Making a Difference in Murwira

In the ocean of desperation that is Zimbabwe today, a tall, soft-spoken, white-haired pillar of strength is fighting against alarming odds to keep the people she loves alive.

Paula Leen’s love affair with the people of Zimbabwe began in 1981 when she left her family, friends, and comfortable home in Oregon (USA) to work as an administrative assistant missionary in Harare.

As she stepped off the plane that first day, Paula had no way of knowing that she was embarking on an adventure that would change the whole course of her life.

When her six-year mission term ended, Paula stayed.

In 1996, she began turning her dream of an orphanage for rural Zimbabwean children into reality. In an area where one in five children are orphans and 100 babies become HIV positive every day, Paula set about developing land for the orphanage: planting fruit trees, digging wells, clearing 20 acres of field, getting the official paperwork and appropriate inspections...

After years of exhausting, difficult work, the Murwira Adventist Children’s Home opened its doors and welcomed its first children in 2003.

Situated in a picturesque, rural setting surrounded by green kopjes (rocky hills) and huge indigenous trees, the Children’s Home grounds include fields of maize, sorghum and millet, crops of chick peas and peanuts, and orchards of pawpaws, bananas, guavas and oranges.

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In addition to the obvious function of providing a home to orphans, Paula and the staff of the Children’s Home do health work in the community. Workers visit every home in the area and fill out forms so the people’s needs can be assessed and so assistance can be provided where necessary. Others provide daily assistance in the home for any elderly, sick, or disabled people with no relatives or anyone else willing or able to care for them, and several workers are paid to operate the outreach programs that feed 2,000+ destitute people each month (more and more people are flocking in daily).

Over 8,000 Zimbabwean people die of AIDS every month, and other diseases, such as cerebral malaria, are rampant. Because of the critical need for health care, employees of the Children’s Home also provide ambulance service including, but not limited to, many (sometimes 10-12) emergency trips to Mutare each week (160 km roundtrip). Regularly scheduled trips on Monday and Wednesday typically transport HIV positive patients for assessment, treatment, and follow-up.

Recently, Paula traveled to the US to try to raise funds so her people won’t starve. For most North Americans, it’s hard to imagine what the current situation in Zimbabwe is like. Referring to the frustration of shopping, Paula says, “They mark up prices twice a day, and always the price goes up higher than the exchange rate so you pay more and more and more. If I get some Zim dollars on a Monday and go back to the orphanage, when I come back to buy things Friday, the prices have quadrupled. A pint of milk is four days’ work, a bar of soap one week’s work, a loaf of bread two week’s work, and a bag of mealie meal is two month’s work. It’s almost impossible to state the cost of a meal right now because this week alone (November 11, 2008) the exchange rate has gone from 180,000 to 350,000 and prices within stores are changed a minimum of two times per day.”

In one area of the country, starving people have been reduced to eating their dogs and cow dung, just to stay alive.

Most of the lunches and suppers Paula serves consist of sadza (a very thick cornmeal mush), potatoes or rice, and a protein dish called “relish”, which is made of beans, soya chunks, or whatever else is available. “Food is extremely scarce and we really need basics like mealie meal, flour, oil, beans, soy chunks, dried milk, formula, and soap.” She tries to provide the children with some sort of fruit each day, although lately that has been very difficult. “Right now the hunger is so bad that the workers are stealing the food that we’re growing. They steal it at night, and we know it’s the workers because the dogs aren’t barking. I can’t really blame them too much, but I tell them, ‘look, if you need some food, just ask – I won’t say no.’”

The people in the Muwira area know very well that Paula is the reason so many are still alive. Won’t you go online to www.adra.ca or call 1-888-274-2372 and donate to help Paula provide food for the people she loves?

Please add your voice to her cry, “I can’t say no and watch a child die.”
All she had ever known was cruelty. Locked away and left alone for hours or beaten severely for wetting her diaper, there wasn’t much hope that little Raina would have a happy life. Suffering cruelty at the hands of her mentally ill mother and grandmother, Raina quickly learned to be “tough” to survive.

When kind people rescued her and took her to the Children’s Home, Raina’s life began to change.

Although it took many months of loving kindness before she would trust, or have anything to do with, women, Raina is now happy and well-adjusted and greets Auntie Paula with hugs and kisses. Raina has become a favourite of the workers at the Children’s Home and is excited to be starting school soon.

Severely malnourished and critically ill, Vaiso was on the verge of death when Paula found her. Although at the time, the Children’s Home was still under construction and not ready to open, Paula knew that if she didn’t take Vaiso into her home and try to help her, a painful death was imminent for the little girl.

