

FRIENDS OF FUMBELO

October, 2009

The Community School

At the center of the village of Fumbelo, on the outskirts of Lusaka, Zambia, is a one-room, dirt-floor community school, serving more than 200 students from four to sixteen years old. Teaching all of these children at their various academic levels is Zalepa Njobvu, a truly devoted and talented volunteer teacher. The school is open to all village children. There is an assistant teacher at times, so that Zalepa may attend the Teacher Training Course, to which Communities Without Borders (CWB) sends her.

This summer and last, the Friends of Fumbelo carried trunks of much-needed supplies, collected from Village Church and Charles Street Church, to the school. The donated materials are the school's ONLY supplies. Zalepa especially appreciated the composition books – enough to distribute to each student.

Lunch Program

The community school is also where the children receive their only meal of the day – nshima (corn-based meal), prepared by the village women and served at noon. Last summer Friends of Fumbelo found that for a child to be served a meal, he must bring his own bowl – impossible for some. This year we donated 75 bowls to be kept at the school.

In spring 2009, Friends learned that the funding for the noontime meal had disappeared and it was no longer being served. Friends immediately sent funds (from selling donuts at Coffee Hour every week) to Fumbelo to reinstate the program.

The village women brought back the noontime meal and also started to serve a nutritious porridge at breakfast. Friends is committed to funding this initiative going forward - at a cost of \$300 per month

Government Schools

Consistent with CWB's primary mission of educating orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), Friends of Fumbelo used the 2009 Outreach Grant from Village Church, together with other monies received through fundraising, to provide tuition, uniforms, shoes, backpacks and school supplies for 63 children to attend government primary school (\$100 per year per student) and four children to attend secondary school (\$300 per year per student). These 67 were identified as the most vulnerable of Fumbelo's children. There are many others who also seek sponsorship to government schools.



Isaac and Yvonne Njobvu

Bicycle Program

One of the highlights of the 2009 visit to Fumbelo was visiting with secondary school students sponsored by Friends and hearing about their experiences. They are extremely thankful for the opportunities they are being provided. We did learn, however, that some walk as long as three hours to get to school each day, attend a full day of classes, and then walk three hours home. Only then do they eat their one meal of the day. After doing some research, Friends bought each of the four students a bicycle and committed to buy a bike for every sponsored student who passes his secondary school entrance exam and continues school. Friends believe this will help with transportation AND provide students incentive to continue their education. Each bike costs \$160 (including repair kit and pump). For 2010, we may purchase as many as 10 bikes.



Dr. Selestine H. Nzala

From the beginning of Friends' first visit to Fumbelo in 2008, it was clear that many children needed medical attention. With the help of Jane Ndulo, CWB's envoy in Lusaka, Friends

Noria Kyandela on her new bike.

contracted with Dr. Selestine Nzala of University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, to visit and treat the village children twice per month. Dr. Nzala is the first doctor to ever visit Fumbelo. He examines and treats more than 50 children each visit and prescribes medications. Friends underwrite these visits and the medications, at approximately \$200 per visit. We are committed to providing funding going forward.

When meeting with Dr. Nzala in 2009, Friends learned that he trains doctors in Public Health. He agreed to take a group of 13 medical students to Fumbelo to conduct a community diagnosis. Friends funded this effort and received a detailed, 18-page report with findings of the three-day inquiry. Friends will use the report's findings, conclusions and recommendations to plan future initiatives.

Dr. Nzala also assisted Friends to navigate the health care system in Lusaka, which resulted in appropriate agencies visiting Fumbelo during Child Health Week. They provided Fumbelo's children with much-needed vaccinations and de-worming.



Maheu: A Nutritious Drink

Over the year that Dr. Nzala has been visiting Fumbelo, he has consistently diagnosed many children as malnourished. The typical daily diet consists of one meal, usually nshima, which fills the stomach but is not nutrient-rich. Nshima is made from mealy-meal, a milled corn. Vegetables and oil are added when available. Proteins such as fish or chicken rarely make it into the meal.

