

DRU'S VIEWS

Thirty-first Edition – November 2010

Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them. Mark 6:34

Lifesong School

When we have guests come to Lifesong School, we take them to visit our children's families in their homes. It is always a very moving experience to see the destitute environment in which our children live and to hear the stories of the hardships the families face. We ask one of the guests to pray for the family after asking what requests they have. Often, their requests are spiritual rather than material, which surprises many. It is a very moving and emotional experience for those who are seeing real poverty for the first time. In fact, as much time as I have spent in the shanty compound myself, I never leave without a sense of compassion and wonder. The tears are very near the surface.



And yet, midst the despair there is always hope. Charity Katongo, 11 years old, is in the 4th grade at Lifesong School. She is the youngest of nine children. Her parents live in the bush; they burn wood to make charcoal to sell, but it is never enough income. So three years ago, they sent Charity to live in the compound with her sister, who is married with two children. Charity started attending Lifesong School two years ago. When she is able, she goes to visit her parents; seeing how they struggle to survive has motivated her to work hard in school. This year she has moved from 12th place in her class at the end of the first term to 7th place at the end of the second. She aspires to eventually move up to 1st place! She is in a class of 16 boys and only 4 girls, but she says she sees girls as equal to boys and is not afraid to excel over them. Her favorite subject is mathematics, and she likes playing basketball and soccer. She says she doesn't like insults, fighting and bad language! Her role model is our school nurse, Cristobel, who has inspired her to become a nurse someday. Her wish is for Lifesong to continue helping her achieve her goals.

During October, two of our children, Ezron and Veronica Chiweza, lost their home to a fire. The family stayed with relatives and friends. Our staff rallied and contributed from their own meager resources to purchase food and other supplies; Lifesong School donated blankets and clothing. One of our garden workers, Leah, who is taking care of several orphans, took Ezron to stay at her home. Her nephew Alan, one of our students, gave Ezron some clothing from his own few things. Lifesong is a compassionate community emulating the early church where each one shared from what they had.

Sometimes the poverty is hidden so the world doesn't see. Lifesong management learned by accident of siblings of two of our students. Davison's brother, age 17, sustained a spinal injury in a diving accident two years ago. He is paralyzed from the neck down and has not been able to leave his home. When we learned about this case, Nurse Cristobel went to check on him and discovered he had huge bed sores. She showed his parents how to treat the sores and how to help prevent them. We also learned about Annie Lengwe's little brother, 7-year-old Shati, who has what appears to be cerebral palsy. Their father died last year, and the mother is sick and dying. Their grandmother is left with caring for everyone, and Annie often misses school because her help is needed at home. In September, we were able to present both of these boys with wheelchairs that were provided by the Kitwe Rotary. They were sent by a Rotary Club in Lincolnshire, UK—an international act of compassion!



Update on William

William's cast was removed from his right foot the end of October; however, since he was experiencing some pain in the foot and leg, it was replaced for another month. He returns to Lusaka on November 30 for review. I was able to visit him at home this week and give him a set of little toy metal cars. His mother said that just that morning he had been making toy cars from clay. We used the cars to teach him colors—red, orange, and blue. The little gray car looked like "Auntie Dru's car"—which seemed to delight him. His mother says he is now free from pain; hopefully in December he will be given permission to start trying to walk on his "new feet." He was wearing a cowboy boot on his left foot, donated by Lifesong.

"My Children"

Daudi was dismissed from school early due to continuing health problems. He is having trouble with his vision and is being treated at the Kitwe Hospital Eye Ward. He is also having headaches due to internal head injuries from the automobile accident in Lusaka last year. He arrived at home and discovered his father has been gone since May and had not paid the rent. Fortunately, the landlord was understanding and let him stay. Your donations have paid both Daudi's hospital bills and the rent so that he has a roof over his head.

Kafuti has been accepted into the Electrical Crafts course at Luanshya Technical College starting in January. We are still waiting to hear from Northern Technical College, our first choice. When I last checked in September, they still had not made selections due to low enrollment numbers. In the meantime, he has been asking a lot of questions about what college life will be like—and has told me he won't have time for fun and games!

Life at Kafakumba

The Bauson family – Bill, Cassie, and their sons Peter and Keith—have arrived from Indiana as well as Sid and Ellen Benson from Seattle. They will all be my neighbors as soon as their houses are completed. It will be exciting to have a little community around me—I've felt a bit isolated. We are planning a Thanksgiving potluck, and I was lucky enough to find turkeys. They will go nicely with the cake I'll bake with Libby's pumpkin and cranberry sauce I brought back in my suitcase.

The Twikatani women continue to meet twice a week for sewing lessons, literacy training and bible study. Just before I left they were learning to make skirts – with pockets! Some have now advanced to making long-sleeved shirts. If they can learn to make school uniforms, they will have a good business. Some of the ladies have started knitting stocking caps with ear flaps. While I was in the U.S. I sold 20 placemats they made for donations, and brought back \$100 to give them, which they will use to purchase more materials and supplies. They have also earned some income by cleaning the new house and property that the Bensons will be moving into soon. We listened to them working today—singing and laughing and having a wonderful time together.

My Time at "Home"



As always, my time in the U.S. went too quickly. I'm afraid I missed seeing many of the people I love and didn't get out of Central Illinois. I had to pass up a chance to speak in Thunder Bay, Ontario, because my calendar was already booked up. I gave over a dozen presentations—3 in one day—including classes at Bradley University. I drove over 2,500 miles. I also was able to meet with some donors and potential volunteers and attended the wedding of my beautiful granddaughter, Jessica. What a thrill that was. (I was thinking, in 9 months I could be a GREATGRANDMA! Not sure I'm ready for that!) I also enjoyed special times with my Bear Buddy, Rai'Dyon, and his sister, Syi'Eria—my how they've grown!

I always seem to have to adapt to my own culture after being away. This time I noticed several things that would be shocking to a Zambian experiencing America for the first time: automatic doors, good roads, gigantic superstores open 24 – 7, elaborate churches with padded pews, pipe organs, full bands, state-of-the-art audio/visual systems, etc. However, one of the most distressing things would be the grotesque Halloween decorations in people's yards. Americans might think of them as "fun" or just pretend, but for an African ghosts, witches and "zombies" are very real and not something to joke about. They would be terrified. I wonder how we've become so de-sensitized and place so much emphasis on such horrific things.

Sneak Peaks

- While walking through the compound to visit William, I learned that I have been given a name by the neighbor children—I'm "William's Auntie Dru."
- Where there is poverty, there is no waste—the other morning I saw women picking up corn that had been spilled by the roadside during a traffic accident.
- One day, 6-year-old Webby asked me to take his picture; his twin brother, Richard, told me they would "pay" me "tomorrow."

Prayer Requests

- For Lifesong School management, staff, children and families that everyone will stay well, that children will excel in their exams and we will continue to be able to lead them to Christ while meeting their physical and academic needs.
- For the construction work at Kafakumba—that workers might be injury free and the enterprises will build the community.
- For Kafuti, that he will be able to pursue his education in the best way possible. And for the other kids that they will continue to do well in their studies.
- Personal for me—for discernment, patience and tolerance—I'm praying each morning that God will make me "a holy woman today." Also for my daughter and her fiancé—for work and peace.

And please pray for compassion in our world – that we will stop being suspicious and fearful of those who are different—and just love them as Christ loves us all.

In His service,

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