Vaiso is now nine years old. A balanced diet and regular treatments for her HIV have given her fairly good health, and love has made her happy.

ADRA Canada is part of the international ADRA network which is present in 125 countries worldwide.

In addition to projects in Canada, ADRA Canada currently has projects in the following countries:

- Burkina Faso
- Cambodia
- Dominican Republic
- Jordan
- Kenya
- Laos
- Malawi
- Mongolia
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Rwanda
- São Tomé
- Togo
- Tajikistan
- Thailand
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- Zambia

ADRA Canada is also either currently providing, or has provided this year, emergency management in:

- Bangladesh
- Chad
- China
- Congo
- Haiti
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Mexico
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Peru
- Sri Lanka

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**NOW AVAILABLE!**

Canada’s Really Useful

GIFT CATALOGUE

2008/2009 ADRA Annual Appeal

Here’s a sample of what you will find on page 26:

Every year Canadian men, women and children fill shelter beds for reasons too numerous to count. When leaving the shelter to second-stage housing, or when moving into an apartment, these people have nothing. Here are some ways in which you can help:

**GIFT 33-08 $10** Equip a new shelter resident with a personal care kit.

**GIFT 34-08 $75** Give a bedding kit (sheets, blanket, comforter, pillow).

**GIFT 35-08 $100** Provide a bathroom kit (shower curtain, rug, towels, soap dispenser, garbage can).

**GIFT 36-08 $500** Provide a kitchen kit (dishes, silverware, pots & pans, baking sheets & pans, towels, storage containers, glasses/mugs, small appliances, garbage can).

To order gifts, call toll-free 1.888.274.2372 or go online to www.adra.ca
You can Donate $6,000,000.00!

Chances are, you don’t have six million dollars to give away, even to a very worthy cause like ADRA Canada; but did you know that you can be part of donating at least that much to ADRA next year?

If just 60,000 (less than .5%) of Canada’s 33 million people donate $10.00 a month next year to ADRA Canada, the total donation will be more than six million dollars!

It’s exciting to think of the thousands of lives that could benefit from community development and emergency management programs funded with that amount of money!

Won’t you consider being part of this $6,000,000.00 donation by giving at least $100.00 more than your usual donation to ADRA Canada next year?

Thank you for your support of ADRA Canada - it is GREATLY APPRECIATED!

Free Resources for you!

Call 1.888.274.2372 or email pr@adra.ca to order the ADRA Canada Gift Catalogue, Fundraising Powerkit, Winter DVD, and Geo Game.
Poverty is rising among children and new immigrants, the middle-class is finding it increasingly difficult to afford education and housing, and there are 250,000 Canadians living on the streets.

You Can Help Erase POVERTY
In Canada’s Inner Cities.
Please give generously to the ADRA Canada Inner City Fund!

Donate by phone 888.274.2372 or online at www.adra.ca

Please accept my gift of:

$_________ for the Inner City Fund
$_________ for Murwira Children’s Home
$_________ for Emergency Management
$_________ for wherever it is most needed.

OR Donate online: www.adra.ca

Name:______________________________________________________
Address:___________________________________________________
City:___________________________Prov:_______Postal Code:__________
Phone:__________________________E-mail:_______________________

Method of Payment: □ Cheque □ MasterCard □ VISA □ AMEX
Credit Card #:__________________________ Expiry:__________________
Cardholder Name:___________________________________________
Cardholder Signature:________________________________________

Make cheques payable to ADRA Canada.
Although cities located in Canada’s metropolitan areas are economic cores, tragically, they also have the highest rates of poverty.

720,000 Canadians, including almost 300,000 children, use food banks on a regular, ongoing basis.

Homelessness and panhandling are now highly visible on the streets of major Canadian cities.

Every day more than 200,000 people call our Canadian streets, “Home”.

The number of children living in poverty has almost doubled since the 1989 Federal Resolution to End Child Poverty.

Food supplies are usually high at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, but often diminish during the rest of the year.

Currently, approximately 6,000 ADRA Canada volunteers work at more than 110 community-based relief and development projects all across Canada.

Following is a partial list of volunteer activities:

- Feed the homeless
- Provide breakfast for hungry children
- Supply personal care kits to abused women in shelters
- Teach healthy lifestyle awareness
- Provide free health screening and stress testing
- Renovate homes following times of disaster
- Stock food banks
- Provide computer, literacy, and financial management skills development
- Present “Native New Health” DVDs and workshops.