

sac news

NEWSLETTER OF THE FUSN SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE



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FALL 2007

FUSN's Zambia travelers return from service projects

If you could see the expression of excitement on the children's faces when we brought in special games to teach them English and the fun puppets they made in classes our teams taught you would see why our trip was so satisfying. We divided up into seven teams of two and taught some of the 600 students we are supporting each morning in three different communities.

Every day we were greeted by grandmothers, aunts and neighbor women singing and clapping with smiles on their faces. They take care of the boys and girls who have been left as orphans because their parents have died of AIDS.

At the end of our trip we delivered sneakers generously donated by New Balance in Boston and arranged by Linda Rinearson and her daughter Becky who both were on the



Above: The eyes tell a story



Our first mosquito nets for pregnant women

trip. Many of the children have no shoes or just worn-out flip flops. It is hard to play soccer without shoes. I asked them what they would do with their sneakers? "Play football" (soccer), "go to school", "I will wear them to church", "they will help me run faster!"

by Peter Smith

Action Projects

Communities Without Borders
Michelle Boudreau - 781 894-7350

Environment Team
Eric Olson -558-6866

Greater Boston Food Bank
Judy Zacek -969-7992

Newton Food Pantry
Jackie Colby -527-2394

Women's Lunch Place
Marion Bullitt - 965-0409

Walk for Hunger
Lynn Holbein -244-8260

Clothing Donations
Joellen Hawkins -527-7575

UU Urban Ministry Inner City Youth Programs
Michelle Walsh -738-3548

Partakers prison visits and workshops
Ros Winsor -566-5215

Concord Prison Art Project
Jacki Rohan -795-2415

Mentally Health Task Fce.
Nancy Stanton
-781 642-7284

UUs Against Slavery
Barney Freiberg-Dale
-969-7339

Coalition for Strong UN
Nancy Wrenn -969-2758

20/20 Vision
Peter Smith 233-6071

UU Service Committee
Karen Lein -332-3316

Fair Trade Coffee
Mike Arnott -868-7591



Judy Friedman, Sharon Ellis, Brita Gill-Austern and Helen Smith celebrate 16 of the teachers who teach in community schools for AIDS orphans supported by Communities Without Borders. They attended a workshop organized to share their best practices.

Community school teacher meeting a success

The teacher's workshop on July 27th was a great success, judging from comments I heard during and after the breaks, and my own observations. The fact that so many teachers came was very gratifying, though I realize they would not have been able to attend if they hadn't been picked up by our bus.

I was present for the entire session, and was so impressed with the teachers' openness and frankness about the problems they

encounter on a daily basis. One even brought posters from her classroom, which were very impressive. This was the first time all the teachers had gotten together and actually heard each other. I hope next year we can start a resource center for the teachers. It could be the first step in helping the schools get what they need to improve their teaching, e.g., books, supplies, materials. I was impressed with the teachers' concern & caring for their students.

by Judy Friedman



Here Nancy Friedman uses a traditional tool to help form the foundation for the new medical clinic in the rural village of Simukanka.



Above Faye Huang, Becky Rinearson Crowder, Cammie Samuelson, and Maria Haynes work with Zambian partners in Simukanka to sort some of the 40,000 bricks made by the villagers for the new medical clinic.

High school students & health clinic building

For two weeks this summer I went to Zambia in southern Africa. I witnessed what life is like there, taught in schools, and helped build a health clinic. A loud clapping handshake, combined with an upward sliding motion, locking thumbs, was at first unfamiliar to us foreigners, but later became second nature.

One high point was meeting with 20 high school students from Garden compound. Their interests and problems were not that different than here in America. But the conversation kept coming back to AIDS and HIV (17% of Zambians have HIV/AIDS).

Dealing with and living with the epidemic is always on their minds. The classrooms were plastered with posters supporting abstinence and plainly stating the problem. While all the kids took sexual education, only one had ever been to a doctor and clearly, some things had not been explained. "If condoms don't work 100% of the time, then why do they keep selling them?" asked one girl.

In the city, people cannot afford health care, while in Simukanka, an isolated village 45-minutes from the nearest town, the people have no health care.

The people from Simukanka shared heart-

breaking stories of how this has affected them. For example, only one man in town owned a mosquito net (to protect from malaria). There were two funerals during our short 4-day visit. Part of Communities Without Borders' work this summer was to fund the construction of a health clinic there. Just sitting in the shade outside of their soon-to-be clinic, I spoke with a few women. They said one woman had recently died from childbirth, riding in an ox-cart heading for the nearest health clinic in Choma.

We also worked along side the men to build the clinic. We witnessed the long process, where almost everything is done by hand. If taking a 30-minute truck ride to pick up thousands of handmade bricks does not confirm this, then just wait until the wheel falls off the truck!

When this happened, the sun was going down, and the workers started walking home. This turned out to be the most beautiful way to see an African sunset. With nothing but dry grass and the occasional tree in the surrounding area, the sinking sun stood out in a sky of orange and pink and purple.

by Becky Rinearson Crowder

Stand High student's eyes were opened

I would just like to thank all my supporters who helped me go to Zambia this summer and achieve one of my life-changing goals. I went to Zambia with no preconceptions about what I would learn, so I was open to all the experiences there.

There were many experiences during the trip that made me feel connected to Africa and gave me a broader view of what's happening there. One of the highlights was teaching and playing with the Zambian children in the compounds, and I now am

certain that I want to work with children in some way as a future career.

AIDS and other diseases are common in Zambia. Several of us visited an orphanage, a hospice, and a malnutrition ward which underscore the effect that diseases can have on how someone lives and how they look at their future.

by Daquana Harper
Daquana is a mentee of Judy Friedman in the UU Urban Ministry Stand High program in Roxbury. She charmed everyone on the trip this summer with her energy and beautiful smile.

Nov 11 Sunday service on Zambia Trip

We look forward to telling you more of our trip stories at this special service.

The FUSN Trustees have decided this year that five collections will go to community social action projects. The first . . . "Community Collection" will be at the November 11 service for our work in Zambia supporting the education of AIDS orphans. Please make out your generous check to Communities Without Borders. *Thanks!*

Editors' Note:

We see this newsletter as a place where, space permitting, anyone at FUSN might share a meaningful activity. If you're involved in something you'd like others to know about, contact Ros Winsor (617 566-5215 - roswinsor@aol.com) or Peter Smith (617 233-6071 - psmith@igc.org)

Stand High Stand United Explorer's Club Saturday mornings, VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

For more information about Stand High or the mentoring program, contact Judy Friedman 617 325-9886 or e-mail: judyfried@verizon.net