Mom had one of the best yields in the villages. I don't know yet if she actually won the competition being held for the certified maize seed, but I did see her tremendous harvest. I think she is surprising many people with her adept farming methods. She has such successful approaches.

The idea we implemented last October of purchasing certified maize seed was a great plan, with an expectation of people returning the cost of the seed after harvest, but with the rains destroying much of the crops, they are left with little in the field and no plausible way to return the original cost. Our food relief comes at a critical time. People are dying of malnutrition and I can see our help making a huge dent in what is available to them.

EDUCATION

We are continuing to sponsor children to higher grades after Secondary as we are able. We have a few more children who have approached us with high passing grades, and an interest in continuing their studies, either at a regular "Advanced" level or a specialized field such as Fabric and Fashion. Additionally, we found out about a deaf and dumb girl who we will have tested in Harare. She is clearly very bright and aware and so I am looking forward to seeing what can be done to help her. Its unlikely we could afford to send her to a boarding school but would do all possible to do whatever else we can. We had such success with the last child who was having trouble hearing that it is very encouraging to make effort in this regard. Thank you for your support of the "special needs" program as this is helping all of these children!

EXPORTS

This last week has been full of working with the various craftspeople around how their particular craft might make it to America. I was approached by someone making necklaces out of bamboo and glass beads. His artistic style was good and so I was able to buy some of his wares. I happen to have brought a baggie of various seeds, which came from old necklaces of mine, and so I was hoping to inspire someone with them. It was fortuitous that he happened along. He took home the seeds and returned in a few days with a whole new style of necklace. He is lucky that his mother is the local horticulture expert and so he has a natural background in plants and seeds available locally. Another young fellow also showed up with bracelets made out of copper, aluminum and brass. They are really quite well done and so will add to the jewelry section of the Ancient Ways sales booth.

Again, we are purchasing a small amount of sculpture, hoping for a shipment prior to Zimfest. We too will be bringing back some larger purses and maybe some special sizes for passport/ticket purses. I found some great Bali batiks and brought them as well for making some stylish tops and dresses. There is nothing like the way that special fabric hangs and so it

fits the bill for the design needed. They have been made up and are ready to be brought home. We are also re-ordering our finger puppets this trip and trying something new with embroidery on t-shirts for these talented women. I'm sure you'll like it!

Everyone here is so very grateful for the work. Besides buying food for their family, they often say they are also able to buy text books for their children, or pay for their school fees. It is an important addition to their life. And for us, the sales not only bring in some funds for paying Nhimbe wages and transport costs but also give us a great way to share the story and plight of these people. They are so capable and strong and hard-working, I am very happy to be part of the chain involving their lives. Thank you for doing what you do when you buy their crafts, help us find a place to sell them, or cover the sales table when we are selling them. It makes such a difference that everyone is involved...a true Nhimbe effort.

SUMMARY

After a few more days in Mhondoro and then back to town, I will be leaving until next time. On this particular trip I will pass through Kenya for three days to go to the Good Samaritan Ministry Continental Training Center where two of our crew will be attending a course in August and September this year. Our hope is that they will be able to obtain a passport as this is truly a most complicated situation now. With inflation reaching near 1000% (comparing to last year at this time) many Zimbabweans are fleeing the country and many doing so illegally.

Our friends here had gone to South Africa for a week-long visit around the Easter holiday. They remarked what a tremendous number of Zimbabweans they saw working there. Many were at the street corners selling their wares and upon noticing the license plates noticeably waved, as well as multiple businesses who are hiring primarily the Zimbabweans. Their bed and breakfast hired only Zimbabweans. It was noted that they are hard workers, and of course, if they are there illegally and so would be in need of the job securely.

We are holding the Light for the passport process. Obtaining the forms to get the passport is not possible without paying someone off under the table. We will ask our Kenyan friends to write the official letter of invitation which will hopefully whisk the process along. Please send us energy in this regards and visualize the papers moving along smoothly. Thanks much...this is a very special opportunity for our team here and is a much needed portal in our evolution.

Until next report, Tatenda Chiazvo! Thank you very much! for your sincere and fully received support and concern. Without your part in this incredible dream we would be unable to touch the lives of the over one thousand people here. It's important to remember also that although there are many here who don't receive any actual physical benefit from our presence as they are not immediately involved in the projects; there are many, many people, who upon hearing of our efforts are deeply moved towards hope for their own lives. You know, it means so much to just know someone cares.

Bless you – in much gratitude,

Jaiaen