

MISSION TEAM REPORT MAY – JUNE, 2023

The team was met at the Lilongwe airport by Shadreck and Yami Chikoti. Shadreck met the team on the plane side of immigration. With the help of a 'fixer' from the immigration department, all 8 passports were priority processed, and we were through in quick time. All 24 pieces of luggage arrived without damage. Each member traveled to Malawi with 3 pieces instead of the usual 2 because Golden Rule Travel has an agreement with Ethiopian Airlines for humanitarian travel. A special word of thanks to Dan Shupp of First English Lutheran in Mansfield who once again arranged for the manufacture of 15 custom boxes from his employer Mr. Box.

On Day One the team traveled from Lilongwe to the farm and the rescue center site in Mchinji district. The two pieces of land are remarkably close to one another. The rainy season was especially long, so that the anticipated irrigation work at the farm has yet to begin. It will be started soon. Team members better understand the use and potential of the farm, and the vision of the rescue center. Sweet potatoes are being interplanted among the rows of banana trees. They are raising the blue gum seedlings from seeds that they collect at the farm, instead of purchasing them. It was a long day well spent.

On Day Two the team traveled to Salima to drop their luggage, then went to the project for a wonderful welcome. The volunteers have cleared a small garden area at the top of the slope where the proposed irrigated garden would go, to the west and down-slope of the skills building. They envision watering it with water that 'spills' from the top of the water tank when it is full. There is not an automatic float cut-off in the tank, so water streams out of a pipe to alert them to turn off the pump. A possible need is to collect that water and transport it across the compound to the garden. They envision a trench. Perhaps a better idea is buried PVC pipe.

Days Three, Four, and Six through Eight were the primary teaching and program days. The lessons and teachings were adaptations of sessions first used in 2016. They do not have a usable football pitch at the project, so the football portion was done at the north end of the compound, near the cross. The smaller children were closer to the skills center, or in the center. All of the children gathered each day for the puppets and teachings in the skills center.

The development of the children through their involvement at the center continues to shine. Older boys and girls serve the younger ones their meals. The olders help with crowd control. Precious acted as a third interpreter, and did very well. All of the university boys were present for at least some of the time. Blessings traveled to spend his Saturday at the project while we were there. All of the others were there for all of the days.

We visited the Salima District Hospital early one morning. The nurse on our team donated supplies, and was given a quick tour through the facility. It was our first visit in many years. The facility is not getting any better.

800 string bags were distributed to children of all ages. Solar Calculators were given to high schoolers. Flannel and other supplies were given to Kanyenyeva Wala. Sketchers shoes were given to the women, along with scarves and blouses. Mr. Willard was resplendent in new shoes and sport coat. Soccer Balls, jump ropes, books, and some clothing were given to the children.

The large swing set is in need of repair. The connections for the swings have worn away to the point that only one swing is serviceable, and that just barely. Repairs were MacGyvered, but won't last very long.

The team traveled to Mvuu Camp in Liwonde National Park for one overnight. The paved roads are becoming less and less serviceable, more and more potholed and dangerous. The condition of the roads might impact any future teams making that trip.

We worshiped our first Sunday at the Full Gospel Church a stone's throw from the project. There were 50 people attending. The elder who greeted us was a young man who grew up in the project! Seeds of faith are being planted and are bearing fruit!

Our second Sunday was spent at the church of KM board member Abusa Blessings Chikakula. We were very blessed to be able to spend that time with his congregation, which is in the countryside north of Lilongwe, not near to the project at all. It is a good thing to have a pastor on the KM board once again. Hopefully that congregation can enter into ministry partnership as well.

Pastor Deborah Domeier from First Lutheran in Paxton, IL was captured by the entire project, especially the university boys. She is single, and has committed to provide a scholarship for Christopher's education throughout his four years of university!

The land that is adjacent to the project to the west is available for purchase. The family that owns it has approached KM to offer it. The conversation is in the very beginning stages, so no price figure has been mentioned. It is the land that the well purchases were made from.