

WALKER ZAMBIA UPDATE

JANUARY JACARANDA

The Jacaranda Tree and the Jacaranda in process, Obri.

NEHEMIAH BOYS RANCH

Sara Rose Children's Foundation Zambia / Heart of the Bride USA



JACARANDA IN DROUGHT

A BOY WITH HOPE

In Zambia there are tall beautiful trees called Jacaranda trees. The trees stand like giants throughout 6 months of rain and 6 months of drought. The rains begin in November and end in April. When dry season sets in gradually our lush surrounding begins to turn brown and a light layer of dust covers anything left with greenery. After 5 long months of no rain we all are eager to get through the last month of dry, brown bush and hard soil. We long to see the flowers, fruit and amazing foliage of rainy season. It is during this time that a beautiful surprise takes place. The Jacaranda tree that has been without moisture for 5 months, begins to bloom. It seems that out of nowhere the beautiful blue/purple flowers pop out and fill the horizon sky. It signals that refreshing is on it's way, but leaves you to wonder how the flower could receive enough water to bloom with such splendor. What really is at work deep within the soil to supply what is needed for this display?

How many times in our lives do we feel like we are in a dry place, but somehow God provides evidence that He was obviously at work in the midst of our doubt? Are you in a dry place right now? Don't doubt that God Himself is always at work around you.

Obri is a Jacaranda that we just experienced this week. Obri is probably about 21 years old. He has been on the

streets for at least 12 years of his life. In general Obri has a sweet spirit, but has a difficult life in town. He gets picked on, beaten, teased and not even another street boy shows him any respect. Every time Obri is seen in town he is high from the inhalant 'sticka'. It is very difficult to hold a conversation with him that makes any sense, he usually stinks and is wearing the same dirty holey clothing always seen on him. We have been very concerned about him as he is close to crossing over to the 'mad person' phase of streetism.

A few days ago we did a 'night outreach'. We go to town after dark and try to find where the boys are hanging out together or preparing for sleep. As we find them and listen to their stories, they seem genuinely excited to see us in their 'home'. After running a sick street boy to the hospital, meeting a 12 year old girl that was pregnant, praying with about 10 boys wanting freedom from their addiction and a chance to go back to school, we still hadn't seen our friend Obri. Wanting a chance to greet him and let him know we were looking for him, we kept searching the known spots. Finally after our 3rd try we found him in an unlikely location. We went to a corner of town where the minibuses run and in the evenings people set up blankets to sell foods like peanuts, maize, fruits, buns etc. for late night travelers. There in the midst of these marketeers we saw Obri's friend

Lucky Zulu sweeping up peanut shells and trash for the ladies selling. Lucky Zulu was actually working. Amazed at this unusual sight we went to Lucky and asked, 'where is Obri?'. Hearing us, the marketeers yelled, "Obri some white people are looking for you.' Quickly around the corner came our friend. But this was not the Obri I knew. This guy was not high from 'sticka' as Obri always was when found in town. This guy looked like he could've even had a bath recently. This guy had a new nice 'leather-like' jacket that was clean. This guy greeted me with a firm hand shake, confidence in his step and clear speech.

All these years of seeing Obri in the drought, not believing that God was at work in his life, then suddenly...somehow...out of nowhere...we see a bloom. Obri was working and walking as if he were a different person and all this in the night. A time when we thought just the opposite would take place. There is no question that Obri still has a LONG way to go, but that small glimpse of what God can do in the life of the LEAST (in my mind) of these street boys was a huge boost in my faith.

I know I have to wait until September to see the beautiful blooms of the Jacaranda, but this week I saw something better. Thank you Lord for being at work in the drought, when I can't see any evidence of it.



(LEFT)

Chongo and John in Ndola at MMM for their first step in Construction Management: Bricklaying and Plastering



(RIGHT)

Joe Katoka behind the wheel and ready to learn as he attends a one month course of drivers training, then will also get some agriculture training. (pray for Joe as he still needs improvement in reading.)

