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Grabowski News from Malawi

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Results-based management, HIV/AIDS and strategic planning

CRWRC has chosen a unique development strategy. Instead of starting its own organizations in developing countries, CRWRC partners with local organizations. We work together with these local organizations to help them develop and manage Christian community development and relief programs.

In Malawi, this means that Phil and I work as consultants for the Presbyterian Church in Malawi. We help them to design, implement and monitor development projects that improve agriculture, health, adult literacy and small business.

CRWRC has chosen to partner with local organizations to ensure that programs are locally appropriate, build local leadership and technical skills and are sustainable. Even if CRWRC was forced to leave Malawi, the Presbyterian Church would remain and continue to reach out to the needs of the poor.

A big part of our work as consultants is to provide opportunities for planning, networking and learning. The past few months have been full of conferences, workshops and trainings.

In January, Phil introduced CRWRC partners from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia to Results-Based Management, a new management tool for planning and monitoring development programs. In large and small groups, participants learned new terminology and theories and applied them to their annual plans.

In April, Christa led a strategic planning workshop for the Presbyterian Church in Malawi. Development staff, board members and Presbyterian Church synod officials met for one week to discuss the history, current situation and desired future of the Presbyterian Church's development department. Participants emerged with renewed enthusiasm for their Christian development work and a three year strategic plan to guide their organization.

In May, Phil assisted in the facilitation of an HIV/AIDS integration workshop for partners from Malawi and Mozambique. Lessons covered HIV/AIDS transmission and patient care, a Biblical response to HIV/AIDS and how HIV/AIDS affects development programs in agriculture, health, literacy and business. Participants drafted plans to expand their HIV/AIDS work.

Every day we are learning new things and passing on what we learn to our partners. It is exciting work. Thank you for making it possible!

Photo 1: Christa facilitating a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) for the Presbyterian Church strategic planning workshop.

Photo 2: Phil supervises small group work during results-based management training.

Photo 3: Presbyterian Church staff developing plans to expand their work in AIDS.

Cascade youth give \$3,449 for goats, latrines and Bibles

In each pew of Cascade Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Cascade, MI, there is a small envelope. On each envelope are printed three small drawings. One drawing depicts a goat, another a latrine and the last a Bible.

Every Sunday, youth from Cascade Fellowship CRC have the opportunity to support development projects in Malawi and Mozambique with their offering. They use these envelopes to choose what project they want to support.

If they check the box next to the goat, their donation will be used to buy goats for poor families in Malawi. If they check the box next to the latrine, their donation will be used to help villages in Malawi construct new composting latrines. If they check the box next to the Bible, their donation will be used to purchase Bibles in the local language of Chichewa for youth groups in Mozambique.

In May, we had the privilege of attending Cascade Fellowship CRC. The youth presented us with a "check" for \$3,449. This money translates into 28 goats, 250 latrines and 119 Bibles!

The youth also presented us with 18 soccer balls they purchased for youth in Mozambique. Through our HIV/AIDS prevention program, Mozambican youth meet regularly to study the Bible and discuss health issues. They also meet to play soccer.

Soccer provides a safe activity for youth. It also provides opportunities for health education. During halftime, youth present educational dramas and songs that encourage HIV/AIDS prevention. Youth use homemade balls formed by melting together plastic sugar bags. They are thrilled to play with real soccer balls.

Our visit to Cascade Fellowship CRC was inspiring. Our sincere thanks go out to the youth and adults who are working hard to make life better for their brothers and sisters across the world in Malawi and Mozambique!

Photo 4: "Check" and soccer balls given by the Cascade Fellowship CRC youth.

Photo 5: Two Malawian boys show off their homemade soccer balls.

On a personal note

On May 8, Christa finished her third semester of graduate school. She is now more than half-way through her master's program in international development and hopes to graduate in spring 2008.

On May 10, we left Malawi for a month of vacation in the US. We traveled first to Austin, TX, where we participated in the wedding of Phil's sister Anita to John Fiege. It was great to catch up with Phil's family.

We traveled next to Grand Rapids, MI, for the high school graduation of Christa's sister Sarah. Sarah played high school soccer and we were able to watch a number of her games. A highlight was the goal she scored with her head against Byron Center. We got to play soccer ourselves with Christa's relatives on Memorial Day.

We also spoke at one new supporting church and plan to attend a CRWRC conference later this week. And we have been blessed to connect with a number of friends in the US.

We wish we could have seen each one of you but this is a short trip. We plan to be in the US for a longer visit next year.

Our visit has reminded us again how important each of you is to our work in Malawi and Mozambique. We could not be there without your support and encouragement. Thank you!

Photo 6: We celebrate with Sarah after her high school graduation ceremony.

#### **Praise God for:**

. the successful trainings and workshops we have carried out for our CRWRC partners in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia over the last few months

. the youth and adults of Cascade Fellowship CRC and their support for development projects in Malawi and Mozambique

. the opportunity to spend one month in the US visiting family and friends

**Please pray for:**

. proposals we have submitted to expand our work in HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention to be accepted and funded by international donors

. the expansion of our HIV/AIDS youth groups to two new cities in Mozambique and Christa's graduate school research related to this expansion

. safe travel back to Malawi