

## February 2011 Newsletter

## Zimbabwe Relief Foundation



### *Greetings to you from Delene in Zimbabwe and the ZRF Board:*

The new year is in full swing and we are running to catch all of you up with new developments here and in Zimbabwe.

#### NEWS from ZIMBABWE:

As we mentioned in one of our last newsletters we have two new members on the ZRF Board. In January, we sent one of them, Pat Cottrell and her husband, Greg, to Zimbabwe for a 19-day trip with Delene. Here are some excerpts from her emails and final report:

After getting grounded at Dulles airport and spending our first night in the terminal there; we flew to Johannesburg, then, after a good night's sleep we flew on to Bulawayo. Praise God, ALL the luggage made it safely, and passing thru customs was uneventful. No one even opened our bags -- although when the customs official asked WHY on earth we needed so much luggage for a 3 week trip, Greg smiled and told him that I had packed every dress and cosmetic known to man because I was "high maintenance". The official looked at me - smiled and winked at Greg - and let us thru. Hmmmmm - now really... :)

The purpose for our trip was threefold:

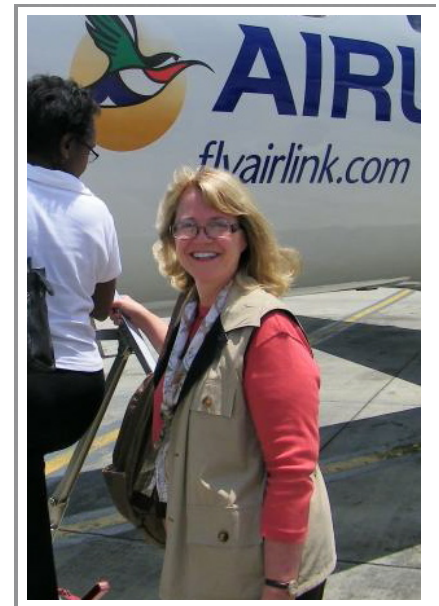
- to connect Delene Thomas (ZRF Board) with Kevin and Susan Fry at Eden Children's Village and to learn more about their mission (in Doma, N of Harare, in eastern Zimbabwe)
- to look at projects in Matabeleland (western and southern Zimbabwe where Bulawayo is located) that are serving the community and to assess what needs still exist and are not being met yet
- to come alongside Delene for encouragement and help her look at where she may want to serve.

On all fronts the trip was a HUGE success. Delene and the Frys hit it off beautifully and Kevin and Susan were wonderful in sharing their wisdom and knowledge. The Frys teach about 200 kids the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum / they house 184 orphans / they operate a clinic which serves the community / they have a HUGE agricultural project -- growing all the food they eat (and have 700+ chickens / 90 cows) They have a staff of 162 employees! We stayed in their home for several days and really got the feel of the project. Delene spent time in the preschool and primary school, and with the herbal gardens and clinic. In all we spent about four days there.

We spent the majority of our other time looking at community projects in and around Bulawayo. We visited orphanages, clinics, senior care buildings, AIDS halfway houses, & looked at micro business opportunities (fish farming up in Msuna on the Zambezi, making soap from the castor-oil tree, and grinding the leaves of the moringa tree to powder to put in food to help combat AIDS). Greg spoke to 3 different Rotary clubs about possible cooperation on projects between his Centennial Club and those in Zimbabwe.

We were able to enjoy a few "tourist" things -Victoria Falls -an evening boat ride on the Zambezi (lots of crocs and hippos), a short game drive in Hwange National Game Park (we saw elephants, giraffes, zebras, monkeys and kudu).

Thru the whole trip we really felt God's hand of protection. We did encounter police roadblocks on our drives, but we paid them money (we felt we had no other choice) and they let us pass with minimal hassle. We kept a low profile. Our weather was fabulous, and we stayed healthy the entire time.



Pat Cottrell in Johannesburg  
boarding flight to Bulawayo



Pat & Greg Cottrell with children and their teacher after distributing small wooden cars made and donated by Colorado Rotarians.

