



The Orbus Nursery School for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

The beginning of the school term here saw the start of the newest nursery school in Malawi. Orbus made its small beginning by opening the Orbus Nursery School for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) on Monday 6th September 2010. By the end of the first week we had 66 beautiful little children registered and well settled.



None of the parents or guardians of the children have cars so they or the older siblings either carry the children or they walk to the Orbus Centre from surrounding villages. Many of them were bare foot and very poorly dressed so we have started to provide shoes and clothing for the neediest children. Within two weeks we hope to provide lots of clothes, shoes and other necessities for most of those registered with us and the poorest of their siblings. Some of these children were not included in the recent goods distribution through the surrounding CCAP congregations so Orbus has another opportunity to be generous.



Kindy drop-off



Getting used to new boots



Perfect fit

Some of the children have one parent still alive, some live with grandparents or aunties or uncles, some have both parents but are in a bad place and considered vulnerable. Most of them are very poor, and come from either Daniel Village to the east or Malunga Village to the west, two very poor villages. We have also had some less needy members of the nearby Malawi Housing Corporation community bring their children and we have welcomed them and established a fee structure for those able to enrol and pay. This will provide income, will help ensure the OVC are not stigmatised and will help to involve the broader community. There are no fees for orphans or vulnerable children. We have appointed a Social Welfare Liaison Officer to assist in identifying those in real need.

Some local women have come to volunteer, trained teachers, a development worker and class assistants which is very encouraging. Some of the parents and guardians have also assisted on a voluntary basis every day with things like assisting in class, cooking and cleaning.

The Nursery School program includes prayer, singing, Bible stories, fun activities and playtime every morning from 8am to noon Monday to Fridays. Some of these children are not healthy and because most of them are very poor they do not receive a nutritional and balanced diet, so we are cooking them porridge fortified with vitamins and minerals every morning. We aim to use

some of the vegetables we are growing on the site too and shortly we hope to begin the poultry project and we have initiated the planned planting of a fruit tree orchard and lots of maize before the rainy season starts in November.

Following are some photos from our 1st few days. Like the 1st day of kindy anywhere in the world there was some apprehension and a few tears from some of the children, but not for long.



ORPUS





Kindy pick-up

"Sing to God, sing praise to His name, extol Him who rides on the clouds--His name is the LORD-- and rejoice before Him. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling." (Psalm 68:4-5)

Other News:

Over recent weeks we have appointed three ladies as the management group for the project, a Manageress, Ellen and two assistants Rhoda and Flossy. These lovely ladies are all members of the Ngumbe CCAP. Rhoda is the Deputy Session Clerk and Flossy is the Women's Guild Co-ordinator. Ellen is a schools inspector. We have also established an Oversight and Management Committee which is made up of one representative from each of the four surrounding CCAP churches, Ngumbe, Nansengwe, Chitimba and Mlombwa. Ellen is to report to the Committee which then reports to the CCAP Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission which is to report to the Synod and to the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

The **Orbus HIV & AIDS Club** has also begun, with 49 members registering on the first day, 42 women (with 12 babies among them) and 7 men. This club is designed to provide education and management of living with HIV & AIDS and to develop an herb farming project on the Orbus site to grow herbs which have been identified as helping to boost the immune system. The members initiated a steering committee of ten and have already made plans to begin the herb farming activities. The work is to be done voluntarily by the members, the seeds have been donated by a local NGO, Development Aid from People to People, and the output of this project will be provided free to the children and adults in this community who are living with HIV & AIDS and any excess will be sold at market by Orbus to provide income.



Lewis, Dick, Agnes, Rhoda, Ida, Flossy and Ellen at the inaugural Orbus Centre Oversight and Management Committee meeting

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God willing this small beginning will see Orbus grow to include a primary school, a secondary school and a vocational training centre, along with increased agricultural and farming output and other income producing projects. Your prayers for this are requested. *Craig Manners* September 2010



The Manners family with the 1st Orbus Nursery School class photo. Sept 2010