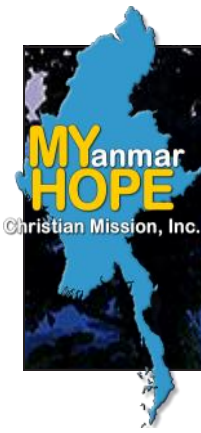


"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving"
- Amy Carmichael



MyHope Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 3 July 2014

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Greetings

We hope that your summer is going well, and that you are enjoying life to its fullest. Over in our neck of the woods the corn is really tall and will be ripe soon. In fact, in the field behind our house, the corn stalks are taller than we have ever seen them.

In America, most of the children are enjoying their summer break, but in Myanmar the break is over and the kids are back in school. Now it is the middle of the rainy season, and the extremely hot, wet weather brings with it a lot of problems, some of which you can read about in the HBS health update.

A lot has happened since our last newsletter, so let's get right to it!

Dengue Fever Outbreak

Many of you have been following our Facebook page and know about the recent outbreak of dengue fever in Yangon. Hope Boarding School has not been immune to this potentially deadly disease, and several of our children and staff have been affected (two of them with the life-threatening variety). We will share more details later in this newsletter, but here we would like to make a **special request for donations to replenish our emergency medical fund**.

Several of our children, and one of our staff, have required extended inpatient care at Pinlon Hospital. The care they receive there is very good, and much better than what



Vah Nei and Khen Them in the hospital with Dengue Fever

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they could get at the government hospital. However, being a private hospital, it is more expensive.

When the outbreak first occurred we received a wonderful outpouring of support from many of our friends, and we are so very grateful for that! However, as the rainy season has continued, more of our children have become sick and have required inpatient treatment. And, since the rainy season will continue for another two months, we need to be prepared in the event that any more of our children or staff get the disease.

Will you please send a special donation to help us with our medical needs? Some of you have indicated that we should let you know if we need more funds, but we want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to share in the blessing of giving.

Please go to our website and click on the "Donate Today" button, or send a check to the address listed in this newsletter. Thank you, and God bless your generosity!

What is Dengue Fever? (source: Wikipedia)

"Dengue fever, also known as breakbone fever, is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by the dengue virus. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle and joint pains, and a characteristic skin rash that is similar to measles. In a small proportion of cases the disease develops into the life-threatening dengue hemorrhagic fever, resulting in bleeding, low levels of blood platelets and blood plasma leakage, or into dengue shock syndrome, where dangerously low blood pressure occurs."

April Trip Update

For the past several years, Palal has been requesting that a team come to Hope Boarding School while the children are on their school break (March, April, and May) to spend some extended time helping them practice their conversational English skills.

This year we were finally in a position to do just that. MaryAnn put together a team of volunteers to help prepare lesson plans, gather materials, and accompany her to Yangon to work with our kids at HBS.

The team consisted of herself, Susan Cormeny, Luke and Laura Crater, Missy Farley, and Caren Hughes. Anne Tetzlaff and Jami Cherry were key volunteers in helping to prepare for the trip, and many, many people contributed funds and materials to make the trip a success. MaryAnn will be sharing more details about the trip later in this edition, and one of the team members (Missy) will share from her own perspective.

Thank you to everyone who donated funds, gathered and donated materials, and prayed for this trip. It could not have happened without you!



The April trip team & volunteers (Not pictured: Missy Farley)

VBX: “Weird Animals–Where Jesus’ Love is One of a Kind”

By Missy Farley

During our April visit to Myanmar we held the second **Vacation Bible eXperience (VBX)** at Hope Boarding School. This year’s theme was **Weird Animals – Where Jesus’ Love is One-of-a-Kind**. Kids learned that Jesus loves you even when...you're left out, you're different, you don't understand, you do wrong, and when you're afraid.

Despite the temperature soaring over 100 degrees, the kids had a great time as they rotated through story, crafts, games, snacks and worship. It was fun to see so many faces



Pao Min Thang and Missy Farley

from the previous year’s VBX, in addition to the beautiful new faces that we had the pleasure of meeting for the very first time.