Zimbabwe is a country that needs much prayer. It was once the breadbasket of Africa – and all the infrastructure (plumbing, electricity, roads, schools) was working beautifully. Since 1980 (independence) the country has been in a rapid decline. Pres. Mugabe has taken over the commercial farms and mines so that neither industry is productive, and he has either systematically destroyed infrastructure (burning buildings) or left things to decline with no care or repair. Electricity is only on maybe 3-4 hours within a 24 hour period (and often that is between 1am and 5am) ~~ internet is very sporadic ~~ roads have HUGE potholes (sinkholes) that make driving dicey ~~ the “graduating high school kid” has the education equivalent of a 4<sup>th</sup> grader ~~ AIDS is a tremendous problem, and because of that, there are many, many orphans..... etc etc.

And yet, the people we encountered all are trying to better their country. We were heartened that most everyone is involved in some kind of volunteer program – be it working in a clinic (hospital care is horrid), or helping in a senior center, or working with kids. We worshipped at 2 different churches in Bulawayo, and we met the Anglican Bishop for all of Zimbabwe and several Catholic priests. Faith is strong

in Zimbabwe, as most everyone realizes that only our God can truly make change happen.

Anyway, I just wanted to say thank you for all your prayers during our travel. We know God was watching over us,

and we feel truly blessed.

### NEWS from the BOARD:

The ZRF Board is encouraged by Pat’s report and sees several possibilities emerging from the Cottrells’ trip:

- Delene plans to return to Eden Children’s Village in Doma for training and certification in the ACE curriculum later this spring.
- Recent contacts with local churches could open the doors to an early childhood education programs on church property.
- With help from the Frys’ Delene could begin the process of registering with the government as a Private Volunteer Organization (PVO) which would give her more latitude to develop programs and hire workers. After talking with the Frys we have a much better understanding of what is involved and why it makes sense to do this at this time.
- We expect that we will continue to support the programs already up and going (particularly the clinic, the preschool, gardening projects, etc.) and to move in the direction of providing early childhood education based on the ACE curriculum. Education will be the key to helping Zimbabweans help themselves.

As we are in the beginning stages of several of these ventures, we will be updating all of you as things unfold.



Delene Thomas with Susan Fry discussing ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum at Eden Children’s Village, Doma, Zimbabwe.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE:

Thanks to all of you who have been faithful supporters of Delene and our ministries in Zimbabwe. Those of you who made financial contributions in 2010 will find your year-end statements enclosed. We were able to send Pat to Zimbabwe due to a generous grant from Christ Church. We are concerned about the level of support, which has fallen off of late. We know the current economic situation is a factor. Please pray for more supporters and please help us by spreading the word and sharing this newsletter. Thanks!

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

**We depend on the Lord for guidance and grace and therefore ask you to pray with us for the following:**

- Delene and all the other people who are working to relieve suffering and provide encouragement to the people of Zimbabwe
- For a peaceful, non-violent campaign and election
- For the right doors to open with regards to these new ventures
- For Delene to stay grounded and focused
- For Delene's mother, Lorraine, (showing signs of dementia) that she would not worry when Delene is away for training and other ministry responsibilities
- For favor with the government as we move forward with the process of registration
- For continued blessing on the mentoring relationship between Delene and the Frys and on their ministry



Delene and her mother, Lorraine.

## A NOTE from DELENE:

Pat and Greg's visit couldn't have been more timely and I believe divinely orchestrated. Through their contact I was privileged and blessed to meet the Fry's at Doma (a 6 hour drive from Bulawayo to the NE interior) and see the wonderful work being done there. I'm still in awe with the amazing experiences I had at Eden Children's Village - from the ACE program, the herb gardens that provide the clinic with most of the herbal remedies, to the permaculture and animal husbandry -- I was just captivated.

It has been a long season of waiting and discerning God's way forward and I believe that the visit to Doma was confirmation of what I am passionate about and what sort of ministries can be done in 'our neck of the woods.' I left Eden Village on fire, truly inspired, encouraged and excited for the work that lies ahead in the Matabeleland area. Please add traveling mercies to your prayers as I expect to be on that road to Doma many times!

## FEEDBACK - QUESTIONS - CONCERNS -

For questions or feedback to Delene or about items in the newsletter, contact Edi King - [kingidaho@gmail.com](mailto:kingidaho@gmail.com)  
For questions or concerns of a financial nature, contact Greg Hanna at the address below.

### ZRF BOARD MEMBERS

**Greg Hanna, President**  
**Ken Berry**  
**Pat Cottrell**  
**Edi King**

Zimbabwe Relief Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization.  
All donations are tax-deductible and much appreciated!

Please make a contribution, and send your check to:

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