



ORBUS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2011



Update on Activities - November 2010 to March 2011:

- * The Orbus Nursery School.
- * OVC Nutritional Feeding program.
- * The Orbus Farm and Agricultural program.
 - * Further Site Developments.
 - * HIV/AIDS Group.
- * Craft and Fellowship Group.
 - * Sports teams.
- * The Masters family home.
- * Visitors to the Orbus Centre.
- * The Orbus Files: Snapshots of some of the children around Ngumbe.

We encourage you to visit the Orbus website at www.orbusafrica.org and especially to view the [Orbus Photo Albums](#).



"Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." (Isaiah 1:17)



The Orbus Nursery School for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC):

The nursery school for OVC aged between 2 and 5 has been operating since 6th September 2010. The number of children attending varies but reports put the number at between 60 and 80 regular attendees with around 120 registered.



The Nutritional Feeding Program:

The outdoor kitchen has been extended and semi-enclosed allowing for its use during the rainy season. About 80-100 children are fed Monday to Friday at the Orbus Centre with a nutritional, vitamin and mineral enriched porridge formula. St. Andrews Christian College in Melbourne, Australia kindly raised funds last year for this program.



A New Home for the Masters Family:

Orbus has started construction of a new home and a rental house for the Masters family, a child-headed family who have lost both parents and live together looking after their young brother Manuel who is disabled. The first of these two houses is nearing completion.



Fastani and Manuel
March 2011



December 2010



February 2011



March 2011

The Orbus Farm and Agricultural Income Producing Initiatives:

Approximately 3 acres of maize was planted prior to the rains in November 2010. This is due to be harvested in March/April 2011. A fruit orchard was planted in November 2010 and vegetables grown include sweet potatoes and cucumbers. Orbus volunteer Blessings Kanike generously donated 22 paw paw trees which have been planted near the John Calvin building.



Blessings reports recently: "We have very healthy maize crops and if the rains continue to come we might have a very good yield. The parents and guardians are really working very hard in the gardens and they are really helping us." Orbus were also given banana tree suckers by a banana grower, Mr. Maiden, from Thyolo district which have been planted at the Orbus site.

Orbus Site Developments:

The clean water well started in September 2010 on the Orbus site was completed on time by Assan in early October. The workers, volunteers and wider community have been very happy to have access to this free, clean, drinking water. The area around the well is being landscaped to help make it an enjoyable meeting place.



Recent activity at the Orbus site has included farm work, planting grass, tending the hedge and the many plants and trees planted in 2010, laying bricks, completing plumbing works, septic tank works, mains water connection to the Spurgeon and Lloyd-Jones buildings, clearing an area for potential future building work, tending the fruit tree orchard, clearing a playing field, and planting more trees and plants.



Craft and Fellowship Group:

The Craft, Cooking and Fellowship Group has started. This group has been set up at the Centre for the mothers and guardians of OVC to spend time together, to have Bible studies and to help each other with their shared situations. A room has been stocked with a good supply of wool, cotton, material, needles etc from the goods in the containers from Australia. Centre Assistant Manager Flossy Mlanga reports, "The women are very much interested, we have registered about 32 women now. We'll have more after finishing working in the gardens."

Orbus Junior and Senior Soccer and Netball Teams:

Our multi-talented Blessings has taken on the role of Head Coach of the Junior and Senior Soccer teams. He reports: "I could see kids were excited coming at Orbus to play soccer, Although they were bare footed and others put on shirts without buttons I could see joy in their eyes, they were more than 20 youths aged 6 up to 11, living in communities close to Orbus campus. I love playing with these kids, they love soccer. I will be training with them every Saturday morning." A sporting field was cleared in November 2010 on the Orbus site. There has also been a women's netball team started at the Centre.



The Orbus HIV & AIDS Group:

HIV & AIDS is prevalent in the area so one of the main concerns for Orbus is to assist those living with HIV & AIDS and to educate the community on prevention. To achieve this the Orbus HIV & AIDS Group was established and held its first meeting on the 14th September 2010 with 49 members registering on the first day, 42 women (with 12 babies among them) and 7 men. The club is led by a local man named Caruso and a volunteer committee with two young women from a USAID funded group called Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) providing guidance and specialist HIV & AIDS input. They are very active, meeting at the Centre every two weeks at least. The group's herb farming project is going well, with herbs which have been identified as helping to boost the immune system, having been planted on the Orbus site.

Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC):

The Orbus Centre for the Care of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) is located in Ngumbe, Blantyre, Malawi and is held in trust to care for OVC with joint trustees from CCAP Blantyre Synod and the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (in Australia). The Synod's Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission are now overseeing the Orbus Centre and the transfer of the project to the Blantyre Synod is expected shortly.