Once again, the HBS students went above and beyond during this year's VBX. They invited friends and neighbors, helped decorate, assisted during transitions and helped us translate at the various stations.

This year’s VBX wouldn’t have been possible without Luke Crater, Laura Crater, Susan Cormeny, MaryAnn Cherry, Anne Tetzlaff, Jami Cherry, Palal, Kikim, and all of you who donated funds and supplies.

Thank you all for blessing the kids in Myanmar!! We pray that every child walked away knowing that they are God’s masterpiece, his greatest creation and that He is always with us.

Editors Note: Most of the children attending the VBX were either from Buddhist families, or converts from Buddhism. It is safe to say that many of the children had never heard of Jesus’ love before that day, or they knew very little about Jesus. Please pray for the precious Gospel seeds that were planted that day to grow and bear much fruit!

You can see many great pictures and videos of the VBX at our public Facebook page (no account needed). Just go to www.facebook.com/myanmarhope and click on the “pictures” tab and the “videos” tab under the main banner. To watch a video of the precious children singing “All Around the World,” go to this link: <http://goo.gl/ykBLIQ>

Hope Boarding School Update

A lot has happened at HBS since our last newsletter; some very good things, and some not so good.

Annual Matriculation Exam Results

The children all took their final exams in February and March. We also had three eleventh grade boys that took their high school matriculation exam but, unfortunately, none of them passed. This is very disappointing, of course, but not wholly unexpected. This is an incredibly difficult exam.

The annual matriculation exam spans nine days and covers a wide range of subjects, some of them very advanced.

This year, out of 541,946 students nationwide who registered for the exam, only 171, 647 passed the exam (about thirty-one percent). According to the Myanmar Government’s Ministry of Education, only eight percent of the country’s population have finished high school.

The high-pressure exam is administered in Burmese, and even children whose mother-tongue is Burmese have a very difficult time with the test. Most of our children do not know Burmese when they get to HBS, so they must learn the language after they arrive in Yangon. Even with the language difficulty, most of our children are doing well in their classes, and some are even at the top of their class.

Our boys who failed the matriculation exam came to HBS at an older age, and they had not received a good education in their early years back in the villages. This lack of a good foundation, on top of the language difficulties, put them at a severe disadvantage.



Chuck and MaryAnn Cherry visiting with the local high school principal and several high school teachers

Even with all of the disadvantages, though, they are still so much better off than if they had never come to HBS in the first place. Back in their villages they would not have even been able to attend high school, let alone be able to sit for the exam.

In addition, during the time they are at HBS, our children receive so much more than just an education! As all of you who have been following this ministry know, the children at HBS are rescued out of abject poverty and placed into a loving, caring home where they are fed, clothed, housed, and provided with incredible benefits that are not even remotely possible back in their villages.

Several people have asked us what the children do when they finish at HBS and are not able to pass the matriculation exam. This is a very difficult question that we are still wrestling with. First of all, if the student decides he or she wants to try



The main entrance to the local high school where several of our children attend. Chuck and MaryAnn were granted the privilege of briefly touring the school and visiting with the teachers and students.

taking the exam again, we allow them to stay on for an additional year to study for the next exam (it is only given once a year). If the student decides they want to return to their village, of course we honor that decision.

If the student takes the exam a second time and fails, then he or she will need to return home to their family. We (Myanmar Hope Christian Mission) would love to continue supporting these children as they transition into adult life back in the villages, or wherever they decide to go, but as of now we do not have the resources for that kind of ministry. Our budget is stretched thin as it is, and we have to focus our ministry funds on our core mission. As the ministry grows, and more funds are available, then we can possibly do more for the children as they finish high school and move on.

Please pray for us as we struggle with this aspect of the ministry. We wish that we had the funds to do more, and we pray for the Lord to provide. Please pray with us. Thank you.

You can watch a short video clip about education in Myanmar by visiting this link: <http://goo.gl/wHbdTF>

To learn more about education in Myanmar, this Wikipedia article is a good place to start:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Burma

Online Donations can be made securely at our website: <http://www.myanmarhope.org/Donate>

Checks can be made out to “MyHope” and sent to:
Myanmar Hope Christian Mission
624 Garvey Lane, Chatham, IL 62629

All donations are tax deductible and 96 cents of every dollar goes directly to the people of Myanmar.

