

field report #1

November 19, 2019

ANCIENT WAYS

NHIMBE FOR PROGRESS

Getting Off the Ground Running

We gratefully arrived Wednesday after an uneventful flight, to the sound of *titambere*, “welcome, welcome”. Airport security let us swiftly move through with each of us carrying 2 suitcases—one for personal and one for project. This was the oddest mix of tourist luggage imaginable. One entire suitcase was complete with a science lab to turn every solar or water quality question into an answer and solution. We were able to bring 6 soccer balls from One World Play Project, 3 for the preschool and 3 for MMC girls program, which we had purchased getting the bulk price. The latest box of library books delivered just last week were also fortunately included. We had much in the way of a kitchen pantry with herbs, spices, and a few other staples for our 30 day stay giving us the comforts of home, since we work long hours over the entire month.

The 27 hour journey left us flogged but able to get to the grocery store before heading *kumusha*, out to the rural area. There is an amazing resilience when there is large purpose behind us, knocking on the proverbial door requesting determination, sudden expansion, and focus.

At Honeydew market (a better store), shelves were loaded with produce and processed products—an abundant amazing array offering every category of food. Greek yogurt with actual cultures was my favorite surprise.

- Kg Carrots \$15.99 ZWL or \$1.07 USD
- Kg Green Beans \$27.88 ZWL or \$1.86 USD
- 1 liter orange juice \$59.19 ZWL or \$3.95 USD
- 2.5 dozen eggs \$73.99 ZWL or \$4.93 USD
- 1 liter milk \$17.39 ZWL or \$1.16USD

Although the prices in USD

are quite reasonable, the average Zimbabwean cannot afford the ZWL “Zim Bond” and so the store shelves remain quite full. People have said that hyperinflation is now worse than its ever been, quietly longing for the Mugabe era. The exchange today was \$15 to 1 USD

It is now illegal to spend USD. One must change it at the government rate, which of course many people are using the parallel market. And, many are going to jail. If a person is well known at the store, you might find them paying for their cart items in an office down the hall.

We found the rural area waiting for us and were able to quickly have a light meal, finding sheets etc. in the trunks, and getting to bed for that long awaited rest. The next day required much organization since our bags were mixed up with packing schemes.

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Special points of interest:

- *Negotiating with Schweppes to obtain 2 liter bottles for the SODIS implementation. Hoping for collaboration.*

- *Upcoming MMC 3-day Camp this weekend with 300 girls expected.*

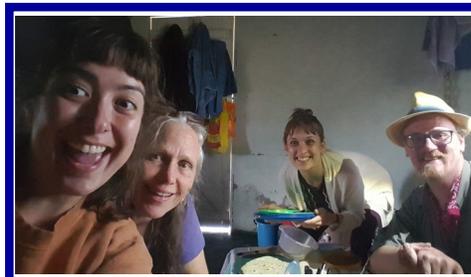
- *Health Forums coming up to explore public health and hygiene.*

- *Test Moringa seeds are sprouting fast!*

Unprecedented & Inspired Volunteers

Ancient Ways has been blessed with 3 people to work on the ground with me this month. Carina, the videographer from Brazil, has been handling the filming of our first week like a pro. Jessica, our photographer from Portland, is also

shooting at every opportunity, her stance that of a skilled camera person. Whitney has focused on all things water and solar, peering with his powerful test kit, at the microbiology in the wells, being Mr. Tech for every solar and repair need.



A Pleasant Friday Visit to the Chief Builds Confidence

Over the years you have heard about our Chief Nherera, who reports to the President of Zimbabwe, along with the members of Parliament, who co-run the country. Chief Nherera is responsible for 56 villages here in Mhondoro.

We offered him the traditional \$10 gift to say thank you, as we shared about our plans for the month, inviting him to several of the community events we are organizing. He is definitely attending the Mhandara Monthly Care (MMC) 3-day camp on the 23rd, along with other officials, to see for themselves what we are up to. His wife may also be attending our Health Forum, the SODIS training and Moringa Tree planting.

