

Mission Team Report – July 2024

The mission team from Millersport Methodist Church included Pastor Jim Condrey, Cyndi Condrey, Penny and Ken Ekegren, Karen Taylor and June Primmer. We flew through Nairobi and were so efficient that we beat our luggage to Lilongwe by one day. All luggage and six plastic tubs with Days for Girls material, die cutter, knit hats, solar lanterns and miscellaneous water bags were collected by Shadreck and brought to Salima.

We had dinner with the KM board and had good discussions about the status of our organizations. Harold Chuidza, Chairman of KM was there along with Blessings Chikakula and his wife and Board Member Ndidza Chisanu.

Our first full day consisted of purchasing fabric for school uniforms and then traveling to Salima and enjoying a welcoming ceremony.

We traveled to Liwonde National Park during the weekend. The Shire River has been very high which eliminated the previous dock for the boat ride to Mvuu Lodge. We drove to Hippo View Lodge and took a boat from there. The round-trip cost of the boat was \$60 USD. As the boat ride allowed us to see hippos, elephants and crocs, we chose to take an afternoon (and evening) land safari tour and then a morning safari land drive prior to traveling back to Hippo View Lodge.

The weekdays were spent at Kanyenyeva. VBS was led by Cyndi and Pastor Jim Condrey on three days. Tuesday and Thursday were spent sizing and distributing 600 of the 700 pairs of Shoes that Grow. We ran out of Large and XL shoes and are working on raising funds for another order of 90 shoes. The teens and college students joined some of the women to show each child how the shoes fit and how they can grow. Each day, approximately 800 children received lunches.

During the week, the Days for Girls team cut (without patterns) and sewed 65 shirts for the 1st through 3rd graders. They will continue making shirts for the rest of the students.

We toured the new chicken business that was built adjacent to the kitchen. They recently created a bamboo fence to contain the chickens – some were being taken by neighbors when they were freely walking around. We expressed our concern that the business will need a manager that can concentrate on the business to improve its productivity. There are funds set aside to grow the number of chickens, but new young chickens were not old enough to purchase yet.

We watched the new maize mill in action. The committee indicated that the mill is open 8-5, six days per week and stays busy. During our stay, they were only milling maize for the feeding program, I believe because of the noise that the diesel engine creates at the project.

The Skill Center now has plumbing and a toilet in the back, However, it still have some leaking issues that need to be addressed. Also, the solar system will get another panel and two additional batteries to better serve the well pump.

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On the final day, 36 solar lanterns were distributed to the committee along with hats that Penny knitted during the past year. The college students also built two new benches and repaired a third. Chintengo was commissioned to build three more rocket stoves, two new large rings for the main stoves and a larger stove to be placed inside the barrel stove that the College Now students built five years ago. It is hoped that the larger stove inset will provide sufficient heat for that stove to cook beans instead of relying on a three stone fire.

We visited the farm and rescue center land on our last full day in Malawi. The blue gum trees and banana trees number about 1500 each, with another 1500 blue gum saplings being nurtured for future planting. The main tilled area will be beans this year and the plan is to work with the government to plant about 25 acres of rice in an unused adjacent area of the farm. The deep bore well for the irrigation system has been installed, but the well pump, tank and all piping will be installed when the contractor makes his way back towards the city. It is expected that the irrigation project will be installed before the end of the year.

We walked the perimeter of the Rescue Center property, about 25 acres. The desire is to build a wall to prevent neighbors from planting crops on the property. This area is well off the beaten path and the road to it will have to be repaired – we had to drive between village houses to access the property. Both KM and MOCP members have pledged to find grant funding to make the Rescue Center a reality.

On our last night, a financial review was performed by Ken Ekegren, Yami and Shadreck Chikoti. The month of August that included educational funds was inspected. General discussions on the status of KM yielded the following information:

- They expect to have a chicken business manager by the end of the year.
- About 50% of the farm is now being used.
- Financial ledgers for both the chicken and mill businesses will be created for 2025.
- There is still a need for a vehicle for KM. Although a van was mentioned, it appears that increased visits to the farm would be better handled with an SUV.
- The soap business is now independent and new workers are being trained.
- Training is also happening for new sewers at Days for Girls.
- The farm and Rescue Center will be the focus for KM in the future. KM wants to hold the feeding program numbers to the approximately 800 that exist now.