HBS Health Update

The annual monsoon season is in full force right now. Palal tells us that they have a saying up in the villages, something to the effect that, "If you live through the rainy season, you'll probably live another year." In other words, many people die during the rainy season.

There are a number of reasons for this, of course. There is a much greater chance of catching mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria, dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, and yellow fever.

Flooding is also common during the monsoons, and the lack of proper sanitation infrastructure leads to many more waterborne diseases such as bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever.

Poisonous snakes are out and about in much greater numbers during this time of year. And of course, the temperatures can rise into the 100's Fahrenheit with 100 percent humidity, which is a perfect environment for the spread of disease-laden bacteria.

When you think about all of the ways to get sick in Myanmar during the rainy season, it is a wonder that anyone is able to survive during that time!



Flooding at HBS. Three of our boys captured and killed snakes in this water!

and one of our staff, Mr. Pa Sat, contracted the more serious dengue hemorrhagic fever, which causes internal bleeding and can lead to death if untreated.



We are so thankful that HBS is located very near to Pinlon Hospital, a very good private hospital. (One of the reasons Palal chose the current location for HBS was the close proximity to Pinlon). We are also extremely grateful for the outpouring of financial support that allowed us to send our children to Pinlon, rather than to the greatly inferior government hospital, which is located downtown. Only when you have been to Yangon and have seen both private and public health care can you truly appreciate the difference.

Even though Pinlon is a private hospital, it does not have its own blood bank. When Let Tin Pao and Pa Sat needed transfusions, Kikim had to actually go around the neighborhood seeking out blood donors! It was a very difficult and trying time for her, and since Palal was up in Naypyidaw on important business, she was doing all of the work herself. She nearly ran herself to exhaustion during this time.



Some of our kids at the entrance to Pinlon Hospital after being discharged



Flooding around the local high school. The school was closed for two days, until the waters receded enough to get to the school from the road.

So, with all of the above in mind, it is not surprising that some of our children and staff have been sick over the past month. So far, we have had eight children in and out of the hospital with regular dengue fever. One of our boys, Let Tin Pao,

A very positive note to this story is the relatively small percentage of our children who have become sick so far this season. While at the hospital, Palal interacted with representatives from other organizations and religious groups whose

members had been admitted. One well-known ministry said over fifty-percent of their students were down with dengue fever. A leader from one of the local Buddhist monasteries said that eighty out of one hundred monks were sick with the fever.

Palal and Kikim go to great lengths to make sure the children are protected and the facilities are clean and bright. Of course, they can only do that because of your generous financial support, which pays for things like mosquito repellent, mosquito spray, mosquito nets, and so forth.



Spraying for mosquitoes at Hope Boarding School

Please continue to pray for our children and staff. Especially pray for Kikim, who has been working around the clock caring for the children, both in and out of the hospital. She has also been battling kidney stones, and that leaves her very weak to start with. All of the added stress of taking care of many sick children really take a toll on her strength. Of course, Palal helps out with the children when he is home, but he has been forced to travel quite a bit lately, leaving more of the burden on Kikim's shoulders.

Thank you all for your generous donations which enable us to really care for these children. You make it all possible. Whenever I compare our HBS kids to the other children that I see in Myanmar, it is obvious how well they are taken of. Our kids are very healthy and strong, their skin is glowing, their hair is thick and shiny, and their smiles are vibrant and beautiful. The contrast with most other children their age is striking! Thank you, and God bless you.

For more information about the dengue fever outbreak in Myanmar: <http://goo.gl/0czKXu>

HBS Van Project

We are still raising funds for a new Van for Hope Boarding School, but thanks be to God we are getting closer to our goal! We sent out a fundraising letter back in February, and that prompted many of you to send a generous donation to help with this vital project. The West Side Christian Church VBX also donated their missions offerings to MyHope for the van, and we are so thankful for that!



