

Malawi Visions Monthly Newsletter May 2020



College biology “classes” at Khwamba

This month’s newsletter is a special edition. We wish to highlight how the Malawi Visions libraries have become lifeline centers of activity to MoH’s children now that all Malawi schools and colleges are closed due to COVID 19

We are also excited to report that Teen Mentorship, fashioned after the New City Kids program, has begun!

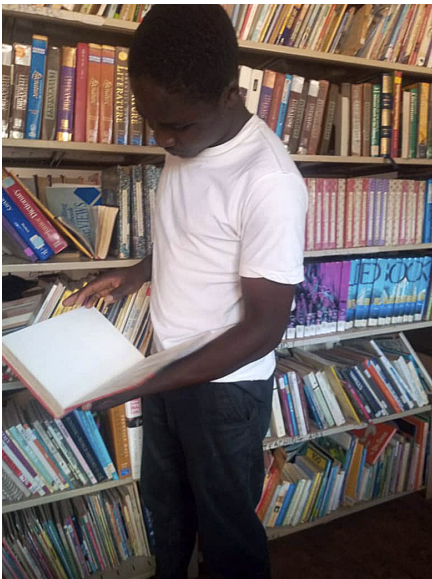
Finally, we begin including stories from the Crisis Nursery: a sometimes forgotten yet critical component of MoH’s operations.

Paul

Books and COVID-19

Days are long and life has changed in the Malawi villages. Government imposed restrictions, in response to the COVID19 pandemic, have indefinitely closed all schools in Malawi. Gathering in groups larger than 25 is forbidden. When the median age is 17, a major fraction of the country is idle! Ministry of Hope daily programs have been suspended, where many hundreds of children would normally come for a hot meal, encouragement, and group activities.

But within this environment, our six village libraries have suddenly taken on a preeminent role in the lives of Malawian children, young and old! Without school to occupy their time and minds, scores of them are flocking to the libraries where teens read to the younger ones. The older students themselves are discovering books to read and study as their newest pastime, and solace. Books have suddenly taken on new meaning and value! What seeds are being planted!



Milca, Daniel, and the site supervisors, have taken the libraries into centers of awareness and communication of preventative measures against the spread of COVID19. Washing hands with soap, social distancing, making and wearing masks, and cleaning the rooms and tables regularly,

are observed and demonstrated, and proper hygiene procedures are carried home to protect families and siblings within the communities.



Books and COVID19, continued

At Khwamba, our first learning center, informal mentorship programs meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and are attended by 35 high school students. Under Milca's leadership students, outside of school, are encouraged to keep up with studies, and stay busy at the center to avoid engaging in improper behavior. College students, also home from school, are teaching the high schoolers the subjects they themselves had been learning: English, Math, and Sciences. What better way to review and understand their own studies, as well as to introduce high school teens to college level subjects!



In addition, one-on-one student counseling sessions, providing special attention and prayer, are ongoing, as well as Bible studies and door-to-door evangelism.



The laptop computer classes actively continue at Khwamba. We were recently informed that all 6 of last year's computer students were accepted into universities! That never happened before! Now, at Khwamba six new students eagerly learn the intricacies of Word and Excel, albeit equipped with masks and clinical gloves we have provided. How exciting to witness their enthusiasm, and hope! A second laptop program will begin at Matapila in June!



Books and COVID19, continued



We are so excited that our centers are suddenly playing a life changing role much more than we could have anticipated so early in our programs' development! Children who may not have before been



aware of the joys of stories in books, teens for the first time taking leadership roles and improving their English skills, and college kids suddenly becoming teachers, are daily occurrences before our eyes! Young people are find-

ing new experiences and rewards perhaps that would not have occurred otherwise, very possibly changing their lives forever! It is difficult not to be in awe, and humbled, to watch how God is able to turn as horrible a circumstance as a worldwide pandemic, into a not otherwise achievable growth opportunities!

We can't help but reflect upon the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to

A Letter from Daniel Moyo

You were profound visionaries in setting up these libraries and learning centers which have now become the sole life giving resources for all our college and secondary school students with all schools closed. The centers are the lifeline and no other alternative with children borrowing books and reading to keep themselves update and active and avoid unnecessary socialization in the absence of school that would make them engage in risky behaviors that would make even some pregnant. I just don't know how things would have been if it were not for these Libraries. May God bless you and keep you well and safe. Thank you on behalf of the many children.