JACARANDA IN BLOOM

Rehabilitation Showing It's Fruit

As we enter a new time of blooming in the desert, some of the Nehemiah boys will amaze you. As much as the Jacaranda flower brings the sign that refreshing is coming, watching these boys bloom through the UPWARD program is a great sign that a refreshing generation is coming.

Godfrey, has recently been promoted to full Ranch Staff while he finishes grade 9 and works as a soccer coach at a nearby school. His primary responsibility is in evening supervision and recreational sports.

Joe is beginning his drivers training through a professional driving school. He continues to be a huge blessing at the Ranch as a Leader in Training, volunteers at the children's orphanage and plays in a district men's basketball team.

John and Chongo have been away at their new trade school for construction for 2 weeks. They are learning how to live independently, budgeting their money as well as learning building concepts at Mobile Maintenance Mission. They both seem to enjoy it so far.

We also have received news that all our grade 7 and grade 9's have passed their exams to determine if they can continue in their education or not.

Many of the boys not yet in the UPWARD program are attending a new school this year. An American based

ministry called LIFE SONG has agreed to take in our boys at their local school for orphans and vulnerable children. This is a great blessing to us as our plans to begin a school have been postponed. Life Song missionaries have become good friends of ours and are grateful to have the Nehemiah boys as they perceive them to be a good influence on their other students. Who would've thought....?

Godfrey teaches soccer at Life Song and the boys that attend get the benefit of a christian environment, lunch, a computer lab, art, music, and even some medical care. This has been a true blessing to us.

I just want to pause and thank the Lord for his amazing hand in the lives of these boys. I also want to thank the sponsors and UPWARD supporters for investing in these bright futures in their first bloom.

We are currently trying to get Japhet and Beya into a boarding school that is a bit beyond the UPWARD allowance and above what monthly sponsorship can support. It is a local boarding school that is their only option for a christian environment as they move into high school. Please let us know if you have an interest in helping with this pressing need. They each need about \$1000 more for the year.

JACARANDA IN CRISIS

THE RECOVERY OF KAREN VAN DE VOORDE



(LEFT)

Karen Van de Voorde with a child from the orphanage, being welcomed after a lot of prayer on the child's part.

Karen Van De Voorde (TK as she is lovingly called), age 53 has recovered from her near death experience with Malaria and she has returned back to Zambia just recently. We are all happy to see her here and many of the Zambians that prayed for her healing are experiencing encouraged faith due to her presence.

Karen suffered with our daughter Hannah from a serious case of malaria and was flighted to South Africa for treatment in May of 2011. After 2 months in South Africa, mostly in ICU and 3 weeks under sedation, Karen has regained strength and is already back on the field.

Karen wishes to thank all of you who made it a priority to pray for her recovery and healing. During this time of crisis we truly experienced God's ability to bring life in a desert and hopeless place. Karen is another Jacaranda experience where hope comes when all hope is lost.

JANUARY PRAYER POINTS:

- * Over the next several days and weeks we really need people praying for the Holy Spirit to lead us as we face some difficult decision and new opportunities.
- * Please pray for Japhet and Beya as they begin a new phase of life away from us in high school.
- * Please pray for anyone in grade 7 as they prepare for exams in November, for some they are still struggling with reading.
- * Continue your prayer for John and Chongo as they are 1 hour away in trade school. They are enjoying it, but as their 'parents' it is a challenge to have several of them spreading out.

Please continue to pray for Bob's father as his test results don't show the promise we had hoped!!! **We love you dad and know that you are trusting in the Lord, but our hearts are heavy for you and mom.**

Walker Family with Zambia Football (soccer) jerseys.

Heather, Candace, Hailey, Wil, Hope, Graham, Bob, Nate, Halayna, Shad, Hayden and Hannah



SAY CHEESE TEMI (HEATHER)!

