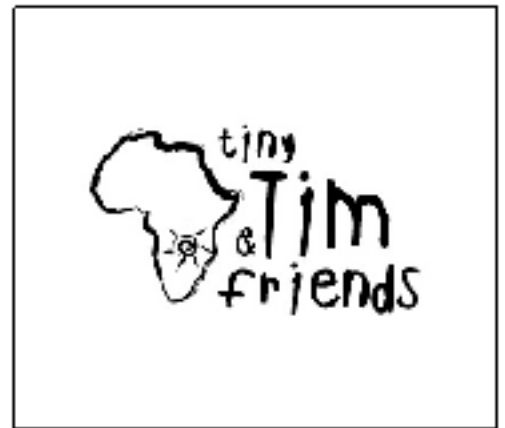


Thursday, April 14, 2005

I'm writing this letter at the start of a very long journey back to Minnesota from Zambia, via Johannesburg and Atlanta (a 23 hour flight).



Three weeks in Lusaka (capital of Zambia) with son, Tim, and adorable grandson, Tiny Tim (pictured above), seemed all too short. We enjoyed many hours of talking, laughing and playing with Tiny Tim. At seventeen months he is definitely the little emperor of the house, running all over and jabbering all the time - not in English or Zambian, but a language all his own.

Our son, Tim, is doing such important, unselfish work in Zambia. Besides his full-time medical practice, he visits several orphanages and a hospice weekly, providing those children with free medical care and medicine that the Tiny Tim & Friends project provides. He also takes children into his own home on weekends when they need a little extra care. Tom and I are very proud of him and the work he is doing, as we are of all our children who have worked so hard to get the Tiny Tim & Friends project up and running.

One of the highlights of the trip was being able to meet the children who have been started on ARV's provided by the Tiny Tim & Friends project. Most of them are at the Jon Hospice Daycare Center and I visited them several times in their brand new building. There are 32 children at Jon Hospice - all of them HIV positive and so far Tiny Tim & Friends has been able to start 6 of them (Evelyn, Mary, Boniface, Arnold, Crispin and Eric) on ARV medicine. Our goal is to eventually have all of them on ARV's, but we are starting with the sickest children first as they have to be watched carefully when first starting on the medicine. 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 Cory, 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.

I was able to bring over and hand out over 50 teddy bears knit by the wonderful women involved in the Mother Bear Project (see link on our "Related Links" page). The children were absolutely delighted to get a teddy bear of their very own that they could keep.



Parmalot, 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 Parmalot 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 plastic spoons and we delivered them the next day. I was asked many questions by the children, such as "Are there orphans in the U.S." "Are there black people in the U.S." "Where is the capital" "Who was the first president". They loved having their picture taken and even put on a little program for me.

It was not easy to leave my wonderful family in Africa and the friends I made while there. These people are so welcoming and friendly and kind. 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.

Betty Meade