Weaving and Soap making

Ministry in Motion

A solid foundation for this ministry was laid many years ago. For this and many other things the program now offers, we give all glory, praise and honor to our God. A simple goal of weaving and soap making to aid the cost of missions has now grown into a safe haven for those rejected by man but not one is forgotten by God.

Our program offers an alternative to traditional schooling for women unable to thrive in that environment. Without traditional schooling and with no family support system, these women were being left to fend for themselves, without marketable skills. Through training, they have learned to sew, weave fabric and make soap. Yet, to truly compete and thrive in a competitive marketplace, we recognize the need for additional business skills. Their training now includes a business plan setting personal goals, budgets and measurable steps for each trainee. Pauline, our seamstress, living at the orphanage, has become our model for this plan. The first goal for Pauline was met when she successfully found a home to rent. The second goal was met when she found enough clients that she no longer depended on the work we provided for her. Pauline is now a confident, thriving young businesswoman. This success story allowed us to see the most important aspect of this program: empowering women to stand on their own two feet by equipping them with the tools necessary to do so.

The Lord continues to give us a vision of greater things to come from this program. We see this area of ministry as a tool for changing individual lives and ultimately, this society’s view of women—in particular those with special needs. Yemba and Natalie are our poster girls for progress in this area. We have watched these beautiful young women develop their skills, learning from one another and encouraging one another. Their finished products, offer both artwork and usefulness and have become a source of respect and admiration from many. The women can sell their finished products for enough money to generate income for themselves and additional funds to purchase materials for ongoing work.

Over the past few years, our eyes have been opened to see that many women here in Yako are impoverished due to different circumstances. We find ourselves repeatedly offering temporary housing to those who have no place to go except the streets. Many of whom have children. All of these women were without means to care for themselves and had broken relationships with family. God continued to break our hearts for these women, truly the least of these, who have fallen into the cracks. Not only have we found ourselves ministering to women and women with special needs but more recently we have been faced with abused and mistreated women seeking a place of refuge and a means of survival. God continues to honor this ministry as He works with these women and reveals to them His love for them and a purpose for their life. ~ Amy Riddinger

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.

Psalm 138:7
The Women’s Center

Working Hand in Hand with Weaving and Soap Making

Once the surrounding community began to recognize our desire and willingness to reach out to women in need, more women seemed to find their way to our Yako project and property. As our awareness of the problem increased, so too did our desire to do something to change this problem. God has revealed a need and out of this need came our response: a Women’s Crisis Center.

God continues to expand His vision for us in the area of women’s ministry. In obedience to what we believed He was calling us to do, we began the process of building a Women’s Crisis Center. The Women’s Center offers a temporary place of refuge while also having the benefit of being in close proximity to our technical center. Here the women participate in the educational and training program developed over the years through weaving and soap making. The women who have developed the skills can now offer training to other women in need. Spiritually mature Christian women in our local church have already begun to act as mentors, offering encouragement and hope for these women.

The training is also open to women with special needs. From our experience, we believe, these individuals make up the most oppressed group of individuals in all of Burkina Faso. In Burkina, preconceived ideas about “handicaps” often keep these individuals in hiding, filled with shame and hopelessness. Under these circumstances their opportunity for education is very limited. Many families believe that handicaps result from curses. Consequently, these individuals are often treated poorly and are regarded as having no value to the family or to society as a whole.

For individuals with special needs going through our program, we have seen change in attitudes among family members and within the community. More importantly, the women themselves are experiencing healthy improvements in their self-image. Both Yemba and Natalie are beautiful examples of God’s handiwork in this area of ministry. Yemba, a young deaf girl, began weaving at our center and is now the pride of her home. Yemba is the only one in her family currently earning money. Natalie, suffers from a disease that has left her with a severely deformed arm and a bad limp, and is now learning to sew. Her self-esteem is improving with each beautiful thing she creates. More importantly, both women now attend church regularly. They receive encouragement from other Christian women and God’s word offers them hope in a world that otherwise told them they were hopeless. They have come to know and believe that they are worthy and beautiful in the eyes of God.

A Matheny Family Update

Heading Back to Africa

The Matheny family came home for a short leave while Ebola was creating heightened fears and new dangers. While home safely with family and friends, the unthinkable occurred. Just as they were to return to the country they watched as the current government in Burkina Faso was overthrown and the borders were closed. The family reflects in their blog:

“….While we should have been zooming across the sky, we sat on our bed and watched over the computer as the Burkinabe people toppled the government of twenty seven years. Though surprising, we feel that this is a very good thing. You probably know we were expecting violence around the Presidential election in 2015. Hopefully the events of the past week have diffused those tensions and will make Burkina a safer place for our family this coming year than it was in the past one. As the dust settles and rule is reestablished in Burkina we are left with something unexpected: bonus weeks in America.

When rioters burned Ouagadougou parliament building and Burkina’s President resigned, which we weren’t expecting we were able to talk to our kids about not worrying about tomorrow for today has enough worries of its own in a way that met them right where they were. While leaders were meeting in Ouagadougou about the countries next leader…we prayed with our children for Burkina to be a nation more open to Jesus after this transition than it was before. And this is what we are here for: To see heaven meet earth in their questions and in our chaos; to serve the church in America and prepare to be the church in Africa; to give God our full attention once again. Sometimes He gets it by sending us to Africa. This time He got it by taking us out of Africa....”

