

good news

NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITIES WITHOUT BORDERS



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Who Are We?

Communities Without Borders is an all-volunteer organization responding to the world AIDS crisis. We seek to facilitate linkages between communities at home with those in Zambia to generate mutual understanding and support. Specifically we are supporting the education of AIDS orphans. We learn about the challenges faced by communities with few resources and we are making a real difference. It is cooperative micro-development.

18 go to Zambia

This August 18 people from our US partners, nine youths and nine adults traveled to the communities we support near Lusaka, Zambia to meet and work with our Zambian partners. They received a very warm welcome in each community. The travelers brought books, clothing and shoes, but most importantly they showed that they care about these "neighbors" who have major challenges to face every day.

The teenage travelers enjoyed teaching the young children English, held the beautiful Zambian babies and played soccer with the youth. All the visitors worked to make their 18 days be meaningful. The adults and teens worked along side the people in the community to paint and build. Each person reported that they had a profound experience.

Visit to rural village

While all of our current Zambian partner communities are in recently crowded settlement compounds on the outskirts of the capital Lusaka, the travelers also made a trip to visit a rural village called Simukanka.

This was a different environment with small clusters of structures spread out along rugged roads. Many of the buildings used the traditional materials of mud bricks and thatch roofs.

The clusters typically contained a group of relatives and were much more isolated from health facilities and schools than the urban communities. The people in the village were also extraordinarily welcoming to the visitors.



Martin Emerson holds a Zambian baby on the August trip

Trip accomplishments

- Travelers taught children using ESL.
- Volunteers worked with Zambians to paint compound school building
- Constructed new latrine.
- Provided two new sewing machines and fabric.
- School evaluations, principal interviews.
- Met with local and national AIDS leaders
- Committed to fund teacher manuals.
- Distributed books, clothes & shoes.
- Provided water and sewer connection.
- Planned and funded new student shelter.

Next trip planning to start in January

Several people have indicated interest in joining a group that will be traveling back to Lusaka next summer. We learned many things from the first trip. The logistics were well worked out and nobody had anything other than minor illnesses. With preparations starting earlier we can assure another successful trip. We were fortunate this trip to have an excellent balance of people who were extremely motivated, flexible and with a variety of skills. On the next trip we may be selective to be sure to get that balance.

Our Partners

African Organizations in Lusaka, Zambia

- Society for Women and AIDS Zambia
- Zambia Nsunga Communities Without Borders
- Chipego Women of Hope

Partner Communities

- Bauleni Community
- Chawama Community
- Garden Community
- Linda Community
- Mandevu Community
- N'Gombe Community
- Simukanka Village

USA Partner Communities

- Brockton Neighborhood Health Center
- Concord Academy,
- First Baptist Church, Lexington
- First Parish Unitarian Church, Lexington
- First Unitarian Society of Newton
- Watertown Harvard Vanguard Health Center

USA Partner Activities

Newton: Sunday service

The youth/adult travelers presented the significance of their visit to Zambia at a Sunday service to the First Unitarian Society in Newton (FUSN). This congregation is now in its fourth year of building a relationship with the Chawama community.

The travelers told stories of wonderful relationships they established with the people in Zambia. Many spoke of their initial concern that the trip might not make a meaningful difference to our Zambian partners. But, it was clear that both the visitors and our hosts in Zambia were uplifted by the experience. Judy Friedman, a lay minister at FUSN said: "I had a deeply moving time in Zambia----in truth it was one of the most amazing experiences of my whole life!" She emphasized "the unceasing spirit of the Zambian people". Sharon Ellis, a former peace corps volunteer from FUSN who worked with everyone on the ESL teaching program during the trip, said: "The Zambian people are perhaps the warmest . . . people in southern Africa".

Lexington: fund school building & travelers paint it

First Baptist Church in Lexington has been very supportive of the Garden Community. This past year, the Garden Community lost the building where the children in the community were being fed and schooled. When a new building suddenly became available this past spring, First Baptist donated the \$3000 necessary to buy the building.

In August five members of First Parish Lexington Unitarian Universalist Church and other travelers spent time painting and repairing the building. First Parish also donated \$500 to the Chihego Women of Hope for teacher manuals.

Last spring, First Parish Lexington completed its second annual fund raising in support of Communities Without Borders. First Parish again raised more than \$10,000. Now First Parish is supporting two additional communities – Garden and Linda Compound – as well as its original, Ng'ombe.

More than 50 members of the congregation recently attended a program where the travelers shared experiences and pictures of their travels. Rodney Lowe said: "We were greeted by 30 teachers and children singing and welcoming us in the friendliest manner."



Some of our 18 travelers with the Chihego Women of Hope

US partners needed

The travelers met with several well organized women's groups who are taking care of AIDS orphans who live in their community. The visitors saw first hand how important it is to have additional US partner communities to support these communities. Without support the children who have lost their parents from AIDS will not be able to go to school.

Contact us

Could one of the communities in which you live or work be linked to a community in Africa? Please send us an e-mail and we will help to make it happen! We will come to meet with your group. We invite your creative thinking on how to make this project even better! *Call:* 617 965-4713

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Zambian students