New City Kid's Program Highlights



The Khwamba Teen Mentors



Daniel training teen mentors

The Teen Mentorship Program, fashioned after the New City Kid's (NCK) program, began in earnest this month with intensive training programs for the teen mentor's. Milca, working closely with Khwamba's Center Director Felix after interviews, has selected 12 teens to be the mentors, and 6 "gap kids" to be their "supervisors". The "gap kids" have graduated secondary (high) school and are in the 1 to 3 year period where they hope to be accepted, and to receive a scholarship, to college. The chosen teens are in their first or second year of secondary school. Both will receive a small monthly stipend. This will be a paying "job" for them! There will be 120 elementary children (grades 5, 6, and 7) in this after school pilot program at Khwamba, where we last year completed expansion of the library into a 3 room "learning center". One group of 60 will meet Monday-Wednesdays, and the other 60 children on Tuesday-Thursdays. Divided among the "classrooms", classes of 20 will receive enrichment in reading, English, and science/math. A music program will be initiated as well.



Milca speaking with the teens

New City Kid's Program, continued



The Khwamba Teen Mentors

Daniel, who travelled to the U.S. in 2019 for a week's intensive training in the NCK program in Jersey City, NJ, will guide the initiation and operation of the program in partnership with Milca and Felix. The several days of initial training the first week of June were completed with a prayer "commissioning". The year long pilot program will be conducted with regular Zoom communication with NCK's Daymiris Echeverria. The experience and development gained through this pilot program will guide the next program planned for Matapila in 2021.



**Khwamba Supervisor Felix
providing training**

**Mentors celebrating
"commissioning"!**



Steria home from boarding school

Steria, the young orphaned girl featured in our January 2020 newsletter story , “Rescuing Steria”, who was experiencing harsh treatment, severe poverty, and lack of food living with her ailing grandmother, is temporarily home from boarding school. Steria, a bright girl who always stayed after Milca’s laptop classes to help, was frequently found to be crying. After her plight was brought to MoH’s attention by Milca, Steria was granted a MoH scholarship on an emergency basis to attend a 2 1/2 year boarding school vocational program, which she began this year. Steria will be trained as an electrician.

The difference in her countenance, judging from her smile, is striking!

What a life changing difference the MoH scholarship programs can make!



Steria in January



Steria today

Blackboards Needed

We are seeking large (at least 4 x 5 feet) blackboards we can include in our shipment to Malawi for our learning center classrooms.



Stories from the MOH Crisis Nursery



Toddlers in the Crisis Nursery watching a video

In addition to 6 Community Development Centers in remote villages, MoH also operates a nursery in Lilongwe, currently caring for 15 babies that may have been abandoned, lost their mothers in childbirth, or were simply given up. The babies are typically cared for until they reach the age of 2, when they are placed in homes with relatives or within their villages. There are 5 live-in “nannies” who care for the babies,

Some of the stories from the Crisis Nursery can seem virtually unbelievable! A year ago Baby Chisomo was rescued from imminent death from a pit latrine where it is believed she was thrown by her mother to die after her birth. A young boy, entering the latrine, heard a baby cry from below, and called his friends. But by then the baby had stopped crying. The boys threw stones into the pit until the baby cried again.



The latrine pit

A man, passing by, observed the boys' excitement, heard the baby cry, and summoned additional help. People came, demolished the concrete covered pit latrine and rescued a beautiful baby girl. The baby was taken to a nearby hospital where for 2 weeks she received treatment for neonatal sepsis.



Chisomo the day she was rescued

the Crisis Nursery . . . Chisomos story



Chisomo 5 weeks later



The baby was named Chisomo which means grace. Everyone who witnessed the rescue said it was only by grace that she survived. After hospitalization, two week old Chisomo weighing 6 ½ pounds, and was admitted into the MoH Crisis Nursery who fed and cared for her. Three weeks thereafter Chisomo was doing very well, where she had gained almost 4 pounds! The MoH nursery witnesses, and helps make, true miracles regularly!

We hope to provide an update upon Chisomo in our next newsletter!

Prayer

Please continue to pray for God's protection for Malawi's children, and babies! COVID19 brings new concerns to an already vulnerable country, one of the poorest on earth. Particularly to the children we serve. The potential impact upon health, food supply, economic welfare, and security of our installations is great.

Meet Grace: doctor to be . . .



Milca has introduced us to Grace, a grade 11 high school girl at Khwamba, who wants to become a surgical doctor. Grace loves reading science books in the library.

Milca says *"We thank God for beautiful souls like Grace!"*

Grace's thirst for books about human physiology and science has brought to our attention the need to develop ways to find and share books among our 6 libraries, as the book collections are not identical. While our first priority was setting up libraries, now that the total collection has grown to over 20,000 books, specific needs are increasing!

How exciting, but also challenging!

This highlights the importance of teen "librarians" at each of the center libraries, communications among them, and then a means to share books among the center libraries. Perhaps the monthly meetings of the center supervisors at the MoH office in Lilongwe could become a "transfer point"!

Development continues!

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