

NEWS UPDATE FROM DEBBIE HOWARD, CONGO APRIL 2010

Dear Friends,

This newsletter is very overdue. Life has been rather full and hectic recently so I'll try to bring you up to date with what has been happening over the last few months and will leave this month's events for another time.

VISITORS

In February I was able to spend time with my good friend Reinhild who works in the east of the country at Bukavu. You may remember me visiting her last year to do Sunday school training. Reinhild was in Lubumbashi teaching at a Bible school. Since I was with her, she has visited the areas that we visited together to do future training with children's workers and has also visited new areas to give the same training. It was good to hear how people are faithfully putting into practise what they have learnt and the good results they are seeing.



Sadly Reinhild had to leave Lubumbashi earlier than intended to return to Germany for medical treatment. In December while travelling up country by motorbike she had an accident and fractured her wrist. Treatment was delayed due to poor medical facilities. While in Lubumbashi Reinhild was told that her wrist had not healed properly and she would need further treatment at home. She will now be returning to Bukavu, Congo later this month and although there has been some good improvement we continue to pray for a complete healing.

A highlight in March was the visit of Conso Mutunda from Barking Elim. Conso left Congo approximately 19 years ago and came back to visit family and to spend a week working with me. As she speaks both French and Swahili fluently, Conso was able to be involved from the word go and was very busy during her stay. She was involved in a hospital visitation programme, spoke in a prison, visited a street boy's programme, participated in a church and youth service and took part in a two day holiday club. Her visit was a real encouragement to those she met, she worked extremely hard and I'm sure she returned to the UK in need of a rest!

STREET BOYS

Patric and Jean-Luc have settled in very well at school. They continue to have private lessons four afternoons a week. They attend the Sunday school where Gilbert (who cares for them) is a Sunday school teacher and also attend the adolescents group of my local church. Sadly, although he appeared to have settled well into family life, Mumona decided to return to living on the streets. It is always sad and can be difficult to understand when someone throws away such an opportunity but we continue to pray for Mumona that he might understand and fulfil the plans and purposes that God has for him.

Despite following up the letter sent to local authorities, like other Christian groups working with street children, we never received a response to our request to visit and run Christian teaching programmes for street children housed by the authorities. Many street children have returned to living on the streets and we are in the process of making contact with them and are aiming to restart our programme for a small group of boys in the near future.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TRAINING

On the 6th March we held a special teaching day for Sunday school teachers. This went amazingly well with an attendance of over 200 children's workers. As the venue for this teaching was further out of town than we had wanted, this made transport more difficult, therefore we were very encouraged by the good response. The teaching was given by members of the training team and a group of children's workers produced an excellent piece of theatre which really brought the teaching to life.

EASTER HOLIDAY CLUB



A two day holiday club for 3 to 14 year olds was held during the Easter holidays. As it was such a large age group the children were divided initially into two groups: 3-8year olds and 9-14year olds. The first group was then sub divided into three groups according to age and the older group was divided into boys and girls. The day started with all the children together for a time of praise and worship. They then went into their different groups for different games and activities.



Half way through, the children stopped for soya and biscuits and before leaving at 2pm they received a lollypop. Over 400 children attended each day and left very excited wanting more, while the leaders left encouraged but tired wanting rest!



I close this letter with some items for prayer and praise. Thank you for all your prayers and support. God bless you,

Debbie Howard

Points for Prayer and Praise:

- Praise God that Patric and Jean-Luc have settled in well at school. Pray for Mumona in light of the decision he has made.
- Praise God for the Sunday school training team and the impact of the training day on the 6th March. Pray for Sunday school teachers as they faithfully put into practice what they have learnt.
- Praise God for the visit of Conso and the encouragement she has been during her visit. Pray for Reinhild, that God may completely heal and restore full movement to her wrist.

All gifts for my ministry in Congo should be sent to Elim International Missions or as appropriate to the Irish Missions Director. Cheques payable to Elim International Missions. Thank you.

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