

Highlights from SWC's Research Trip to Uganda, March 12-29, 2008

In June of 2007, the Africa Youth Ministries submitted a Needs Application requesting sports equipment donations from SWC, as they have been working to integrate sports into their HIV/AIDS, drug, teen pregnancy, and street kids education programs. Since then, we had been trying to find an opportunity to travel to Uganda during one of their sports programs in order to research their needs, in the hopes of possibly organizing a future volunteer trip to Uganda to distribute equipment. Then, in January of 2008, we learned that 10 high school girls' soccer players from Point Grey Secondary School in Vancouver, BC Canada, would be making a trip to Uganda to help the Africa Youth Ministries promote girls' soccer. SWC was invited by the Africa Youth Ministries to travel with the Canadian group in March, make observations, and conduct whatever research necessary to allow us to help/support their programs in the future. Together we worked in six schools in three different communities over the course of the two-week trip... sometimes traveling up to 4.5 hours per day to reach outlying communities. SWC donated soccer uniforms, shorts, socks, and goalie gloves to two girls' soccer teams in one of the communities in Hoima District...



Sunday, March 16, 2008 (Jinja District)

(Left) At one of the schools, we saw this little guy... check out his "soccer ball." We saw many like these... made of banana fiber and polythene bags.



(Above) Monday, March 17, 2008

The next day, we returned to the school, to gather with the children, enjoy some song and traditional dance, and lively drumming.



(Above) The Point Grey Greyhounds present soccer balls to the school.



(Above) The children at the school did not want us to leave, and grabbed our hands through the windows of our bus. Then they ran after it as we were pulling away...



(Above) At the next school in Jinja District, we noticed the many HIV/AIDS-related messages painted on the walls, such as "Say NO to gifts for sex."



(Left) Here's another little guy with a banana fiber/polythene bag soccer ball.



(Left) The students (approx. 1400) return to their classrooms.

(Right) Another HIV/AIDS-related message painted on the wall, "People with AIDS need care and support."



(Right) This little girl from the first school we visited in Jinja had chased our bus all the way to the next school... so after our work there, we gave her a ride back to her school!





Thursday, March 20, 2008 (Rakai District)

(Left) This morning, on the way to our first school, we passed by a place where locals go to get water... they either don't have running water in their homes, or they can't afford it.



(Above) Upon our arrival at the first school, the children were lined up and clapping in rhythm as we exited the bus.



(Above) Soon afterwards, they broke out in welcoming song and dance.



(Left) Then we were given a tour of the school grounds, which included some dorm-type rooms. Many of the children that stay here are orphans because one or both of their parents have died of HIV/AIDS.



(Left) One of the unenclosed classrooms. Approximately 350 students attend this school.

(Below) This is the outside, and inside, of the "kitchen" on the school grounds.

(Below) Just like the first school, the children of the second school welcomed us with rhythmic clapping as we entered their school. At this school, there are 157 students... 91 of which are orphans, and 53 are "double" orphans.



(Below) While the locals prepare the soccer field for our friendship game, the Point Grey girls and the Ugandan girls team dance together, to the beat of African drummers. After the Point Grey girls presented the Ugandan team with uniforms, they piled into the back of a truck for home...



Friday, March 21, 2008 (Rakai District)

Today we would have another friendship soccer game on another field in Rakai district.



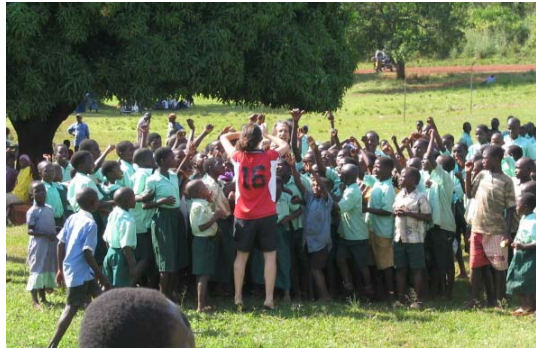
There was more lively drumming music and traditional dancing to enjoy, along with all the beautiful children!





Tuesday,
March 25,
2008 (Hoima
District)

(Left) This morning we would be treated to more dance and song at the first school we visited.



(Left) All the kids LOVED getting their photo taken!



(Right) As we left the school, they ran beside and behind our bus again... with the same, beautiful smiles!



(Above) At the next school, the children ran next to our bus as it made its way onto the school grounds. We were greeted by warm, friendly smiles.



(Above) These teams are wearing soccer uniforms, shorts, and socks donated by SWC!



(Above) There seemed to be more "bounce" in their step during their warm-ups after donning their new uniforms!



Thank you... with your donations and monetary support, we will be able continue to provide much needed sports equipment to programs in need such as these in Uganda!

