

Update #11

Saturday May 20
Field Trip

The VOH has 9 children's homes, each of which can have up to 9 children. However, the government currently has an initiative to reunite these vulnerable children with some relative - an aunt, a sibling, or a grandparent for example. As a result many faces that would be familiar to past team members are no longer at VOH. House 1 has been converted to a Resource Centre where special events can be held, and children can receive homework help from the interns on attachment to VOH. Two of the houses are empty, and the remaining 6 houses are staffed by the 8 mothers. The "spare" mothers fill in when someone has a day off, or if someone needs to be away for some reason.

For the approximately 50 children who live here, their world is contained within the walls of VOH. This 20 hectare property contains their homes, their school, their church and a medical clinic. Everything the children need is on the property so they never have to leave. While that may sound wonderful to us, the children aren't always quite as impressed with it. Seeing and doing the same thing every day gets BORING after a while! And summer holidays are particularly long as they don't even get to visit with their friends from school - the children from VOH rarely leave the property.

Today we had a chance to change that, as we took the children and mothers to Longcheng Amusement Park. Many children didn't sleep last night because they were SOOOO excited about the trip! We saw children waiting at the VOH gates at 5 AM, when the bus wasn't scheduled to leave until 8 AM! They arrived at the park but had to wait 30 minutes before the gates opened there. Once they had their tickets, they raced through the gates ... only to find that there was no electricity and the rides didn't work! It is not uncommon for the electricity to be off in Zimbabwe, but this was particularly unfortunate timing. They made do with trampolines, slides, swings and a wading pool as they waited. Eventually, the park started up their generators, and the children ran to the rides - the swinging Pirate Ship, the Rocket, and other typical amusement park rides. The look of fear on their faces as they waited for the ride to start, and then their squeals (of delight? of fear?) as the ride progressed, were such a joy for us to hear. The mothers were able to relax and watch their young charges be typical kids. We were an average family out for a day at the park - if a family of 60 people can be considered normal!

We were so happy to be able to provide this day for the families. We're pretty sure that they will be telling stories about this day for quite some time. And we're also pretty sure that the kids will sleep VERY well tonight!





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Audrey Bos