A new Toyota HiAce van. We hope to purchase something similar to this model.

As of the time of the writing of this newsletter, our van fund stands at just under \$32,000.00. We estimate the cost of the new van, including all fees, licenses, permits, etc., to be about \$40,000.00. So we are almost there!

It would be great to have the use of a van to transport our children back and forth to the hospital. This is just one of the many examples of how a vehicle would greatly enhance the lives of Palal, Kikim, and everyone else at Hope Boarding School. Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support!

HBS Building Update

Work continues on the new building and on the grounds of HBS, thanks to your many generous donations. Since the last newsletter, Palal has been able to build a new front and back fence, put in new security gates, **install a new generator (praise God!)** and finish several other smaller, but much needed, projects.



We are especially thankful for the new generator!

This is something that HBS has needed since the very beginning, and now the need has been met! Every night the

power goes out, and the children had been forced to use battery-powered flashlights to finish their studies for the day. Also, since food is prepared using electric cookers, if there is no electricity, meals are delayed. The new generator allows life to continue on as normal, even when the power goes out. Thank You Lord, and thank you to those of you who donated the funds for this wonderful generator!



A portion of the new front security fence under construction

We still have several needs related to the building and infrastructure of HBS. **Most important is the need for fire escapes on the new building**, but other needs include:

- Steel frames for fire escape doors
- Commercial dryer
- Two gas stoves and tanks
- A 2,000 liter water tank
- Tile for boys' dorm (two floors)
- Two electrical meters
- Garage between the buildings
- Tile for stairwells in the new building

If you are interested in helping to fund any of these needs, please contact us for more information! Thank you and God bless you.

Church Rebuilding Project

Palal has been traveling quite a bit lately, taking care of urgent church and ministry business in the northwest. One of the reasons for his travels is the ongoing effort to rebuild some of the poorest churches.

At our annual convention in Tamu last December, the people requested that we help them restore and rebuild their old, broken-down and falling-in buildings.

One of our older widows, Mrs. Nei Kho Lhing, traveled all

the way from Homalin to request that we help build a church for the Christians. Mrs. Lhing is an elderly blind widow, and it was both amazing and very touching that she would set out on such a long and dangerous journey by truck, boat, and bus, to come meet us and make her request.

We told the northwest Christians that we would do what we could to raise awareness and funds to help them in their plight.

So far this year we have received only a small portion of what is needed to help the Christians to rebuild. We are especially encouraged by the congregation of Milford Christian Church, in Milford, Illinois. Pastor Brent Zastrow and the missions committee have challenged their congregation to supply the needs for an entire new church building for Canaan Christian Church (\$15,000.00).

We have also been able to start the rebuilding process for Tingkaya Christian Church (now finished), Namihan Christian Church, Khampat Christian Church, and Valpabung Christian Church, but much more is needed in order to finish these jobs.

However, we have not yet been able to start any work on Homalin Christian Church, Joljam Christian Church, or Jagnoi Christian Church.



Namihan Christian Church under construction

It is important to remember why we need to help our Christian family in northwest Myanmar. The poverty rate across Myanmar is very high in general, but the poverty in northwest Myanmar is even worse, and among the Kuki people of northwest Myanmar it is worst of all. The unemployment rate in Chin State and Sagaing Division is around 75 percent; but in many of the smaller villages it averages 95 percent. There are just no jobs available for earning money.

Some of the people survive with small farm plots and

maybe an animal or two. Others work in the rice fields of Burmese farmers when work is available, but they are usually paid in rice rather than in money. Others survive by finding food wherever they can, sometimes by digging for roots and vegetables in the jungle. In other words, the people are desperately poor, and they have no money to use to support their pastors, let alone to save up for church building projects.

It is incumbent upon us, who are so greatly blessed with an over-abundance of material and financial possessions, to help our brothers and sisters in need. These folks are not lazy—they are very hard working, and will work from morning till night when work is available. They provide all of the labor themselves, but they need our help to provide them with resources and building materials.

