

Grace Academy ~ Notice Board

Grace Academy Grand Opening May 24, 2008 - *A day of celebration!*



Our current needs

Funds are needed for the on-going relief efforts as well as support for the projects in Myanmar.

On-going funding needs for Buseko Children's Home and Grace Academy in Zambia.

We have numerous children needing sponsors in Zambia.

Funding for the feeding program at Grace Academy Zambia.

Please visit our web site at: www.seedsofhopecm.com to view our urgent needs.

Your prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.

In Canada, please make cheques out to:

Seeds of Hope Children's Ministry

PO Box 3474

Mission, BC V2V 4L1

Or in the USA

Seeds of Hope Children's Ministry USA

PO Box 897

Chico, CA 95927



NEWSLETTER

Sowing Life, Love & Laughter
Summer 2008



In The same way let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven. Matt.5:16

Triumph, tragedy ... and shining lights. *By John Chalkias, Executive Director*

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Board of Directors

Bill Bartleman - Treasurer
David Berg - Director
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Mollie Morton - Director
Rev. Grant Sauer - Director
Dr. Gloria Tyler - Chairperson

Mission Statement

Seeds of Hope Children's Ministry is committed to serving Jesus Christ. Our mission is to help orphans and the less fortunate around the world by sharing God's love and what He has blessed us with. We have a particular call in the area of caring for children who are either infected or affected with HIV/AIDS



Dear friends,
We looked eagerly forward to May 2008 as a time of triumph and celebration. The invitations were sent out for the grand opening of Grace Academy early in the year. We looked forward with great anticipation to a day of celebration with our friends, donors and our Zambian brothers and sisters. Grace Academy is the crowning effort in our fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. Grace Academy is the only boarding school in the world today specifically for HIV/AIDS affected or infected children. It is an incredible place where lives are being transformed, where children broken by hardships, abuse and disease, find healing and hope. It is a place where laughter is heard from children running and playing in glee and being children once again; no longer having to be afraid of being harmed, of sickness or death - things that children should never have to think about. It is a place where they are nurtured and loved and given education and life skills to succeed. Most of all it is a place where they learn that God loves them and has a plan for their lives. Please see the back page for the photos of the grand opening and the wonderful celebration that we had.

Equally exciting to the point that we were almost looking past Grace Academy to the opening of our newest project, "**Precious Gems Children's Home**", a home for children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS in Myanmar. The first phase of that project was completed, furniture and appliances were already purchased, staff was hired and children were ready to be admitted. May was also to be a time of celebration for us in Myanmar but by now most of you have heard of the devastating cyclone named Nargis that hit that country on May 3rd.

Meteorologists from India had been tracking the storm and warned the Myanmar government of the imminent storm heading their way. However, no warning was given to the people. It was raining that night as people put their children to bed. The rain and the wind were not unusual in any way as it is monsoon season at this time of year and no one realized the danger that was heading their way. The

storm hit in the darkness of the night, violently ripping the roofs off homes in Yangon, the former capital city. People woke to the roaring of winds and water racing through their homes. Screams and panic filled the air in the cold, wet darkness as children and parents searched for each other. In the low - lying Irrawaddy Delta region it was even worse as they were hit by surging tides that washed families and whole villages away.



The death toll is now estimated at over 140,000 and it is expected to climb even higher with over a million displaced people needing food, water and shelter. The country's military government has refused and hindered international aid which has cost the lives of tens of thousands more of their citizens. With this horrible event, they have sunk to a new level of darkness of human abuse and evil.



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Helping children and their communities since 1995

It is in deepest darkness that light shines brightest. Pastor Min is one of those lights. Pastor Min and his wife, Ashi moved into a shanty town in the outskirts of Yangon with the hope of starting a church and sharing the hope and love of Jesus Christ to their new neighbors. Even though they are educated, they chose to live in a shanty to serve their people. He and his wife are the most humble and dedicated servants you can ever meet. However, their kindness was met with hostility and threats of violence. Their neighbors bound with fear and superstitions were afraid to even hear of the God who loves them. Dejected but not giving up, this young couple wondered what they could do to demonstrate the love of Christ to those around them. Ashi noticed that the poor women in their shanty were desperately trying to work and care for young children. She offered to not only look after their children so that the moms could work but to teach them as well. With that she started **"Future Flowers Pre-School"** with a handful of children. She currently has forty-eight children that she teaches and cares for. Min has one of the only homes in the shanty provided with city water. Everyday he would pour each of his neighbors a drum of clean drinking water for free. Soon some of the neighbors started coming to his home to hear of this God who loves them. Before long his home turned into a house church that was overflowing with people every Sunday. Last Christmas he fed up to 300 people by providing rice and then putting on a Christmas presentation. Needless to say, his neighbors who were once hostile to this man, now fill his home which is also the church. He is the "Billy Graham" of this shanty

town and all his neighbors love this amazing couple who have dedicated their lives to serving God and their neighbors.

