

April 2017

Dear friends,

Since my last newsletter I have continued to volunteer at the children's hospital pharmacy part time. To be honest, I have had to adjust my expectations as I realised I can't totally change the way the pharmacy is run, but I hope I can make some difference. Thankfully we finally cleared out all the boxes of expired drugs. The hospital director left which is sad as he and his wife were good friends of mine (they even invited me to spend Christmas day with them). We are still waiting for the new executive director to be appointed, but so far the hospital staff appreciate my involvement here.

I continue with my efforts in conservation farming and am not able to report any success stories, but I have certainly learnt a lot.



We planted some maize seeds at the YWAM base and the rest at my farm plot. We didn't use artificial fertilizer but put decomposed chicken manure in all the planting holes. The maize plants at the base (photo above) did a lot better than at my plot. This may be partly because the land around my plot has been over-cultivated and burnt each year causing the soil to lose its fertility, whereas the land at the base has been better cared for.



There was an infestation of armyworms attacking maize plants all over Zambia and beyond.

Armyworms are caterpillars which cause a lot of destruction. I tried all sorts of 'organic' remedies but

an experienced farmer recommended the best non-chemical method for getting rid of them was to pick them off by hand (on a small scale farm) which was not easy to do as the caterpillars crawl inside the stem. I am not sure if any of the organic methods worked but in the end the armyworms disappeared.



My caretaker's 2 children are holding the first maize cobs that I enjoyed eating from the farm.

We have had a lot of fun keeping chickens at the base but there have been several challenges such as a bird of prey regularly coming to feast on our chicks, so we had to make a wire cover

to prevent this. Several eggs have hatched but sadly many of chicks die, so we need to seek further advice on how to prevent this happening. We

have already sold 3 large roosters (if we have too many roosters they constantly fight with each other). I have found the chickens quite



entertaining to watch and most days we have to chase around the garden as a few escape from the chicken coup (this provides my morning exercise!)



We had a really good rainy season this year which farmers were very grateful for after 2 years of drought. I decided to plant peanuts instead of grass on part of my lawn, which are doing well.

I planted quite a number of tree seedlings at my farm plot but I have no idea if they will survive once the goats sneak back on to my land. I am also planting a thorny bush called bougainvillea around the fence as once this is grown it will provide an effective thorny 'living' fence.



This year I am blessed with visitors as my friend's daughter Emily came stay for 10 days in March. She is an occupational therapist and volunteered at the children's hospital, at private clinic in town and also visited some disabled children in my neighbourhood.



She was such a blessing to have around and helped with the chickens too.

On 10<sup>th</sup> April my mother, uncle and aunt arrive from England. Mum will stay for a month, and my uncle and aunt will be here for 3 months to also lend a helping hand at the base. In May I am hosting a team from Costa Rica who did the same environmental school that I did last year. I am looking forward to them coming for a month and have a whole list of things I'd like them to do, such as setting up our drip irrigation system, fixing-up the chicken coup, and teaching in the community about caring for the environment. A new family have moved on to the base and are renting the house next to me. They are American missionaries with an organization called Action Zambia. They are involved with helping HIV positive children in a poor community and teaching about HIV in different



settings (so we have a lot in common). They have 4 children and 4 dogs (including these 2 puppies) which will help provide greater security on the base.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of March started out as a very ordinary day for me as I drove to my farm plot with some logs tied on top of the car (to reinforce part of the fence) and some bougainvillea stems and tree seedlings in the car. When I crossed the bridge towards the land I found it was still very muddy from the rain and a car was stuck in the mud blocking the road. I had no alternative but to turn back my car and return home. I was driving along a country road where there are quite a number of schools and at that time children were walking home for lunch. 4 little boys were walking in line along the side of the road (there is no pavement or sidewalk) when all of a sudden the boy in front attempted to cross the road without looking. It happened so quickly that I couldn't stop in time, so I hit the child and he rolled into the bush by the

side of the road. The other little boys ran to their friend but he wasn't moving. I saw several adults running to the scene so I decided the best thing was for me to drive to the nearest police post (there are no emergency numbers to call). I later heard that the missionaries that stay close to the accident scene, came out minutes later and took the boy to hospital, but he sadly died on the way. I was in a state of shock as I reported the accident and was told to wait at the police station. I called my friends Stanley and Pauline and they came as soon as they could. They were able to call various friends and people who knew what to do in such instances, which I really appreciated as I have never ever experienced anything like this in my life. I was still in shock over the next few days but I received a lot of support from local friends. The church I attend kindly got together to help provide the funeral costs for the bereaved family. So many people have stood with me during this extremely difficult time – I have felt overwhelmed with all the love I have been shown. I don't know how I would have managed without so much kindness, generosity and the prayers of so many people. The 8 year old boy's family have been remarkable Christians who have shown incredible grace towards me (even the police officer dealing with my case said the family were unusually considerate, especially in their grief). The boy's family were concerned for me and wanted me to know that I shouldn't take the blame for what happened. I am so deeply humbled by their kindness. I heard that the little boy wanted to be a pastor (from the age of 2) and had even preached a short message in church in front of adults at the age of 8! His older sister, who witnessed the accident, has since started attending the Bible club hosted by the missionary organization opposite where the accident happened.

I am under a police bond as I have been charged and I have to go through the legal court system in Zambia. I have to appear in court every so often and my case may eventually go to trial but at this stage I can't predict if/ when that will be.

Throughout this dreadful tragic event, I have felt immensely 'carried' by the prayers of others. Please may I ask you to pray for continued comfort for the family and also for the legal procedures ahead. Please pray for God's protection during this whole process – let His will be done and may He be glorified through this tragedy, bringing many to Christ. Also pray for confidence as I start to drive again and that God will protect me from fear. Please pray too that my family and the visiting team will have a good stay in Zambia these next few months.

Kate