Will you help our Christian family in northwest Myanmar? Will you send a generous donation today to help build or rebuild a church? An entire church building for one of these congregations can be constructed for about \$15,000.00. That includes all of the bricks, cement, lumber, and corrugated steel for a roof. Please pray about this, and if the Lord is leading you to help your fellow Christians, please send a check or make a donation online. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns at info@myanmarhope.org or (217) 415-9187.

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL)

By MaryAnn Cherry

From April 22 – May 20, I had the privilege to spend time at HBS, working with the students and staff on their English skills. The students learn English in the government schools,

where the teaching method is rote memorization. They do well with reading and writing English, but do not have an opportunity to practice conversational English. Although they are somewhat insecure about their speaking abilities, they are very eager to learn and seemed comfortable practicing their English with us. And they all did a great job!



Susan helps Lhing Neo and San Kim with a reading exercise

For the first week, Susan Cormeny, Luke and Laura Crater, and Missy Farley were there to help get the classes started. Then, I was there for a week, alone. The last two weeks Caren Hughs joined us. For over two weeks, we also had the help of Mr. Thang Boi, who is Kikim's younger brother. His English is very good; in fact, he has taught ESL classes in Myanmar. We so much appreciate his willingness to leave his family and spend time at HBS helping the students.



Working on a group lesson together

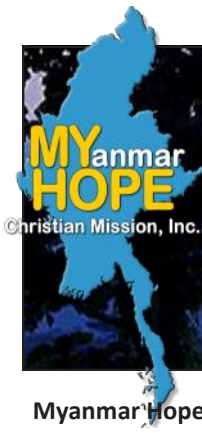
On most of the days our class time was from 9:00 a.m. to noon, and again from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. Because of the students' passion to learn, we were instructed by Palal and Kikim to go back to our hotel room for a couple hours in the afternoons so that all would have a chance to rest. Otherwise, we couldn't get them to leave the classroom! When we returned to HBS in the late afternoons, most of the students were already in the classroom writing cards and letters to their sponsors, working on sentence corrections and extra credit. Although class did not officially start until after their supper hour, they were ready to start right back in on the ESL material.



Caren Hughs with the HBS kids out on a field trip

Kikim, knowing each of the students so well, very wisely

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**Bringing the eternal hope of Jesus Christ to the people of Myanmar in a holistic manner
by addressing their spiritual, physical, emotional and educational needs**

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divided them into four groups: Purple Porcupines, Pink Penguins, Blue Beavers, and Green Giraffes. Each group had the perfect mix of English skills and personalities. Class time consisted of power point presentations, worksheets, games, songs (they learned 20 English songs during that month!), crafts, writing poems, translating Kuki songs, oral reading, extra credit for initiating English conversations, and more. We also incorporated some life skills into the lessons.

Throughout the month, I kept track of points earned by the groups, and at the end of each week I announced the totals. The course ended with each group presenting a skit they wrote and acted out in English. The students really loved making the props and costumes for their skits! Palal and Kikim, Pa Sat and Lhing Lam, and Cherry were the judges. It looked like the Pink Penguins and Blue Beavers were tied for a good part of the course, but the Purple Porcupines pulled ahead and won overall, with the Green Giraffes a close second.

Naturally, everyone got a prize, and they also each received a certificate for completion of the course. Everyone agreed that learning a second language is hard work, but it can also be a lot of fun.

This experience would not have been possible without the help of key volunteers, too many to name. But I do want to give a special shout-out "thank you" to Susan and Laura for putting together the very detailed lesson plans, Mary Fern Phillippe, Jami Cherry, Anne Tetzlaff and Missy for collecting craft materials, and the group co-leaders Ka Kap, Mung Pu, Nga Ngam, and Le Lal. We also want to

thank our families back in the U.S. for their support in allowing us to travel half-way around the world, and also the many donors who contributed funds and items to make it possible.

Was it hot* in Yangon during those four weeks? Absolutely! Did we get tired? Definitely! Did we miss friends and family back in the U.S.? Of course! Are we open to going again next Spring? Well, I can't speak for the rest of the team, but my answer is an unreserved, heartfelt, "YES!!!"

* The average day-time temperature during that time was 102 degrees Fahrenheit.

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