

Malawi Visions Monthly Newsletter March 2020



Happy girls at Khwamba

During this time of COVID-19 turmoil and social isolation, the Malawi Visions Team is continuing to support our orphan children in Malawi by conducting preparation work individually at home, and monitoring and praying for the developing crisis in that poorest of countries. We hope you will be encouraged by the activities about which you will read this month. We also have an exciting autobiography by Innocent, a young man growing up in a rural village whom we have watched, through MoH support, become a teacher! This month we have broken our rule of a 4 page newsletter to keep you up-to-date on exciting home and Malawian activities to bring hope despite the worlds crisis.

We seek your prayers and encouragement more now than ever.

Paul

COVID-19 Situation in Malawi

1. No reported cases yet, but test kits are not available hence data is questionable.
2. Detected cases in neighboring countries: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya
3. All commercial international flights in/out of Malawi will cease April 1.
4. No public gatherings of 100 or more. Including church services.
5. MoH ceasing daily feedings and center operations until further notice.
6. Malawi Visions will likely not travel in September. A shipment is planned.

Battery Box Production Continues !



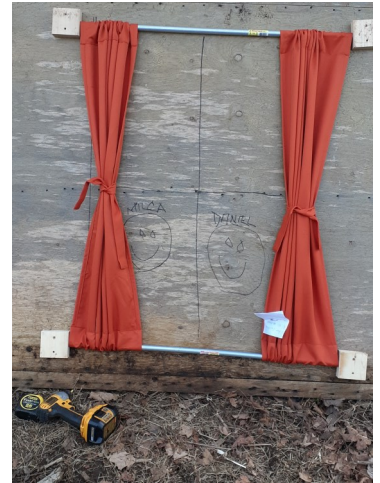
With restricted gathering restrictions here at home due to Covid19, traditional group production of battery boxes has not been possible. Nevertheless, recognizing the great demand for our carry-electricity-home boxes, Bob and Paul have produced 30 boxes to be ready for our next shipment. These will expand our “box” operations at Khwamba, and initiate a 2nd facility at Selengo village.

Curtains for our Learning Centers



Milca issued a call for curtains for the windows of our libraries and learning centers to keep out the blowing dirt during the 8 months of dry season, as well as to darken the rooms during video lessons, and provide security at night. Elizabeth created a design and we have

Testing curtain and hanger design



tested a simple, cost effective way to attach them using metal conduit. After mock ups, Andy, Carolyn, and Sue got busy painting the attachment blocks we fabricated from 2x4's, while Elizabeth began production of 24 curtain sets.



A happy painter!



Sewing Skirts (and Shorts)!

Elizabeth (at home) and Diane (COVID-travel delayed in Texas) have been busy continuing their skirts-for-girls projects. Already 130 skirts have been made! And this year, a new project has begun: creating shorts for the boys! Elizabeth reports 90 pairs of shorts have been completed!



Elizabeth in NJ



Diane in Texas



Girls excited with their new skirts at Matapila

2019

Carolyn's Book Corner



Our book collection this February started out strong with the collection of approximately 1,500 books. However, Covid-19 has suspended our efforts until further notice! In the meantime, our volunteers have sorted and boxed these books in hopes of being shipped in June. We are continuously awed by the beautiful books that we have received over the years. Our unexpected treasure for this year's coming shipment was enhanced by the opportunity to collect highly illustrated, Biblically based books from the World Impact School in Newark which sadly was closed last fall. 10 volunteers made 4 trips to Newark in October to collect, sort,

This year's books

and box several thousand suitable books, a windfall from God! We have an awesome book team of about 20 people who have faithfully participated each year! Where do the books go when being stored? . . . to Paul's farm of course where they will eventually be crated . Thank you one and all!!!

Last Year's Book Collection at World Impact School, Newark



Meet Innocent. Local School Teacher. and playwright



Innocent's play in 2013

I came to know Innocent in 2013, when he created and performed, with his friends Edward & Lines, a play at Khwamba to honor our Liberty Corner team. I kept track of Innocent over the years every time I came to Khwamba, and was excited to find in 2019 that he had graduated from college and was now a science teacher. Years ago I asked Innocent to write about growing up in a village in Malawi. He brought his story to Milca just the other day. Here is his "growing up" story:

MY VOICE OF THANKS TO MINISTRY OF HOPE (MOH)



A science teacher in 2020

Hello, my name is Innocent Damiton Njovu. I was born on August 24 in the year 1994. I was born in a family of six children, 4 girls and 2 boys. The six of us were brought up by a single parent, our mother because our dad ran away from my mum in 1996 when I was still young. My courageous mum stepped into the role of our dad and tried her best to provide us with basic needs in the home. My mother tells me that by the time my dad left, I was one year old.

When I started my primary school, I was performing very well despite my difficult situation at home. Even though I was doing well, people from the neighborhood used to scorn me. They were speaking discouraging words in my face saying that even though I was working hard in school, I could not go further with my education because

my mum could not afford to pay me fees in secondary school (since primary school is for free in Malawi). It was very difficult for me to respond to such comments because I was just a little boy by then. Instead, I was just feeling sorry for myself. Every time I was going to school, the demeaning words I had heard were always coming on my mind. My only motivation as I was continuing school was that I enjoyed learning new things at school. My performance started improving and I was earning good grades during examinations.

One day, my mum sat me down and encouraged me to work hard in school. She assured me that she would be able to pay my school fees when I got selected to go to secondary school. This was interesting for me to hear because I knew that she was struggling to bring food on the table and I could not see her supporting my school fees in any way. Later I learned that my mum was a woman of faith. She did not have to pay my fees at secondary school. MoH did that, but it was her encouragement that made me focus and achieve excellence in school. When I look back at that, I see how God worked out everything so well for me to get an education.

