

**Subject:** Snapshots of Zimbabwe... An update from the VOH

Like looking through the pages of a picture book, snapshots of our life freeze moments in time. Pages of pictures together begin to weave a story, to tell others not in the picture, what was, what is. No matter what we say in a newsletter, the story of Zimbabwe today and the Village of Hope can't be told effectively without looking at pictures. We pray you are blessed as you look through our 'picture book' of the last 2 months.....



**SNAPSHOT #1** - The teachers of CHAPS have taken a moment to walk up from the school on their lunch hour. There is great happiness and hugs and laughter as they gather in the Village of Hope administration office to congratulate us on the news that we have just received a one year work permit! When others are being denied, God has again 'made a way where there seems to be none'. The relief, the answered prayers, the joy of the moment are clear in the smiles on the faces. God is being praised!

**SNAPSHOT #2** - A 3 year old girl with a runny nose sits on the concrete edge of a straw roof rondovel. Nyasha is covered from nose to knee in chicken grease and relishing even the juice that has fallen between her fingers. Visiting this rural orphanage, an hour west of Harare and the Village of Hope, we are blessed to watch the quietness and intensity with which all the children eat the meal we have brought. This is the first meat they have had in 4 months! Their food supplies are low and one third of their preschool class is no longer attending for the hunger and faintness that has taken their energy, their ability to make it through the day. This 3 year old with big eyes, and dark curly hair knows the meaning once again, of a full tummy, for the first time in a very long time.

**SNAPSHOT #3** - Takudzwa (pictured left) bows his head and leads out in prayer in a Sunday School class where 21 other students have gathered. His prayers are reverent and powerful. Just 3 years ago this young boy had trouble with authority, especially with women. He was failing in school and cared little about others. But today and under the watchful eye and

powerful prayers of his house mother at the Village of Hope, he is top of his class, speaks respectfully to adults, women included, and today prayers for even me as I endeavour to teach 9-12 year olds, stories of the Bible.

**SNAPSHOT #4** - In the middle of a high density suburb, where block houses the size of a Canadian bedroom, sit so close together you can reach out and touch the next, Mavis is curled up in a ball, sleeping soundly on a bunched up and moth eaten blanket on a dirt floor. She has had nothing to eat in 3 days. She is parched from the lack of water. For the cholera outbreaks from the unsafe water supply, water has virtually been shut off to the neighbourhood. Her aunt and herself are too weak now to go looking for firewood to boil what water they gather from a well 2 km. away. She has been sent home from school for failure to pay fees. She has nothing to do, and is too exhausted to even forage. After all there is nothing to forage - the neighbours have less than they have. And so instead she succumbs to the numbness and forgets the pain for a while, in a sweet dream.



**SNAPSHOT #5** - A team has arrived from Canada. Despite the travel warnings, despite the advice not to go, they have taken a leap of faith! For years they have poured into the lives of the children at the Village of Hope. Community members have taken some children on sponsorship to provide for food and an education, the team has assisted with building our expanding primary school, with teaching english, with decorating the children's homes. And now on this final day of work at the Village of Hope, before they return to Canada, the children of C.H.A.P.S. have gathered with the team for a school picture with the new school caps the team has blessed them with (picture left)! What an awesome site! The children are giggling and happy as they show off this new part of their uniform.

**SNAPSHOT #6** - A mother collapses with deep heartfelt wailing. Her only daughter is dead. She is left with two sons. Not even her husband is alive to share her grief. Her teenage daughter, distraught from the oppressive conditions of Zimbabwe today, left a short scrawled note that she couldn't take it anymore. She killed herself. Tired of the lack of fuel and finances that kept her from her friends, tired of the hungry nights they had surviving on one income and not

being able to find basic food items, tired of having no way out - no passport to travel with - no skill to use yet in another country, seeing no hope for her future, she took her own life. This scene is becoming too common in the depression that can surround one without a job, without food, without school fees and so separated from friendships. The feeling of isolation as each person retreats into themselves and adopts a survival mode that is becoming the only way to make it through another day.

We pray you see the contrast in the snapshots above, the picture of HOPE that God has allowed at the Village, though the scenes outside the gate are quite different!

At the Village of Hope in the past two months, we have...

- continued construction of 4 new children's homes. Roofs are on. Plastering, electrical and plumbing are now being worked on inside each home.

- started pouring concrete on the second storey floor of the double storey school block (pictures right between & beyond the current school blocks for grades 1-6)!

- entertained a team who came despite the travel warnings. Who took a step of faith and were blessed as much as they blessed us.



- unveiled and trained all staff on the new Child Protection Policy - keeping all children that enter the grounds of the Village of Hope safe from mistreatment and disrespect.
- met several times to decide on another almost 70 children who will be sponsored through Child CARE Plus and educated at CHAPS in 2009! Their profiles are now being prepared to transfer to Canada.
- received a year long work permit! We can now breathe easy without trips to Immigration, until August 25, 2009!!
- taken on another 4 children into our children's homes. We are registered with the gov't for 24 children, and are now at 21 residents! How exciting to see the changes in their lives in a few short weeks.
- held a CCP parents seminar - taking on topics such as 'protecting our children', HIV/AIDS, and basic first aid.
- watched proudly as 9 of our CCP children and 4 staff members (out of 30 people total) were baptized in our backyard pool - both resident and community children. We are INDEED seeing the fruit of our labours! God be praised!
- decided on a remedial class for 2009 - to assist our students who are struggling with the background they have had at low level government schools.
- been interviewed and published in the PAOC's (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) TESTIMONY magazine (Sep 08), on C.H.A.P.S. (Cornelius Hope Academy Primary School).

### **Prayer requests /**

- for continued peace in the nation of Zimbabwe
- for relief from the economic hardships. That even staple foods would become available!
- for Godly spirit filled house moms.
- that God would continue to 'make a way where there seems to be none'!
- for an answer to the overcrowding at Hope Community Church on a Sunday. Our numbers are increasing, our mean age is decreasing and we are packed out!
- for our new youth and children's Pastor - Pastor Denver - that he might fulfill God's plan for the young ones at the Village of Hope and Hope community Church. He has a HUGE task ahead of him.
- for the health of our workers as we have had a terrible stomach cramps and diarrhea running through everyone, old and young. The recent heat wave has not helped the situation.

Thank you for praying for our work permits! God heard! Thank you for being a part of what God is doing in our corner of Zimbabwe!

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'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.' Isaiah 43:19

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