While there, Whitney tested the Chief's new bore hole well and gratefully it turned out clean. It was sitting right next to the old well which was a huge open hole with water at about 10' down. We didn't waste a test on that one.

We expect to honor the Chief at the MMC camp with some special gift like dried fruit from America and keep all the wheels greased appropriately. He has supported our every effort over the years, even writing an official letter documenting his support of Ancient Ways travelers coming into the country in case there is ever a problem at the airport, or with the CIO (their version of the CIA), which is located everywhere in the country, even here in the rural area.

Chief Relaxing at Home



Our Zambian Drip Irrigation Instruction Was Fantastic!

The Zambians, Justin and Mutinta Machlenga with their son Miracle, took a 10 hour bus ride, arriving 2 hours late on Friday night, so everyone got home by 1 am. Of course, as tradition would have it, Patricia made sure they had some sadza before sleeping, even at that hour. Waking early, we all went to the Community Center for an 11 am workshop on permaculture including a clever drip irrigation system for areas without running water. Perfect for this region! We spent a long day with many people attending, studying all of the practical steps to build deep raised beds, hook up the drip system and

plant. We used Covo cuttings, which is a perineal similar to spinach, kale and chard, but can be grown from cuttings. It was very heartwarming to see our Nhimbe all helping out. They took turns with the shovels and whipped it out in no time. Our trainers were also very impressed with such a successful turnout. They promised to sponsor further hose donation if we show we are using the system. All we must do as a community is prepare another 9 rows for a total of 10 and they will come see us again! Wow! I am so relieved as I was contemplating the fund raising challenges to continue the work. It was

an investment of \$410 to bring them, plus transport to/from town at \$80 and \$60 for lodging here. So for the \$550 we got far more commitment for the future from them than I had anticipated and am so very grateful!

Our goal is to research the US made hoses to see what the cost might be for providing families with the system. The Zambian NGO only works with groups to be able to organize and get their donor support, or also we can look into what it would cost to bring the hose. It's a US based nonprofit that is supplying the NGO with the hose. Tune in later for more updates on this one!

Training around the tree and then onto the practical digging beds and loading with compost and manure.



Delicious Lightning, Rain, Wind, and Thunder Clapping

Friday we made a quick visit to the **Community Center** so our team could see the grounds without people present. It was noonish and Nhimbe Preschool was just closing for the day. The children and staff were happy to see us giving us some opportunities for film. Then a group of girls arrived early from the Chibika primary to attend the 2 pm MMC weekly meeting. They also were delighted to get in some pictures.

We went home for a short respite and assumed we would return for the weekly girls meeting but an incredibly powerful storm came in with buckets and wind turbines of volume thrashing the plan. We knew there would be more chances to see the girls so hunkered down instead.

That night the elements continued pounding with lightening and thunder beyond your imagination, unless of course, you have been in a Zimbabwean storm. The amount of lightening is phenomenal and the thunder claps as if there are gods in the sky wanting our attention. Imagine turning the RF gain up on a amplifier to max and somehow clearing all over-amped sounds until its crystal clear. Then directing that into the round cement hut also acting as a resonator. It is actually a bit dangerous to be in a thatched hut during the storm, but the unusual experience is so intense, one can only be in awe. The next morning the weather was clear, like nothing had happened, with only damp ground to tell the story.

“...the thunder claps as if there are gods in the sky wanting our attention...”



Well Testing Becoming a #1 Priority

We have been looking into the **microscopic world of bacteria**, etc. with this incredible water testing kit Whitney ordered. The Aquagenix CBT EC+TC MPN simultaneously detects and quantifies E.Coli and total coliforms.