When the cyclone hit, our biggest fear for loss of life was for Pastor Min as he lives in a shanty where the homes are all made of bamboo. We feared that the homes were either blown away or washed away

in the storm and the people with them. We are all praising God to hear that they are well. Their home and church were spared but not their neighbors. They are now using the church and all their resources as a refuge for their neighbors. As I look at the picture of Min in his home, I just

marvel at how a structure made of bamboo can withstand hurricane winds and remain standing while all other similar homes were demolished - **truly a miracle!**

We have been receiving phone calls and emails from people who sponsor children in our projects in Myanmar. I am happy to report that none of our homes suffered any loss of life. All but Precious Gems Home lost their roofs. Along with that they lost all their furniture and other materials due to flooding and water damage. **Seeds of Hope Children's Ministry** immediately put together emergency relief efforts. Even though visas were not being issued to relief organizations and still as of this writing very few visas are being issued; **we have a unique opportunity to respond to this crisis because of our partners in the country.** MCP is a group of doctors, health professionals and pastors which has the means to reach the people hardest hit and to be most effective with funds. We are continuing our urgent plea for donations to help with food, medicines and rebuilding.

To date we have rebuilt the roofs on Colorful Garden Children's Home, Rachel's Children's Home, as well as Justina Home.

We have sent our contractor and his crew to assist in rebuilding of the above named children's homes and are paying for all the costs. We have also sent in funds to assist Pastor Min in helping his neighbors rebuild their homes as well as provide food for over seventy families on a weekly basis. The following is an excerpt of an email that we received from a friend residing in Yangon:

"Your gift to Min has been doing amazing work. Ashi came by yesterday because Min was overseeing the reconstruction of the last of six houses which have been completely rebuilt (food has also been distributed). Some are Christian and some are not. Tears of joy and thanksgiving are flowing. The church is growing and God is being glorified. They are calling Min not just Saya meaning "teacher" but Saya "Gyi" meaning "great" teacher. They are quick of course to give Glory to God but also to direct thanks to Seeds of Hope."

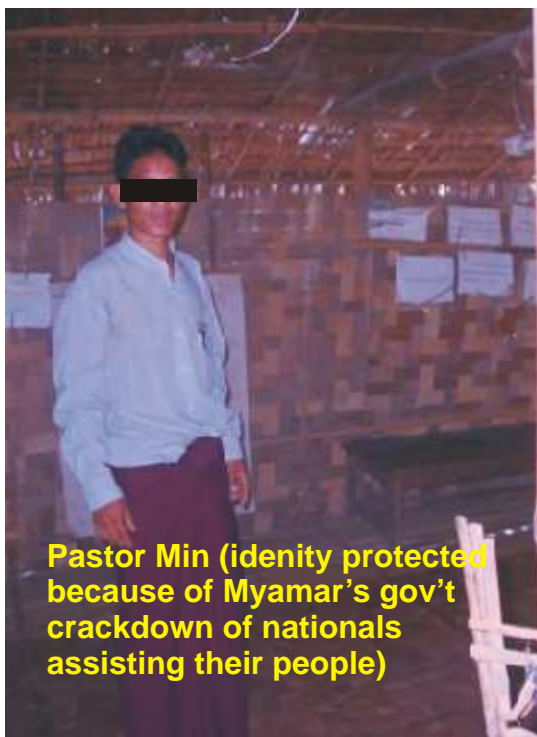
Seeds of Hope Children's Ministry is also financially assisting MCP in their relief efforts in bringing aid to those hardest hit in the delta region. Our nurse who is the manager of **"Precious Gems Children's Home"** is currently serving on the field with MCP. The relief efforts of our partners - MCP, the many nationals working with them as well as the many

NGO's they are partnering with, are truly amazing; despite government opposition they are managing to get into the delta region where the need is the greatest. In addition to the ten doctors on staff, MCP has hired ten new physicians (mostly recent medical school graduates) and fifteen nurses to deploy into the delta region on mobile medical outreaches. Each team is comprised of two MD's and three nursing personnel. We are so proud to be associated with these unsung heroes. I also want to mention that all the pastors of the homes we are associated with, have opened wide their homes and are sharing the little that they have.

We are waiting for visas and hope to have a small team in the country before the summer is over to do a first hand assessment of the needs. We will be continuing to post updates on our web site as we receive news from Myanmar.

Our urgent needs at this moment are to continue supplying essential needs to the Children's Homes that we support as well as to help them assist their neighbors. The effects of this storm will be with us for a long time and the road to recovery will be a difficult one. We are committed to our people and to the children in our projects in Myanmar. Now is the time to stand with them in this hour of great need. We ask that you continue to help us in our efforts and to keep the people of Myanmar in your prayers.

Thank-you to all who have responded to our urgent plea. We are grateful for the way you have let your light shine in this urgent situation. Please mark your check along with your donor card, **"Myanmar Relief."** You can also go online and make your contribution through our web site at: www.seedsofhopecm.com



Pastor Min (identity protected because of Myanmar's gov't crackdown of nationals assisting their people)



One of Pastor Min's neighbors who was helped to rebuild her home



All of our Children's Homes lost their roofs. This is the Justina Home. We were able to repair the roofs on all our homes thanks to the response from our generous donors



Seeds of Hope funds have re-built numerous homes in Pastor Min's shanty village. We have also been able to provide funds to feed over seventy families by providing rice, vegetables and cooking oil. Because of government restrictions, large aid organizations are not able to get into the country but with our in-country partners we are able to impact whole communities on a grassroots level.

