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ND NEWS

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The challenges and blessings of 2011

At the beginning of 2011 we had fourteen full time staff but by March we were down to ten. Romeu and Michele were in Holland for three months and Gabriel was in the south of Brazil for five months of leadership training which left us for a while with only seven. As you might imagine it was a big challenge to keep the camps running but we didn't cancel a single one and there was even quite an adrenalin buzz in the air at times, as those of us who remained just walked that 'extra mile' together! God sent us several uplifting words at that time from different parts of the globe. This one came from a friend who was praying in London.

Isaiah 60:22 - 'The smallest family will multiply into a large clan. The tiniest group will become a mighty nation. I the Lord will bring it all to pass at the right time.'

Thankfully we had some fantastic volunteers this year, **Chris and Kate Wilmshurst** and their gorgeous wee girls **India and Lola** (Dunfermline), volunteering from October 2010 to March 2011, then later in the year, **Charlotte Sanford** (London), **Daniel Mathie** (Dunfermline), **Susie Reid** (Glasgow) and **Connor Scullion** (Birmingham).

We had new additions to the permanent staff team too, with **Rafael** (Morven's son) starting in February and then more recently, **Thais Teixeira Monteiro** (Belo Horizonte).

Our current volunteers are **Adriano and Julia Uliano**, with us until May, who run an orphanage in Mozambique (the dream project). Julia is due to give birth any day now and Adriano is helping us with maintenance and camps. We also look forward to welcoming **Ronald and Riemy** (Holland) who arrive mid-January and are staying for one year!

When we look back over 2011 of course we remember the hard times and the lows, but the blessings and highs were far more numerous and yet again we stand amazed at God's faithfulness and provision. Here are some of the blessings:

- **More than 450 children** from the slums challenged and impacted by the ND experience in this past year.
- **Many of the camps were for 'first time' Projects** who had never brought children to ND before.
- **Internet** installed on the farm - we have been able to stop renting an office in the local town and now have wireless in all our buildings.
- **New staff housing** completed (can sleep a maximum of 20 people comfortably).
- **Furniture for all the new staff houses** (money came from fund-raising events that some of you organized and individual donations).
- New **BMX** biking activity.
- **Canoeing** activity starting soon (gift from BESOM).
- **Great volunteers** coming to help throughout the whole year.
- **Two new staff members.**
- **Ted and Deirdre were granted a permanent visa** by the Brazilian authorities - the nightmare is over for them, huge relief!
- **First ever volunteers visa** applied for by ND and **granted**, enabling us to receive a missionary couple for 1 year (Ronald and Riemy coming in January) instead of the maximum of six months up until now on just a tourist visa.
- **'Promotor de Justica'** (Special persecution lawyer/justice promotor, a man with a lot of authority!) has taken up our case against the military training courses which have been going on at Betel farm across the road for the past couple of years. We'll keep you posted!
- Our **first ever Alpha course** on the farm (looking forward to many more in the future!)



A year of dreams coming true ...



When **Bob Watt**, experienced Fife architect, came out to make the plans for **new staff accommodation**, I remember him saying as we said goodbye at the airport, that it was the first time he had designed a project without there being money to pay for it! I think my answer was something like 'that's faith Bob!' Since then, many of you reading

this turned out to be part of the answer to our prayers - **thank you to all of you who gave money, organized fund raising events or even came and helped us build.** We now have four semi-detached little houses, each with a kitchen, sitting room, bedroom, shower room and bathroom (one has a second bedroom.) They are already filling up with new staff and volunteers - woo hoo! Thank you God!

... and more dreams coming true ...



We have quite a lot of team-building and leisure activities but we have always wanted to offer some **more challenging adventure sports.** It was therefore with great excitement, that we were able to kick off our new **BMX biking** activity in November. What an emotional moment it was as we watched the first group ever, fifteen teenagers from a big city favela, putting on their safety gear and racing round the track ... without doubt one of the highlights of the weekend for these lads and without doubt, one of the highlights of the year for us!

