

zimkids



Plans For A Hope & A Future



## Zimkids News - April 2010

*This month we hear from John Merriman who volunteered for us over in Zimbabwe, along with his wife Ruth and son Nathan, earlier this year. Here is his story;*

2006, along with 19 others, was the year I first visited Zimbabwe. My first sights of an orphanage were obviously memorable, but seeing a boy seated behind a low concrete wall, crying quietly alone, over a burst ball, changed something in me.

As our 2006 trip came to an end, I asked the remaining (embryo of Zimkids) team to look after him, and Manu was indeed looked after. In 2007, many children were taken out of the orphanages and the team began desperately to trace parents and carers. Incredibly Manu (and his three sister's) mother was found.

A book could be written on this incredible woman's life and in particular, the reunion with her children, her battle with HIV, and the hundreds she has inspired over the past two years, but this is meant to be about my 2010, second experience of Zimbabwe.

My wife Ruth and Nathan (nearly two) and I enjoyed acclimatising to instant summer in the middle of the UK's snowy January, and Nathan loved being outside, becoming immediate best friends with Puff's (Zimkids founder and director) dog. I was however desperate to see Manu and his family as I had heard so many stories.

Manu (although now only just 11) was quite the man of the house - a happy, bright and capable boy, with enthusiasm for life.



Although proud to show me their 12'x9' house (smaller than most of our bathrooms), Manu was even more excited that I would be driving the Zimkids Land Rover with his entire family, and all their possessions to the site of their new home, probably a very significant step in their long (and at times painful) journey.

At the new site, Zimkids are helping to build a new brick-built home for the family and Manu's mum has already planted enough food for them and anyone else they may take in. She really is an incredible woman, and a testament to the work of Zimkids. With their support, she is not only able to provide essentials for herself and her children, but also teaches knitting skills to other women, shares the hope her faith in Jesus brings, and runs several HIV+ women's support groups. She is a natural community-builder.

Spending time with Manu, his sisters and mother was very significant for me, Ruth and Nathan. We have seen first hand how a family, have got back on their feet, working incredibly hard against the odds. They are living-proof of how Zimkids, through the donations of its supporters can help bring a family back together, changing their lives and their entire community.

Manu and his sisters are now in full time education in their new area and have a passion for learning; they adore each other and their mother and look forward to the regular visits from the Zimkids team.

**Want to visit and volunteer in Zimbabwe?  
Contact Peter Leech at [info@zimkids.org](mailto:info@zimkids.org) for more  
information about this exciting opportunity.**

Check out our Website

[www.zimkids.org](http://www.zimkids.org)

Zimkids now have a mobile! Any queries please call one of the team on:  
07906320950

(please email where possible)