There are only 25 tests available so we are gingerly using them. The tests are giving us an inside view into the wells that are in the area. Whether they are bore holes, cemented wells like we

build, closed wells with a cistern like Cosmas has, or for instance, a hand pump style. Its too early to make recommendations or get the full picture, but we can see from these tests, that many wells can easily get contaminated through the dust or manure flakes in the air, the dirt on a bucket, the hands on the chain, stagnant water from lack of use, etc. This is giving us a chance to take a closer look and see what local officials are doing since Zimbabwe also has a program to bring safe water to everyone. Stay tuned for more to come!

L. side (blue) shows E. coli and r. side shows clear after treating with special UV light for just minutes!



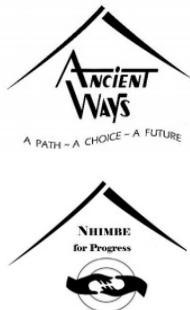
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A Child's Life is the Path



Who Are We? And, How Do We Work?

Ancient Ways was founded in 1993 by Jaiien Beck in Lacombe OR, established as a non-profit in 1994, receiving charitable tax status in 1996. Over the last 25 years we have worked to preserve the life-giving traditions of indigenous peoples, with a focus on their music, art and healing practices.

Nhimbe for Progress was started in 1999 by Jaiien and Cosmas Magaya, established as a Trust in 2010. Over the last 20 years, overcoming all obstacles presented by economic hardships and volatile political policies, we have developed an infrastructure for success, continuity, and permanence. In 2013, Patricia Nyamande Magaya joined the Nhimbe team as a co-director, providing the gifts and talents to assure efficacy and detail business management of our growing programs and services, also managing solo the Mhandara Monthly Care program. Nhimbe focuses on uplifting the rural residents' sub-standard living conditions to better assure preservation of Shona heritage.

Photo Credits Jessica Sienkiewicz

One More Electricity Challenge...

Winfida has been working on her order for 23 purses! Thank you very much for your participation in making that happen! She has been used to the rolling blackouts, which were the norm for years, as well as the recent 10 pm lights on, so working into the night to do sewing was commonplace. But, the latest chapter is absolutely no electricity at all for 3 weeks. Apparently thieves stole the oil out of the transformer serving her area, but actually many other places are also out. She has borrowed a treadle during this outage, so your purses will be ready!

She is also one of the MMC team to

manufacture the washable re-useable monthly care supplies. Excitement about the MMC program was almost the second words out of her mouth when we arrived. She had not yet told me that she had been saving every penny she could from the MMC work for the last 2 years, and 6 weeks ago managed to upgrade her sewing machine to get a higher quality industrial grade machine to handle the jobs. Then just 2 weeks ago she was able to buy an overlocking machine (stitching to prevent fraying), so it reduced our team to 3 people, since the 4th was an overlocking station in another township. She was running over there to complete the pads.

Makorokoto "congratulations" to Wini for her hard work and saving so well! She lives in a poor suburb and struggles with the constant economic changes, so this has been an incredible help to her and the family she is raising. She is a 60-something widow with children, and also raises her late sister's children. I've never seen a Shona woman that isn't a hard worker! She is a prime example.

Thanks again for the purse orders and supporting our MMC program! (I just found out that she made our beautiful purses closer to 18"x18" instead of 11"x11" so I will be reaching out to the buyers to see what they think! Slight error from just using Whatsapp!)

But Solar in the Villages, Save the Day!

Many thanks for the many financial and product donations just before we left—all of the Amazon Smile Charity List items received were able to get into suitcases. Among the list were sewing needles, alphabet cards, embroidery totes, GloGerm supplies, a car inverter and a solar panel. We also

received a large and powerful solar charging station. It has also kicked up our power here in the villages. We have multiple laptops, phones and cameras working like horses. They all need juice! And we are pulling it out of the sun except when there is none. With Patricia able to charge laptops using

her generator as well, we are almost on top of the game. It's a continual effort to be frugal and maximize our electric time. Going into the city we can use the car inverter to charge laptops and that also is an amazing tool! Thank you all for your support!