During Friends' 2009 visit, Dr. Nzala told us about Maheu, a local nutrient-rich drink served in individual-sized bottles. Several days during our visit, Friends bought Maheu by the case and distributed it to Fumbelo's children. We couldn't keep up with the demand. No matter how many cases were bought and distributed, there were always more children's outstretched hands asking for bottles of Maheu.



Children drinking Maheu.

When Friends spoke with the Heads of the government primary and secondary schools and inquired about the Fumbelo children, we heard, "Quite well, considering how hungry they always are." Teachers confirmed that Fumbelo kids would be more successful in school if they didn't come to school hungry. In discussing the problem, the teachers suggested that Friends might provide supplies of

Maheu for the guidance counselor to distribute to the children upon request. This is an initiative Friends are exploring and hope to implement in the near future.

Drinking Water

The majority of Fumbelo residents get their drinking water from the communal borehole, where they may pump their own water for a fee. Even this minimal fee exceeds what many residents can pay, however. So they drink well water, which is free, but not clean or safe. Drinking unsafe water causes many of the water-borne and skin diseases, as well as chronic diarrhea, that the doctor sees so frequently in the village children.

Friends of Fumbelo are investigating costs of digging an additional communal village borehole, as well as initiatives to clean the existing water supply. Directly related to water cleanliness are the issues of hygiene and the proper design and construction of latrines. Identified as important areas for investigation in the community diagnostic survey performed by Dr. Nzala and his students, these will be assessed too.



Pumping water at the borehole.

Microfinance

How can the residents of



Men with bookcase they built.

Fumbelo overcome the multitude of problems caused by their poverty? The village women told Friends that in addition to their garden, which presently is their only means of income generation, they'd like to start businesses of their own. With a little financial backing, they could achieve more than mere subsistence – perhaps self-sufficiency. They wanted to know: Would Friends help?

During Friends' trips, individuals worked with the young men of the village teaching them basic carpentry skills. Friends learned that they could sponsor individuals to attend carpentry trade schools, which would help them earn an income.

Friends of Fumbelo are investigating both areas for possible future initiatives.

How You Can Get Involved

Travel to Zambia

Have you ever thought you'd like to travel to Zambia and see firsthand the wonderful people of Fumbelo? Consider traveling to Zambia with Friends of Fumbelo in 2010. Dates and details of the trip will be available soon. The trip will

include 14 people. Youth must be 16, if not accompanied by an adult.

Join Friends of Fumbelo

Attend monthly meetings on the third Monday evening of every month. Help plan future trips and initiatives. Be involved in fundraising. Help inform the community on all aspects of the Fumbelo partnership.

Join A Small Sub-Group

Do you have an interest or expertise that you could share with a small sub-group, now forming, to explore each of these initiatives?

- * Nutrition and Feeding Programs
- * Water Supplies and Purification
- * Financing and Building a Medical Clinic
- * Setting Up a Micro-finance Loan Program
- * Funding and/or Supplying Youth Programs

Provide Funding

- * Sponsor One Child, One Year at Gov't Primary School = \$100
- * Sponsor One Child, One Year at Gov't Secondary School = \$300
- * Sponsor One Child, First Grade Thru Twelfth Grade = \$1,800
- * Fund One Doctor's Visit and Prescription Medicines = \$200
- * Fund Lunch & Breakfast at Comm'ty School for One Month = \$300
- * Buy a Bicycle for a High School Student = \$160

Donation checks should be written to Communities Without Borders, with "Fumbelo" on the memo line, and mailed to Janet Rose at 50 Bristol Road, Wellesley, MA 02481 or Liz King at 207 Weston Road, Wellesley, MA 02482.

Questions? Interest? Contact Liz King at 781-431-1282 or kingswells@comcast.net or Janet Rose at 781-237-9638 or rosegirls6@aol.com.

For more information on Communities Without Borders, go to www.communitieswithoutborders.org

