

## **Message from the Chair, ZOA, United States**

Dear Friends and Benefactors of ZOA:

We stand at the dawn of a New Year and it is with great pleasure that I wish you and your families a most successful 2009! On behalf of every orphaned child in Zambia that we have reached out to and supported, I want to thank you for your generosity of heart and kindness of spirit. I pray that the same spirit brings back to you health, happiness and fulfillment throughout the new year.

I want to offer special thanks to current and former Board Members; World Bank and IMF staff; St. John Catholic Church, McLean, Virginia and parishioners; the 2008 marathon runners; the young girl (grandchild of a Zambian professor) who mobilized her elementary school friends in the Cayman Islands to raise funds for orphans in Zambia; the Fund for Orphans of AIDS in Africa (FOAA); individuals from across the country and the many others who participated in one form or other in our fundraising activities. Our collective efforts resulted in a good “harvest” for the children in 2008!

The number of children who have received direct or indirect support from ZOA continues to grow. Our project portfolio has also expanded in number and range. This past year ZOA, United States, supported five new projects and made more funding available to three ongoing ones.

Three of the new projects involve the provision of home-based care to parents with full blown AIDS and support to the children after the last parent passes away, as in the case of the family that now has a seven-year-old at its head. Yes, seven years! The other two focus on education, school feeding, and the provision of medical care.

The ongoing projects that received funding include: a community school program that emphasizes education and child nutrition; a children’s village that caters for children living with HIV and AIDS (which, for the first time, reported no deaths throughout 2008 – largely as a result of improved nutrition and the provision of ARVs); and a program for physically challenged children at a community school that we have supported over the last three years.

I visited six projects during a 2008 trip to Zambia: four that received funding in 2008 and two older projects:

One of the older projects, Angelina Tembo Girls High School, recorded high scores for fifteen orphaned girls who graduated in 2008. As I joined the school faculty in celebrating their remarkable success, we could not help but wonder what would be next in the girls’ lives after such an important milestone. While I could make no more commitment to their futures beyond what ZOA had already done, I left the school with a heavy feeling that these young women were still not ready for the world beyond the school walls. They would need help to acquire any vocational skills.

The other was a community youth training center in Livingstone where ZOA helped set up a poultry project to generate resources for training young people in carpentry, mechanics and tailoring. The report I got was very encouraging: the center used the resources provided to start the project with 300 broilers. In less than two years they have grown to over one thousand. Twenty percent of the orphans supported here are heads of households. The resources make it possible for them to complete training and their siblings to attend school regularly.

All the projects clearly tell us that the resources are being put to good use even when they open up new challenges, as is the case with the Angelina Tembo School graduating girls.

A group of marathoners made contributions to ZOA in 2008. Six staff of the World Bank ran in the Marine Corps marathon in October on behalf of ZOA. The planning time was short but the group succeeded, nonetheless, in raising some money for the children. They plan to do the same in 2009, giving themselves enough lead time for the purpose of raising funds. A supporter from California sponsored a McLean, Virginia resident to take part in a race earlier in the year, also on behalf of the children we support.

The challenges remain daunting but we know we are making a difference. With your enduring support, we will continue to reach out and touch the lives of innocent young people who have been bequeathed little more than pain and suffering in the early years of their time on earth.

The global economic and financial crisis poses even more significant challenges to us and the children. I am, however, encouraged by some recent contributions to ZOA from former Board members and a sister organization. The New Year starts under very encouraging auspices. We will keep it so!

Happy New Year to you all!

Shimwaayi Muntemba,



Chairperson, ZOA, United States