

PARTNERPLAN

Jenny Featherstone - Zambia March 2021

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Dear church friends,

Warm greetings from Zambia, although Lent is generally thought of as a season of giving up, this year, for Britain at any rate, it is a season of coming back. Thanks to your vaccination plan, things are gradually returning to normal, including kids going back to school.

Here in Zambia there is little change, but we are hopeful that the South African strain which has been prevalent for the last few months, is waning now. Nevertheless, our government is struggling with billions of dollars of unsustainable debt, so even with an election looming in August, they cannot provide such essentials as PPE for the covid wards. The two we are supporting in Mansa are desperate. James (a charge nurse) texted, "we have run out of disinfectant and gloves and N95 masks please reply, down on our knees for help" and "we have been having difficulty with supplies from the government, this money (we gave £50.00) will go a long way in our operations".



Despite schools returning in February, we have decided not to open Play4all as the risk of kids taking the infection home to elderly or vulnerable relatives is too great. Jane however, continues to distribute food weekly as part of the feeding programme and gave out 30 single blankets a couple of weeks ago to those vulnerable children who had none. The cold season starts next month. I am also attaching Janes interesting newsletter.

This year we are very thankful for good rains, even though the rain is tailing off now, the dams (reservoirs) remain full, so full in fact, that my friend Emma collected 5kg of small Bream that had spilled over the dam wall, into the sodden grass below it.

My main emphasis since I last wrote has been supporting CADRO. Maketo came up with the idea of 3 recovering alcoholics walking to Lusaka from Choma (just over 300km) to try and raise funds for a counselling centre which will support addicts, recovering addicts and their families. The need for this is huge, Zambia has the highest alcohol addiction amongst women in Africa, and the local brew is downright dangerous as methylated spirits and industrial urea (meant for the crops) are often added to it. Whilst local community leaders are concerned, there is little they can do about illicit alcohol. CADRO wants to offer practical help and advice in their communities, and provide counselling and other resources to help people come off alcohol and drugs.

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The CADRO planning committee usually meet on my veranda every week. Left to right Matemola, Chief, Andrew and Maketo. The 3 nearest right are walking from Choma to Lusaka.

One of our members, an engineer in his early 30's, was so hopeless and dejected that he made a serious attempt at ending his life, he was found in time and ended up in the mental health ward, from where he was referred to CADRO at the end of last year. Now he is sober, back in employment and thanking God for his recovery. He and his mother gave a very frank and open talk on the local radio station YGFM which gives CADRO an hour every Saturday afternoon. Mum stated how she had given up on him and didn't want to have him around, but now thanks God for the difference in his life. There are many more people like these which CADRO wishes to help to turn their lives around, and if we can manage it, the counselling centre will be a significant move forward.

Items for prayer

- For Marita, her visit to Luanshya hospital for elephantitis was not very successful and she is still in a lot of pain. The plan was for her to stay there for treatment, but she was sent home the same day She had an arduous 3-day journey back to Chapata, staying overnight in the broken-down bus.
- For Bridget who looks after Nathan and his sisters, she is very run down with an infected wound from a caesarean, gall stones which couldn't be operated on till after the birth, and is just recovering from malaria, as well as a new baby to look after.
- For the fundraising efforts of CADRO to touch the hearts (and pockets!) of local businesses, and for them to be able to inform many on their walk to Lusaka next month.

Items for praise

- For dedicated and capable people like Jane Mwenda and the Play4all volunteers
- For Nathan, as he has been off dialysis for over 3 weeks now and back with his sisters in Mansa. We hope he will soon be tablet and diet controlled then possibly stop the medication altogether.
- For the motivated CADRO members who meet weekly to support each other. They have changed their lives and are determined to keep away from alcohol addiction.

Wishing you all peace, patience and good health, and a happy Easter for next month.

Jenny

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