The Orbus Files:

In an endeavour to encourage personal prayer and directed interest and care for individual children and families we here make available some brief reports of some of the children. Please do pray for these children, for their spiritual salvation and for their earthly needs to be met.

Alinafe, whose name means "God is with us" in Chichewa, arrived at the Orbus Centre on 7th September with a dirty, torn dress, no shoes and undernourished. Praise God, five months later she is looking much healthier.



Alinafe on 7th Sept 2010



Alinafe on 14th Feb 2011

Baby Lillian was born in Ngumbe on 20th October 2010. The Orbus Centre management heard about Lillian and visited her on 16th November 2010. Lillian lost her mother, 7 days after her birth, from HIV. She is now being taken care of by a local woman, Marianne, and her family. Thanks to the goods donated in last year's container from Australia, Orbus were able to donate assorted baby clothes for Lillian. Orbus are going to monitor Lillian and assist Marianne when possible. Lillian was baptised at the Ngumbe CCAP church. Praise God Lillian has been tested negative for HIV/AIDS so far but she needs to be tested again in a few months time.



Rhoda, Flossy and Ellen visited baby Lillian and Marianne with gifts from Orbus

Gladys lives near the Orbus Centre, is 28 years old and she has 4 children. Her son **Clement** is 5 years old and cannot walk but he can stand, she also has a 3 month old baby and lives in very poor condition. Sisters **Delicious** (HIV positive) and **Nissi** (negative) lost their mother recently to HIV and are now living with their mother's sister. Delicious is older but smaller, possibly because of being HIV+.



Clement



Clement and Gladys



Nissi and Delicious



With the Orbus Team

A lady named **Maria** comes to the Orbus Centre with her twins **Titus** and **Tionge**, every Monday to Friday. She travels about 5 kilometres, sometimes carrying them on her shoulder. "It's sad to see her carrying them but it's a joy to see them. She says how happy she feels to come to Orbus and how Orbus has changed her children's health status, so she is happy. "

Martha was found to be HIV+ in 2000, now she has a son by the name of **David** who is also living with HIV. Martha now is working near the Orbus Centre as a hair dresser. **Annie** and her siblings attend the Centre and their mum is quite ill.



Maria with Titus and Tionge



Martha and David



Annie 7-9-10 and with her mum and siblings Feb 2011.



Visitors to the Orbus Centre:

Volunteers from Australia, Robert Boyle, John Boyle and Bobby Gane spent time at the Orbus Centre late last year and made a valuable contribution to the project. As well as busy days working hard on the Orbus site, another important contribution was forming and strengthening local relationships, partnering and networking with our friends in Malawi and demonstrating the bonds of Christian solidarity.

As well as Australian volunteers there have also been visitors **from Norway** as well as **local visitors** to the Centre. Two ladies from Network Development for Youth from Norway, an N.G.O which is helping orphans as well as people living with HIV/AIDS came to the Centre with some gifts to be distributed to the children. They were on an exchange program sponsored by the Norwegian Government. **A local woman also came bearing gifts with her daughter**. They brought a box of clothes for the children and a bag of maize for the Centre. Then on the 4th December, the Orbus children were spoiled with gifts from **Unilever Malawi** who came with presents including soccer balls, pencils, laundry and bathing soaps and at the end they donated sugar and cooking oil to the Orbus Centre. "It was beautiful to see the children having an early Christmas and treated in a special way, drinking Sobu (a local cordial), playing games and going home with nice gifts from Unilever Malawi," commented Blessings. Lastly some students from the local public **Ngumbe Secondary School** recognized Orbus "for the wonderful work they are doing helping the needy", by visiting the Centre.



The Orbus Team: Orbus has been blessed by God, not only with a very fertile piece of land which we can utilise to help the needy, but also with a dedicated group of caring people in both Malawi and Australia who have embraced the Orbus Centre vision. The number of local women who turn up every morning to volunteer with cooking, teaching, cleaning and other jobs is heart-warming and encouraging.



On a sad note, Chief Daniel Senior passed away recently. The Orbus team from the Centre and from Australia are very grateful for the way that Daniel Snr and his son Daniel have embraced Orbus and assisted in its development. We send condolences to his family. Below is a photo of Daniel at the Centre last year.



Chief Daniel Snr and Jnr
at the Opening Ceremony on 31st July 2010

On a personal note, after a busy few months in Melbourne, and with one extra member of the family, we are preparing to return to Malawi for a short-term visit from April to September 2011.

In Jesus Name, *Craig Manners*