

Tiny Tim and Friends Newsletter

Fall 2005

Betty's Trip to Zambia

I was able to make a return trip to Zambia in April 2005. I had a wonderful time visiting with son, Tim, and getting reacquainted with grandson, Tiny Tim.

One of the highlights of the trip was being able to meet the 32 HIV children from Jon Hospice Daycare Center who have been started on ARVs provided by the Tiny Tim & Friends project. The children are supposed to be ages 3-7, although many are older than 7 years. The teaching staff is excellent and I especially enjoyed meeting Corey, the KARA volunteer from Michigan. She carefully hands out the ARV medicine twice a day and on weekends she sends the medicine home with the children in pill boxes that Tiny Tim & Friends provided.



Betty, Corey and TT&F Kids

Parmalat, the large dairy company, again donated hundreds of cases of butter, yogurt and Maheu (a flavored wheat-based drink, similar to a milk shake). Moses (my driver) and I led the big Parmalat truck around to five different orphanages to deliver the product. What a welcome sight we were!!

Another highlight was being able to visit five schools within the Lusaka area, all in different stages of "disrepair." It's hard for us to imagine a school without books or paper or even a blackboard - in fact some of them didn't even have four walls. The children sat on cement benches. At lunch time a very thin porridge was served and the children had to use their fingers or a pencil to scoop it up as there were no spoons. The Tiny Tim & Friends fund was able to purchase 300 spoons and we delivered them the next day.

I thank all of you donors who have made the Tiny Tim & Friends project a reality. It was a special privilege to be able to see first hand the improvement in these children that your donations have made possible. Your generosity is working miracles.

P.S. Tom is planning a trip to Zambia in November. Check out the website for highlights of his trip along with the latest Tiny Tim and Friends news, photos and stories.

www.tinytimandfriends.org

TT & Friends Garage Sale

Tiny Tim and Friends held it's first annual benefit garage sale on the weekend of September 7th. With items donated by many people, the sale was a huge success. The money raised will continue to be used to buy HIV medicine for children with AIDS.

We sincerely thank all those who donated items and we especially thank our family and friends who worked long hours at the sale.



Notes from Dr. Tim

It's official!!

On 29 July 2005, Tiny Tim and I appeared in Court in Lusaka and petitioned for adoption, which was **granted**.

His new name is Timothy Thomas Sichembe Meade (hope you don't mind, Dad!), and he is all ours! This picture was taken outside the courtroom when it was finally over. All of the Meades are thrilled and welcome Tiny Tim into the family with open arms.



The Tiny Tim and Friends project has started many children on ARV's who otherwise would not have access to these life-saving medicines which stop the progression of AIDS. We have also helped countless others with things such as small donations for food when there was none, pills boxes and a scale for the Day Care so the children could get the right medicine in the right dose, and occasionally for clothing for a child when there was none to be had. We continue to have almost zero overhead or admin costs, no salaries, no gratuities and no bribes. We buy talk time for the mobile phone of the social worker and teacher at the Day Care so that we can communicate when a child gets sick and last month we had to buy a load of diesel for the van that brings the children to and from Day Care because there was a fuel crisis in Zambia. But otherwise, the money has gone all directly to the children and the results are so tangible! Each child started on ARV's has done so well, is stronger with fewer infections and, outside of Joshua and Saviour (see In Memory on the website), there have been no deaths.

Tiny Tim and Friends has also attracted a large group of incredible volunteers who have come to help the children, such as dentists and medical students and nurses from all around the world, each helping enormously in their own way. While it was not part of our original stated mission, Tiny Tim and Friends is helping to raise awareness of the problem of neglected AIDS orphans in Zambia and the world, and making them healthy has inspired their caretakers to bring their own children in for testing and treatment. Indeed, many adult caregivers to these children have finally been tested and started treatment for their own HIV disease, as a direct result of seeing the improvement in our children taking the medicine.

There is the feeling here that we have reached a turning point. The children have all gone through at least a six month cycle of medicine and each has had a measurable rise in their immune system parameters. We are now working to transfer them onto one of the national or NGO programs which provides free ARV's to children. We can then begin to identify and help new children and the Tiny Tim and Friends funds can be replenished. The Board of Directors of Tiny Tim and Friends has been active in the USA applying for funding, holding fund raising events and continuing their appeal for private donation, which remains the mainstay of our project.



So I hope that our donors will look back on the last 6 to 9 months with pride and gratitude, knowing that they have saved many children and helped many people to a better life, free from the ravages of HIV/AIDS. Each time we write a referral letter for a child to be transferred to the national program, it is with gratitude that through all of our efforts we have been able to save this particular child, who we secretly believe will grow up to do wonderful things as a result of our help. We are not helping thousands, but we are helping many, and profoundly helping them. The help that we give has a ripple effect through these children's communities and has a profoundly tangible effect on the people around us here.

Faces and Stories Crispin and Balomi



Balomi - January 3, 2005

Balomi is an 11 year old boy. He does not know if he ever had any brothers or sisters. He ended up in the hands of his cousin who is alcoholic and now living on the street. Balomi is now shared between several families close by, as no one can afford to have him full time at their house. In this sense, he is homeless himself. He has almost total-body ringworm (fungal infection), including on his face. TT and Friends has purchased him some pills and cream to treat this. He is a lovely boy with an easy smile. This picture was just after we took some blood for his CD4 test so he doesn't look very happy.



Balomi - October 10, 2005

Balomi is very much improved since starting ARV's. We were a bit worried about him last month because he has dropped some weight, but Jeanne (his caretaker) said it was because they were short of food, so we supplemented food for her house of 7 AIDS orphans from Hope House, 4 of whom are on ARV's from TT and F. This month he had gained the weight back and was quite happy. We gave Jeanne another \$10 for extra food for next month as well.



Crispin - March 11, 2005

Crispin's mom and dad both died from HIV last month so he moved in with an Auntie. He suffers from end stage HIV and, obviously, malnutrition. Has trouble keeping food down and has chronic diarrhea. He is just perfect for beginning ARVs, if we can get the food problem sorted out. We later learned that the Auntie was so frightened of how thin he is that they decided he was a lost cause and stopped feeding him. So he came here and we started his drugs and I sent him home to my house with the driver and he will stay with TT and I until we get his social situation sorted out. He is a lovely child and speaks English very well. He wants to learn to swim and dreams of going to school some day. He is so shockingly thin for a 6 year old. This photo from today tells it all. Lets see what some medicine and a little home cooking can do for him.



Crispin - Oct. 31, 2005

Crispin has steadily gained weight since starting on ARV's. When his caretakers saw this change, their attitude changed toward him and hope was restored that he might survive. He started getting more food - and survive he did! He is now the biggest boy in Day Care and active and happy and smiling. Always asks to come back to our house to stay, where he was for two weeks when we first started his medicine. It is always a pleasure to come into Day Care and see him smiling and running up to us for a hug.