Seeing at how my family was struggling with life, a volunteer from MoH spotted us, as their focus was to work with orphans. With me, it was not clear whether my dad was dead or alive because he just left and nobody knew his whereabouts. Long at last, MoH accepted me and my siblings and we started attending their programs.

We started going to Khwamba center where we met Felix Khonje, the center supervisor. He warmly welcomed us and gave us a sense of family every time we were at the center. My hope for secondary school started to grow because I knew that if I were to be selected to go to secondary school, MoH would pay my school fees. At MoH, I received some basic needs like soap and school supplies. These are the very basic needs my mum couldn't provide me and this made my school life easier and motivated me.

In 2010, I sat for the national examinations and was selected to go to a community secondary school. Community secondary schools are under-resourced in Malawi and many students who go to such schools do not do well on national examinations. This displeased me because I could not see hope for a better future with this kind of school. I decided to repeat grade 8 with hope to get selected to a better secondary school the following year and so it happened. In 2011, I was selected and attended a national secondary school, where I achieved good grades.

In 2015, I applied for college and I was offered a place at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources where I studied science for a diploma in agriculture education.



Innocent & Edward in 2016

I always thank God for MoH. They stood with me from primary school to the time I finished my tertiary education. I don't take this for granted because I know that without their support, I would have dropped out from school. I saw people withdrawing from college because they had no money to continue with their education but through MoH, God was so good to me.

With MoH paying me fees, I resolved that my performance should be impressive and I worked extra hard. Otherwise that would have portrayed lack of appreciation to the organization paying my school fees and to God who gave me such an opportunity. After finishing my studies in December 2018, I found employment at Maranatha Private Secondary School as a teacher. Now I am able to support my family with the salary I get from my job, paying school fees for my little sister, something that would not be possible if I did not get an education.

I personally recognize Daniel Moyo who always work tirelessly for the better of us, especially me, because he could receive my complaints and understand me as a father. In him and through him, I have learned how to be humble, loving, hardworking and dedicated.

I am also thankful Felix Khonje who is our center supervisor at Khwamba. He is the man who always provide counsel, love and care to all of us up to the point when we are independent.

When I look back and remember the experiences I have had, I do not look back at my father and call him names (though it is painful to know that he did not take responsibility over me). Yes, it has been a painful experience but through it all, I have learned that God had a purpose for my life. He has taught me to believe in him despite the circumstances I pass through.

Over the years, I have just learned to be hardworking despite the challenges that may come my way. God has built me into a man of perseverance through the experiences I have had.



Innocent and Milca 2019

Through my hard work, I am convinced that I will go further with my education and that I will be able to support others passing through the experiences I have had. I am so delighted to see that a lot of children in my village are now going to school. I believe that it is only education that will help to transform my village because education is key to success. The village people going further with education will equip them to be able to deliver their families from the bondage of poverty.

My special acknowledgement should also go to Paul Sigmund and all our brothers and sisters from Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church in the United States who always put the welfare of people to heart by bringing several projects in our villages especially Khwamba. These projects have transformed our villages. A good example is the Light a Village project which has contributed to the good performance of children around Khwamba center. With the lights at the center, children are able to go for studies during the night, which has greatly helped improve their school performance. Again, the center library is making strides in the community because children have a chance to read books when they come back from school. Lastly, the computer school is making a huge difference to young people in the village because they are now able to acquire computer skills right in the village which is a strange thing in most village communities in Malawi. I'm a living testimony because I have been helped with the computer classes at Khwamba. For one to learn computer, you would go into the city to access a computer but many thanks for bringing this to the village. God bless you so much.



Visiting in 2015

The play Innocent created and performed in 2013 with Edward and Lines can be seen here:

<https://youtu.be/2woFx6jvRxc>

P.S. Sadly we learned Edward passed away this year, after graduating college.

Young Artists Exchange !

At LCPC

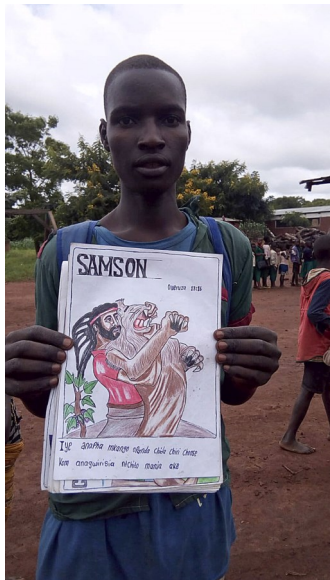


Looking at one of our Malawi calendars, our youth director Kelly noticed that the newly constructed classrooms and libraries had little decoration on the walls (except for a beautiful portrait of Jesus holding a lamb!). Seeking to involve our church youth in the Malawi Visions Ministry, Kelly and Ginny thought a fun project for our young people would be to create paintings for the walls of each library!



With over 25 students and teachers participating on a Sunday morning, pictures of trees were painted to represent the four seasons of the year, while photos and stories of Malawi's children were presented. With vibrant colors, their artwork is simple but elegant. A great deal of love went into this project and the students now have a better understanding of who we serve in the remote villages of Malawi, Africa. We hope next year's calendar will show these pictures

In Malawi



Milca introduced us to a talented young man at Katondo village, Boniface Mtuta, who is an amazing self taught artist of Bible stories. We are seeking to encourage and "support" this budding artist, to create posters for our libraries and learning centers.



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