



Spring Trip Report

April 2012

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Success at the Farm!

It has been a challenging start for our farm project. We planted our first crop of seeds last fall and I am happy to report that we have in storage our first harvest of maize (corn). This crop will be used to help feed the children their noon meal at Treasured Kids Primary School. You cannot imagine the joy in our hearts! Our dream is coming into



20 bags of maize, our first crop from the farm! 100 lb bags ready to be taken for grinding.

reality. The experts tell us it will take three years before we can expect to be self sufficient.

Thanks to all of you who have given and participated in the fundraising venues at the church and at Byler's Farm Market. And many thanks to Ellsworth and Evelyn Byler and Lowayne and

Phyllis Yoder for travelling to Uganda in late January to check in on the farm, meet with those working with us and offer their expertise and help. Their first hand involvement helped to set direction for the initial harvest. We

know we still have a long way to go to reach the goal of self sufficiency but we are making progress. The next crop is in the ground and our next harvest will be in the fall. It is different for us to be able to reap two harvests each year, the norm in Uganda. Byler Farm Market will be hosting another fundraising day at their market on US #12 West (of Sturgis) on August 4th this summer. If you can make it, plan to come out and support the ongoing costs of the farm.



Corn to be ground and made into posho

The farm (20 acres) spans the top and two sides of a valley. In the valley there is a natural spring water hole that has the possibility to be developed into an irrigation source. If we ever decide to irrigate the land, given the richness of the soil, the yield would skyrocket!



The farm spans the top and two sides of a valley

Success with the Road!

As many of you know, another project we have been working on is the construction of an access road to the farm. The



Before

farm is located about 7 kilometers off the main, paved road, on a dirt roadway. From this dirt roadway it is about 400 meters to our land. There was a small pathway that led to the farm and believe it or not this pathway was an official road. Only small vehicles were able to pass over this road/pathway because it was very narrow and overgrown with vegetation. We needed to open it up so we could get a truck in to the property, large enough to haul the bags of maize and other crops

to the school to be used. That project has been completed thanks to the very generous donations from a business and a family in St. Joseph County. These are the types of projects that are so important to the long term vision for the farm. The second crop is already planted. It will be ready for harvest in September Thank you so much!



After

Sponsoring The Children!

The child and teacher sponsorships are another significant part of what we have on our hearts for Uganda. Here are a couple of stories from Jen to help you understand why.

“I was with Godfrey, overseer of our project at Deo Ministries, walking from Treasured Kids Primary to Treasured Kids Kindergarten School. As we approached the Kindergarten I saw this little girl softly crying by the wall of the school. I noticed she had a TK uniform on and asked Godfrey to find out why she was crying. In her own language she told him that she had no school fees and therefore couldn’t attend class. I decided to ask Mary, the Headmistress, about her. Mary said that it was true that her mom was not able to pay Lilian’s school fees but that she had not been told she couldn’t come to school. She sent someone to go and get her and soon reported that there was a very happy little girl being taken back to class. My heart went out to her of course and I prayed that God would raise up a sponsor for her when I returned home. Imagine my delight when the first Sunday back, a young fifteen year old guy from church was touched by her story and decided to sponsor Lilian. He has not missed a month in supporting her! God is so good!”



Lilian by the wall

Over and over I see God put it on people’s hearts to sponsor the needy children of Uganda. This last trip Godfrey told me the story of a young eighteen year old boy, Joshua, who was very bright but had quit school. Godfrey had a real heart for this boy, and had personally taken him to a local secondary school to register him and get him started. Joshua had a sponsor from another project, but just as he was about to begin the school term, his sponsor “dropped” him. In addition, it seems his father did not support Joshua furthering his edu-



A new bike for Frankie—given by his sponsors.

cation. Because of these two setbacks Joshua stopped attending class. Godfrey made an appeal to me to try and find a new sponsor for Joshua. I never promised but said that I would pray and see what God would do. When I returned home I found an email from a young graduate here who was already sponsoring one child but who along with his fiancé wanted to sponsor a second child. They were to be married in six weeks. I told him Joshua’s story and after praying about it, he and his fiancé decided to sponsor Josh. The timing of his email and my return with Josh on my heart just seemed to come together at the right moment. God is good!

The Leader Seminars!

We continued the training of leaders in five different locations this trip—as always! Once again there were many people who took time out of their day to attend and give themselves to developing their skills as leaders. This was our next to last class for this group of leaders. We are making plans to hold graduation ceremonies for those who have completed all six books. It is a demanding schedule. Each graduating student will have attended all six sessions over three years. The local leaders are holding make-up classes this summer and fall in order to qualify as many trainees as possible. Graduation celebrations will be the order of the day in November when we return for the final booklet. It will be a time of festivity as we recognize those who have worked to achieve this result. We will graduate students from Africa Renewal Christian College, Entebbe and West Kampala with their Level One certificate and from Masaka with their Level Two certificate. The trainees from Lira will graduate with their Level Two certificate in April 2013.

We are in the process of praying for guidance as we make plans for future training sites. Training leaders is the one activity that can make a long term difference for Uganda. We pray that students of the EQUIP Leadership Training will one day occupy important positions of influence in the nation.

Plus One Sponsors

The following businesses are “Plus One Sponsors” of SMPI. Please consider using them if you need the services they provide. They have joined with us as partners to support our efforts in Uganda. If you would like to use your business to support the ministry in Africa, I can show you how with virtually no cost to your business.

Byler Farm Market (261-651-8338)

- fresh fruits, vegetables, baked goods, maple syrup

G & J Tree Service (269-330-9510)

- complete tree service (24hrs)

Tristate Security (269-625-8718)

- locksmith (commercial, residential)