

Well, that is one week gone by. And while it seems to have gone quick... there has just been so many things going on.

- From when we got here until Wed morning the boys from St. Andrews in South Africa doing some mission work (in which we joined them in many of their things)
- An American couple on Tuesday and Wednesday, who have been doing work for several years in Cape Town, visited some Zimbabwe projects before returning to the States.
- A local youth conference that run through Friday and Saturday. Part of the conference seen the youths get involved in projects. So on Saturday afternoon we joined one group of about 15 youths attending one of the orphanages we had visited earlier in the week.

Apart from these we have caught up with most of the orphanages and homes that we visited last year. Catching up with people and trying to remember names (I'm not good at that).

So much for a regular post.. it is now Wednesday evening (your Thursday early morning in Aust.). We have found that we have not had as much free time as last trip, as we have been more involved in preparing our food this time. Where as last time we were a bit more hands off which gave us some breathing space. But we can not complain we have great people to work with.

We have been visiting one different orphanage in Harare this year. It is called Mt. Zion orphanage, and there are around 20 kids, ageing from around 3 to 14 years old. They seem well loved with a good group of helpers there, led by Pastor Grange, who is only a young married guy finishing his studies at night school. His wife and 18 month old child live some 30km away, however I think he stays most times at the orphanage, which must make it difficult. They are a great group of kids, but lack for basic things like new clean clothes and underwear (which Anne managed to bring a whole heap over new kids ones over). There orphanage has heaps of space to grow vegetables, and they look to be doing a good jobs of this (though their diet is limited), but their buildings need some work. I will only be able to do a small part of what is really needed. But as always the people are really thankful for any help. It is very hot at this place and there is not alot of shade the children are in the sun most of the day. We would love to find a fast growing tree to put into the playground that in future will offer some relief from the sun.

A special time heer was when Gayle brought along here guitar and played some Shona worship songs for the kids to sing with. It was a spontaneous but special time, a couple of the children used the end of the guitar case as a set of drums, they had the moves going. (move over Evan & Mike these boys could give you a run for your money).

Anne has been working with the children and house mother at Father's House orphanage today making hand prints so that she can put together a quilt with them all. Early next week we will present them with the quilt made from all the hand prints of the kids and children workers from back home at Mountain District Vineyard Church, along with a book of the MDVC kids and workers, along with pictures of those that donated towards Zim projects, particularly towards purchasing land to establish a permanent facility for Father's House. Anne has put some hard yards in putting curtains up at Father's from a pile of donated curtains. We keep going into the hardware stores to get more curtain runners and hooks. Last week we played cricket with the Father's House kids and many of the other kids that live around the area. Many of them just sat watching and laughing, but some got involved after a little encouragement.. which usually meant more laughter from the others. But when we had to go, most didn't want to finish up. While there today, I went out to greet

some of the kids in the street. I made the “mistake” of taking one of them for a walk on my feet. You know when a kid holds your hands, steps on your feet and you walk together. Well, then everybody wanted a go... all at once. I think I was mobbed by around ten kids for the next 15 minutes, I had them hanging on everywhere. They were climbing over each other to hang on. I nearly thought I’d lose my shorts at one stage. Since most of them knew very little English it was hard to reason with any of them. (*Lab guys, It was a bit like trying the purchase equipment through a government tender process*) I tried to sic some of them onto Tyler when he came out, but he ran back inside.... but in some way it was an awful lot of fun. (it was very funny, i have pictures to prove it) In this area they do not see a lot of white people, so to them it is a bit novel. As many of these kids are wearing what we would consider rags, and some things that we would only throw away after we had used them as rags... it is sad... but they still laugh and smile.

At St. Joseph’s Boys’ home, after cooking with them last week, Anne went out and bought them some new kitchen knives. Ones which actually can cut something. Mr Collins was happily slicing away when we went to visit this week.

Some of the boys expressed that they could do with some more area to be able to study, as their biggest concerns are that they do well at school, so we have taken on a project to possibly help with this. The home is really quite a large building, but many areas are full of junk. There was an old library, that still has lots of old books, but is also totally filled up with other things (not sure how much of it is junk). However the room is possibly too dark and small for an effective study room. So we have chosen a larger room with better natural lighting... but first to clean the junk, and useful items out first. Piles of broken bikes were moved and stacked neatly in a smaller storeroom. There were probably 5 working bikes among 30. Then around 8 disassembled beds were moved upstairs to the dorms, and we started assembling those for use. Tomorrow we are back there.. probably to finish assembling the beds, then back down to cleaning the future study room.

The babies at Danai are growing, some of them have started at kinder this year. It is good to see them growing strong and healthy and beginning to talk. We did some drawing with them on Monday. Total chaos. 10 kids all trying to get the crayons and paper at once, some trying to eat them. I needed more hands than I had- but they seemed to enjoy it. We spent some time playing on their very basic play equipment, which is in need of some repair. Glenn has been busy replacing bits of wood and bolts and concreting swings into the ground to make them safe.

We took the little ones for a walk around the block, one in each hand. They do not get out that much, so it was good to use the extra hands for this. They happily walked and sang as we wandered up the road. We did have to carry a few the last little bit. Simple pleasures that mean so much here. We have spent a bit of time playing cards with the older children when the babies are asleep. I have learnt to play “spoons” and “crazy eight” (a little like UNO). Tyler and Shakespeare seem to be keen to rematch. They get along very well.

The older children have all started back at school this week (well all the ones that have their fees paid for them). Poor Titch has finished kinder and is now waiting for a place at school. He may have to wait until next year, so he is home with the babies – Carmen (ACTS worker) will try and have some activities to do with him so that he does not fall behind or forget what he has already learnt.

Glenn has some more DIY work to do here but we need to wait for the ZESA (power) to be on.

On Friday we are off to Mature, some 3 to 4 hours drive away (probably on very ordinary roads) near the border of Mozambique, to visit some Hope for AIDS projects. The chap that heads this up, Caiphas, visited Australia earlier this year and asked that we visit when we were in Zim. So we are spending some of Friday and Saturday out there.

