



Swazi Team Awaits Expectantly & Joyfully

Who and what were waiting for the VanderWals when they returned to their beloved Swaziland a few weeks ago?

A Swazi team ready to resume work for The Luke Commission...That's who.

Talking to them puts things into perspective and gets to the heart of matters. That's what.

"We're happy to have Harry and Echo back. They are a present to the Swazi nation," said PHUMIE, a widowed mother of four who first translated at TLC mobile clinics in 2005. Now she's a team leader.

"Right after they left, the hospital and clinics did not have enough medications anywhere in the country," Phumie explained. "Some places did not even have Panado (Tylenol), and the prices at the pharmacies went up higher and higher."

"Swaziland needs the medications and variety of services The Luke Commission offers," Phumie noted, "The VanderWals show great love to the people, especially those out in the bush."



Phumie standing with patients patiently waiting for Bible distribution at night...



Lion Echo and Phumie celebrating at the beginning of a clinic day...

The weather is hot – 102 degrees F – "and we had no rain in December. It's raining now, but it's too little and the wrong time of year. The crops are dying," Phumie continued.

Another longtime team member, GUGU, said, "Even I am fine, now. It seems like Lions Harry and Echo went to America for a year. Many people are dying in the bush."

"At the airport, Zion was waving and waving at us. He ran and jumped into our arms," Gugu laughed, as

she so often does. "The boys said they missed us."

Gugu bubbles as she talks about a 3-month HIV/AIDS testing and counseling course that she, Phumie, and Phindie are taking. "We are learning, learning. We're almost done. I thank The Luke Commission for sending me."

"Now I am making a delicious dinner. I am a chef today," said Gugu. Then, her lighthearted manner turned serious.



Gugu provides HIV testing and Blood Sugar testing at each clinic...



Phumie registering patients at a TLC clinic....

"So many Swazis are being saved, getting help for their disabilities, medications for their sicknesses, clothes for many vulnerable children, Bibles they cannot afford, eyeglasses so they don't lose their sight. Then we translators can have money at the end of the month, too.

"I am praying the people in America will continue to donate. We cannot do this without them," said Gugu, as the heart of the matter popped up again.

Team leader SIPHO said of the VanderWals return: "Everyone is laughing. We are having fun with the boys. We are all happy."

Personally, Siphio admits 2010 has started out poorly. "I have trouble at home. I know the devil does not want me to work for Jesus at The Luke Commission. But he is a liar. We work for the true God, the one who died on the cross."



Sipho loves playing with Zion (Mandla)...

Sipho translates for Lion Harry long into the night (with a smile!)...

Sipho shows a Mkhulu (Grandpa) how to use the brake on his P.E.T.

“The staff has been animated since our return,” noted Lion Echo. “They can’t relate to jet lag.”

The team immediately went to work sorting and distributing the contents of the 40-foot container which arrived from Ohio just four days before the VanderWals left in October.

PHINDIE, who cares for the mission house where the VanderWals live as well as travels to the bush clinics, said: “Now I have much work. It’s a wonderful thing for us. It’s what we were praying for. We know our people need Jesus and medication.”

Yes, the heart of the matter.



Phindie with Lion Echo at the head of the (left to right) medical line at clinic...



Some of the TLC team.... (left to Themba, Thulani, Small Sipho, Phumie, Phindie

Taking pride and responsibility for supervising the pharmacy is THEMBA. He’s been with TLC since the beginning, also.

“We are not packing medicines yet. We’re unpacking boxes from the container. But soon we will get the medicines ready for the clinics. I’m ready to work with The Luke Commission again. It is my life now,” he said with great conviction.

When the VanderWals flew into Manzini, “it was a big day,” Themba said. “It was a great thing to us.”



Phindie registering patients at a TLC clinic...



Themba hands medicine out a hut window at this TLC clinic...

DUMSILE, a new but dedicated team member, said her favorite TLC job is working in the HIV/AIDS department. "I like to counsel people, but I know we could not do this without the people in America.

The mother of three daughters all still at home and "still schooling, Dumsile explained: "My husband is sick, and Lions Harry and Echo are helping him. They are so wonderful to me. I wish they would never go back to America."

Dumsile credits TLC for much. "They give a wheelchair and medicine to my husband and clothes to my children. I'm so happy."



Dumsile working with Zeb and TLC's visiting dentist Dr. Niles in 2009...



Echo enjoys a moment with Dumsile and her husband after receiving a P.E.T....

"We are very much blessed," said THULANI. "Now that the VanderWals are back and safe, it is good for all the Swazi nation."

Thulani added, "The Swazis are looking forward to the clinics. I want to pray with everyone before they are treated. We cannot do it without God's power. We trust in Him for everything."

With this in mind, the refining of our lives, we join hearts and minds and resources to take compassionate medicine the AIDS battleground of Swaziland.

Janet Tuinstra for The Luke Commission here and there

P.S. Early in the morning Jan. 5, 2010, Clara Hills (featured in the last update) died. Clara had asked God to give her "enough time to crochet 100 blankets for the Swazi babies," a friend said. Clara was well on the way toward her goal, when Jesus decided He had even a better plan: "Come up yonder, dear one."



Sipho helps a Gogo (Grandma) into her new bush wheelchair...



Thulani stands with a child on his P.E.T.



Gugu smiles with a Gogo and her new glasses...



Thulani registers a TLC patient...



Phumie also registers a TLC patient...



Sipho works to change yet another trailer tire...



Sipho and Phumie, the TLC staff leaders, with their TLC brother and sister...