

Jennifer Myers Teaches “Business 101” Seminar in Malawi and Zambia

In the summer of 2007 Jennifer Myers along with Phil Myers and Aaron Blue volunteered to help out Dr. Sam Chilopora with the work of Chizeni Clinic in Balaka, Malawi. We had asked an assessment from this team about what they saw, what we could do better and possible ways to do it.

Jennifer told us that most projects were going well and that the people produced good products. But she noted that there was a gap in understanding of how to market products, how to make a profit and how to sustain a business.

So we asked Jennifer to go on a mission to Malawi and Zambia to teach simple business concepts to those who received Livelihood Development grants. This took place the last two weeks of June 2008. What she taught included: What is needed to start a business; understanding and marketing what makes a business different from its many competitors; planning and anticipating; money management and bookkeeping; and the importance of mentoring and working together.

Jennifer writes this report:

“First, I must thank God for the opportunity and for keeping me safe as I traveled. I thank LifeNets for all the wonderful work the organization does to better communities here in the United States as well as around the world. This, of course, wasn’t my first trip to visit the projects in Malawi, but my eyes were still opened in awe to the living conditions that continue to be improved, the skills learned, and the overwhelming gratefulness from people who feel loved and cared for not only by those in their own communities but by all of us in the States who support them through LifeNets. They are just so grateful for the chance to succeed. I thank the host families who took their time to schedule the presentations, set up the project visits and to care for me as though I were a part of their families. It isn’t always easy traveling to another country, but the families welcomed me with open arms, and I truly felt at home. The generosity and love by these families really captured the essence of LifeNets and the outstanding people that are a part of the organization.

“The main reason for my travels was to present an educational session on simple business concepts and prac-

tices. While I presented the information, the attendees shared their own experiences and stories, they asked questions and were just eager to learn from me and from each other. This discussion not only increased the amount of information they learned, but allowed them to see how they could help each other and how they could learn from each other. They left with tools to help them continue learning how to better their projects/businesses, through marketing, planning and money management. And they were reminded of the importance of working together and possibly mentoring those who too are eager to learn.

“The projects I visited continue to survive and benefit the families and communities. Though the growth is not extreme, it is still a start, and the families are taking the necessary steps to help them succeed.

“My visit to Zambia was a learning opportunity for me as well. There I learned of LifeNet’s cattle program. It is through this program that families learn responsibility and ownership. They realize the importance of working as a community. And the program maintains itself, which is incredible to see.

“It is amazing how one can go to teach, but learn so much more in the process. A part of my

heart remains with those in Malawi and Zambia as I learned more about myself, about service and how quickly friendships can develop as we work together.”

Elifazi Salawila, who coordinated Jennifer’s visit in Malawi, wrote us:

“Thank you for sending Jennifer to us. Her visit to Malawi has been of great benefit to us all. She came to give us a business key, which was not known to some of us.

And we hope that with this business key our businesses will improve and grow. We are glad that she has been able to visit all the projects which were on our programme, both Blantyre and Lilongwe. Jennifer is a cheerful and flexible lady who strived to learn our culture.

This kind of heart helped her to associate with any class of people without problems.”

A more comprehensive report about this project can be found at

<http://www.lifenets.org/jennifer08>.



Jennifer talks about her mission with LifeNets Chairman Tom Peine.



Elifazi Salawila

Foursome Teaches English as a Second Language to Vinogradov Street Children

LifeNets has worked with the Vinogradov street children in Ukraine since 2001. Through generous California sponsors, we have provided the means to feed, clothe and provide transportation for 30 to 40 children who are from troubled homes or orphaned. When we asked Vasyl and Irina Polichko, who watch out for these children, about what more we could personally do with the children, the answer came back very quickly: They would like to learn English!

At about the same time LifeNets supporter Cindy Harper who lives with her husband, Dan, in Cherbourg, France, expressed interest in visiting Ukraine on one of our journeys. She has a master's degree in teaching English as a second language and is experienced in working with children and youth. The Kubiks and Harpers visited and stayed with the Polichkos in December 2007 and planned a summer program to teach English and help with a day camp. The project was joined by retired school teacher Ken Zahora from Indianapolis, Indiana, and university student Stefan Saxin from Gothenburg, Sweden, and took place from June 15-29, 2008.

Cindy Harper described the experience:

“Our project involved teaching English classes each morning during the summer camp. We found an English program that involved lots of movements, songs and games to which the children responded very well. Music is a universal language, and our hope is that through these songs they will remember the English words and phrases long after we have left. Our hope is also that we have planted seeds for basic understanding of and interest in the English language. As the children learn and grow, knowledge of English can give them a distinct advantage in both school and future employment. While at the start of the project our Ukrainian was extremely limited and their English the same, we were able to communicate and share good times through gestures, drawings, songs, movements and games.

“We spent much of the two weeks of summer camp safely behind the high walls of the center or the home. However, on some afternoons we took excursions to go swimming

or explore nearby sites of interest. On the way home from one excursion we passed through a gypsy neighborhood. That was definitely an experience we will all remember, as we witnessed a level of poverty you don't often see in Western countries. We stopped in front of the large Baptist church of the neighborhood, sang a song and passed out treats. There were masses of children, some in colorful and highly decorated clothing, and others wearing not much at all. It was an experience of contrasts in

many ways, and one we will not soon forget.

“The children at the camp left a lasting impact on all of us. Though so many of them came from very hard backgrounds and many were still living in very difficult circumstances, they were all very loving, trusting, open and receptive to our teaching and attention (despite the language barrier).

I attribute this to the patient work and love of the small group of Ukrainians who work with them on a daily basis. The children obviously knew that they were in a safe environment there.

“Another thing I learned from this experience is that a humble heart that is dedicated to God's purpose in one's life can yield amazing results. Miracles are worked daily in the little town of Vinogradov through a couple named Vasyl and Irina Polichko, who years ago decided to truly put into practice what they were preaching. Children, who might otherwise have gone hungry (both physically and emotionally) are patiently and lovingly cared for and nourished. Life's circumstances could have destined many of these boys and girls to a life of hunger, tough choices and suffering. Instead, they are given the opportunity to go down a different path, one that leads to life and blessings.

“The light of God's love is shown to them in a very powerful way. The Polichkos saw a need and instead of turning away (as many of us may do, feeling helpless to do anything), took responsibility for those around them. God has truly blessed their efforts, and we were blessed to spend just a little bit of time with them to witness this great example of Christian love.”

A more comprehensive report of this project can be found at <http://lifenets.org/vinogradov/summer08/menu.htm>.



The group while on an afternoon excursion.



Cindy encouraging children to respond during class.



Ken leading a vocabulary review game



Stefan in van with children.