A new year beginning ...

For the past couple of years we have felt a stirring in our hearts to work with the kids who live in two small slums situated about 5 kilometres from the farm, **Padre Eustaquio and Padre Adelmo (which we refer to as 'the 2 Padres')**. When I recently attended a 'human trafficking' conference in Belo Horizonte, (check out www.notforsalecampaign.org), I discovered that the term 'trafficking' not only refers to children who are *taken away* to be slaves in places far from their homes, but also refers to children who are sex or work slaves in the very places where they live. This modern day child slavery exists in various shapes and forms but it always comes down to one thing in the end, children being exploited, abused and stripped of their basic human rights. So many kids in the slums fall prey to traffickers, sometimes members of their own family, and we feel a growing responsibility towards the youngsters that we have been getting to know in these two poor communities which are literally on our doorstep and which we drive through nearly every day.

Our main thing continues to be the weekend adventure camps and we already have eighteen groups booked in for 2012 from lots of different Projects working with underprivileged children and teenagers in the city favelas, and from a couple of childrens homes too.

However this year, we would also like to start doing **something during the week for children and/or teenagers from the 2 Padres**. Some of our ideas so far are a sports club (different sport each week followed by a snack and Christian message), a youth alpha course, a homework club ... our team is so small and we are already very busy with the camps, so we don't want to bite off more than we can chew at this stage, but we do want to take the first baby step of faith into this unfamiliar territory and ask God to lead us in His timing, in **reaching out to some of the young people we believe He has already put in our path** ... let me tell you about one ...



Gisele, 12, (not her real name), lives with her grandmother, aunty, her aunty's boyfriend, her three little cousins and her big sister. The house is very basic, made from low quality bricks and with a corrugated iron roof. It only has two bedrooms. Gisele's mum is an alcoholic and abandoned her and her sister when they were very little.

Three weeks ago I accompanied Gisele to a **court hearing** in which I witnessed a tragic scene as the grandmother and mother begged the judge to put Gisele and her sister in care. The two sisters just sat with their heads bowed low in shame. The judge and the two social workers present asked me if ND had a team that could start visiting the family as social services are so stretched. My heart was pounding as I looked between the faces of this wrecked family and three very disillusioned professionals. I heard myself saying "not yet, but we will one day." If ever I needed confirmation that **the need is great and ND has a role to play**, I got it that afternoon! If you pray, please pray for courage, wisdom and resources.



Before we even had the money to buy the farm, God put the **NEW DESTINY** vision in our hearts and minds, I really believe it was 'revealed' to us, not thought up by us. The incredible story of how we got this place (email me if you don't know!) has been an anchor through every storm, reminding the team and I that God can do absolutely anything and that this place belongs to Him. We are doing this work because **God loves these kids** and we believe that He sent His son to die for them so that they might find **freedom from oppression and injustice - a new destiny!** The social worker at Gisele's hearing said that in twenty years he has only seen one adult really change ... we believe that there is hope for a situation like Gisele's, and for people like Gisele's mum, because God's love is powerful enough to break through any darkness and bring healing and new life.

So as we stand at the edge of 2012 we thank God for all the children who found hope and felt loved here in 2011, who realized their potential and discovered how precious they are; we thank God **for all the Social Projects** in the slums who brought children to camps this year and who tell us that it is the prospect of coming back to ND that so often keeps them regular in school and in the Projects instead of getting caught up in drug trafficking and prostitution; we thank God **for all the wonderful people** who came from afar to help us; we thank God **for those who coordinate finances and support back in the UK, and give us good counsel** (especially Lorimer and Moira Gray, Andrew Marian and Ed Metcalfe - our fantastic UK board!); we thank God **for the ideas** that He gave us and **the development of the activities and the site**; and last but not least we thank God **for all of you** who support us financially and pray for us regularly. We couldn't do this work without you. May God bless you all!

Happy 2012!
Lots of love, Morven & the team.x.