

SCHOOL PROJECT IN NKHOMA

Each year when the Presbytery sends a team to Malawi, there is a special project awaiting their attention in Nkhoma. This year Barbara Nagy and Dr. Reynier ter Haar, Director of the Nkhoma Hospital Health System, are asking that we construct a school building. As you may know, Dr. Barbara Nagy is a PC(USA) missionary serving at Nkhoma Hospital; she is from Morganton and 51 churches in the Presbytery of WNC provide 80% of her support. So we have deep connections with Nkhoma.

Since hers is a medical mission, why is a school building so important? Because there is essentially no preschool in Nkhoma and the primary schools are so poor that the staff at Nkhoma Hospital have to either arrange to transport their children daily to Lilongwe (60 miles a day round trip), send their children to live with family members in Lilongwe, or take a position closer to better schools. Most cannot afford the high cost of daily transportation or to board their children away from home, so opt for positions elsewhere. So the ability of the Hospital to serve its catchment area of 60,000 is greatly diminished. Dr. ter Haar reports that Malawian professionals are now having only a couple of children but placing a very high priority on getting a quality education for their children, and are willing to pay tuition to do so.

The plan is to start with a preschool in the fall, then add a grade each year until there is a full primary school. Another goal of the plan is teacher training. The idea is that the preschool teachers from the surrounding villages (mostly uneducated volunteers) would continue with the teacher training that Willeke ter Haar has been giving, but adding to it the opportunity for these teachers to team teach on a rotating basis with a master teacher at the Nkhoma school. That way the village teachers will learn by experience. Also there will be a mentor to visit the teachers in their villages and help them apply there what they've learned in training and team teaching.

To construct the simplest of buildings will take at least \$20,000. To finish the interior and equip it will probably take another \$20,000. If the team leaving on May 20 could take at least half of what is needed, the school may be ready to open in September. What a blessing that would be for the community!

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Statement by Steve & Jane Hansel, Members of FPC, Swannanoa and 2007 Malawi Mission Team

One of the most exciting Mission experiences in our lives has been working with several Presbyteries through out the U. S. in the planning, building and maintaining of the Pre-School Teaching Learning Center in Mwandi, Zambia. Our efforts there were also closely tied to refurbishing the hospital facility.

Education is a definite way to address and make a difference in helping to break the poverty cycle. Not only can it give the children a Head Start in learning; it can also impact on older youth with skills training.

This same type of model can be successful in Nkhoma, Malawi with the planning, building of the Pre-School at the Nkhoma Hospital. Just as in Mwandi, Zambia the Pre-School efforts can be collaborated with the Community Schools to help train teachers and better prepare children for economic success at home and in the village.

We look forward to and hope that others will join us in this effort to contribute as an active participant of the Educational Vision to take place in Nkhoma, Malawi.

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