

Update #9

Thursday May 18

The Children

The children here are the lifeblood at VOH. It seems like everything we are doing is either WITH the children or FOR the children. Today I would like to highlight two activities with the children which have brought us great joy this past week.

1. Gifts for Sponsor Children

Through Child Care Plus (CCP), child sponsorship provides money for school fees, medical needs, and access to the community nutrition program. When we travel with Mission Zimbabwe, we also offer the supporters at home a chance to send a flat package and a small amount of money for their child. While this sometimes makes packing difficult (apparently "flat" is a relative word for some people!) the joy we feel while giving out these gifts makes it all worthwhile. With over 60 gifts to give out, we are only approximately 75% of the way through the distribution at this point. Students who attend the schools at VOH simply stay after the school day ends, but we also support children at 3 other schools (Beta Bricks, Kuwadzana, and Star Learning Centre). These students have to make their way to VOH, which may involve ride-sharing, using public transportation or walking. A parent often accompanies them. After having their picture taken, and having a chat with one of the team members, each student then writes a thankyou letter to their sponsor. At this point they usually head home - but today, one girl from Kuwadzana stayed a bit longer. After receiving her gift, she presented US with 12 cobs of corn from her family's garden! Knowing the living conditions in the community, this was an incredible gift, and we were honoured to receive it. Through the influence of parents, and caring teachers and social workers, these children are learning so much more than school content. But providing sponsorship is an integral part of making this possible. Thank YOU!

2. Dinners in the Childrens Homes

We have the opportunity to have dinner with the children in their homes at VOH on four different nights while we are here. Each night we visit 3 of the homes, with our team split into groups. Every experience is unique because every family is unique - and they are truly a family in each home! We get to talk with them about their day at school, discuss future plans, and play games with them. The children often help prepare the meal as part of their assigned chores, and one group was served a restaurant quality meal prepared by one of the older boys. We pray that this talented Grade 10 boy is able to make his way to a culinary program after secondary school. After the meal, the children often take time to share their talents with us. One group had the opportunity to hear a short "sermon" presented by one of the children. Another group was "questioned" by a future lawyer. And it is no surprise that all of us have been blessed to hear amazing music in each home. We are so thankful to be a part of these families for a short time, and thank all of the amazing mothers for providing a loving home where these children can develop their God-given talents!