~ From the Matheny Blog
God’s Children
Humble servant’s of the Lord

St. Agnes Catholic Community in Dalton, Massachusetts continues to watch and support the progress of our beloved friend, Sister Linda Wilk as she ministers to the children and families of Kimini, Burkina Faso. The students of our academy find particular interest in her adventures because, for many, Sister Linda was their adored Fifth Grade teacher. Recently discovering the need for a new truck, our students immediately responded: “How can we help?” After some consultation with our pastor, Father Chris Malatesta, our Seventh Graders developed an action plan similar to the fundraising efforts they’ve worked on for the orphanage and medical clinic in the past. A “Giving Tree” model was decided upon and work commenced. Father Chris helped by creating tags representing different parts of a truck; transmission, windshield, etc…. Our students then processed the tags by laminating and trimming them. Holes were punched and strings were added to each tag. Finally, the tags were placed on small trees located in the various entryways of our church. The joy in our class was palpable as the students worked together with a common goal of helping Sister Linda. I have known most of these children since Preschool, and quite honestly I have never been more proud of them.

During weekend masses, Father Chris made parishioners aware of how vital a new truck would be to the success of this ministry. Donations flowed in at a steady pace. Many donations were substantial, many were modest. All, were given from the heart with a sincere desire to help two dedicated ladies respond to God’s call. I have often said: “In Dalton, all you need to do is say, “Sister Linda needs...” and people eagerly open their hearts and their wallets because they believe so deeply in her and the work to which God has called her. This mission is no exception. I am honored to report that our community raised well over $17,000 toward a new truck! As the tally grew, Father Chris gave our students updates on the “fruitfulness” of their “giving tree”. When the total amount was made public, the students were thrilled!

For me, the sweetest part of this project was the humility shown by the students in the role of servant. This wasn’t about “them”. It was about Sister Linda, and Ruth, as they follow God’s leading to serve the children and families of Kimini, Burkina Faso. What better lesson could there be? — Mrs. Theresa Dudzik

Spreading His Love
Meeting the Needs of His Children

“Operation Christmas Child” will come to Kimini this year, teaming up with a local doctor. This upcoming project leads me to reflect on my former years as a teacher in the USA. I smile remembering the enthusiasm that permeated our school as children bustled about, packing shoe boxes with gifts for other children living in faraway places. It brings me peace and joy, knowing that it was OCC that first brought me to Burkina Faso in 2005! Now, I am here and incredibly blessed to be on the receiving end of this program!

This year, “Operation Christmas Child” will distribute boxes to each child in the Kimini Primary School and in the nearby Koranic School. Dr. Peter from Ouagadougou will perform a medical evaluation which includes weighing, measuring and doing basic blood work for each child. Most of these children have never even seen a doctor before!

This opportunity will offer huge blessings and a great base as our medical clinic opens. We are hopeful that these exams will help us identify nutritional needs and measure growth rates. Additionally, the tests can identify problems such as parasites that may be stealing nutrition from these little ones. With a baseline and an opportunity for ongoing medical care, we hope to continue to change lives by educating and equipping little ones and their families with the importance of proper nutrition. We hope to find ways to help their bodies most effectively use the nutrition they will receive. Ultimately, we believe the students will be better equipped to focus on learning as the Lord leads us in helping to feed their bodies, souls and minds. Early diagnosis can lead to life changing growth for God’s kingdom here in Kimini.

The visit and labs will be completed for a reduced rate of $5 per child. Right now, we have about 350 children scheduled to participate. Funds are needed to make this a reality. A friend has already donated $50 to launch our campaign. We are still far short of the total need to cover the costs. Sparing $5 to help a child can change a life. Any donation, no matter how small is greatly appreciated. The examinations will take place during the day. In the evenings, the team will do open air evangelism using films and preaching. Follow up bible classes will be presented to children accepting the invitation to come to know Jesus’ boundless love. We look forward with anticipation to this “Kimini first”! Thanking you in advance for your generosity! — Linda Wilk
Demonstrating the love of Jesus to a hurting world

Contact

—$ 5,000

If sponsors of children or widows want to give an individual gift, that would be

菲利普 & 萨拉的博客: http://frontrowburkina.blogspot.com

Our Truck has arrived!!

Dear Faithful Friends,

Our truck has finally arrived! It is difficult to find words to express how deeply grateful we are to each and every one of you who helped make this possible. You have done so much more than provide a reliable means of transportation for us. You have helped us fulfill our mission to care for the “least of these” in Burkina. Each time we get into the truck we will whisper a prayer of thanks for each of you.

“I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy for my every prayer for all of you because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now.” Philippians 1:4

With grateful hearts,
Ruth and Linda

Making a list and checking it twice...

✓ Family ✓ Friends ✓ Orphans ✓ Widows

Last year our Christmas party was such a huge success. Some sponsors asked “what can we do for Christmas?” If you as a sponsor would like to contribute to the any of the following just indicate that on your check.

If sponsors of children or widows want to give an individual gift, that would be great too. Some gift ideas would be:

- warm blanket or sweater: $12
- solar lamp: $30
- mat to sleep and sit on: $10
- shoes & outfit of clothes: $30
- a chicken: $6
- a goat: $40
- a sheep: $70
- a bicycle for transportation: $130
- a sack of rice: $40
- mid-year school supplies and back pack: $20
- Or give to our Annual Christmas party where we invite all the sponsored children, have a meal that includes meat and soda, and we give a little something to all the children as we celebrate the birth of our Lord together: $350
- Help buy a new clothes outfit for all the orphanage children to wear Christmas Day: $500
- Or other items that are needed at the discretion of our missionaries: $25-$100

May God bless you and your family during this time of celebrating Christ’s birth. Blessings and thanksgivings to you from Sheltering Wings and the Children & Widows.