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Hugs and smiles were easy to come by!

REFLECTIONS

"Just between you and me, I don't think you'll be happy with the outcome."

The interviewer was being candid. She had just finished asking me questions

for the magazine article she was writing about the camp GEMS was planning to host in Zambia, Africa for older teen girls.

Totally surprised by her answer, I quickly asked, "Why do you think that?"

"I've seen it before. Girls from the states and Canada think they can cut it over there, but they really can't. They are too pampered, too full of themselves, and way too focused on their own

comfort and having a good time to really make any kind of investment in the lives of people in desperate situations."



On a very chilly and windy day, Jan distributes warm ponchos made by GEMS Counselors to orphan children living in a rural village. Their response? Giggles, hugs, thank you's and tears...

"We shall see," was my only response to her, but in my heart I knew she was wrong. The ten college and post college girls heading off to Zambia to serve as camp counselors at our camp weren't just any young women from North America, they were GEMS! Many of them had gone through the GEMS program when they were younger, some had served as CITs in their clubs, and others had served as counselors at our *Get Connected! Camp* in the US. These were amazing young women we were taking with us. They would not fail, I told myself.

I cannot tell you how very wrong that reporter was! These young women were amazing! They poured out their hearts and opened their arms to every one of the 135 girls who came to camp, every one of the 32 orphan children that they tutored, and every lonely, neglected child from the village or compound they met walking on the dusty roads. No... these young women were NOT full of themselves. They were full of a love for God and deep desire to serve Him. They are GEMS!

The purpose of camp was three-fold: to connect Zambian girls to critical life truths from God's Word, to train, equip, and empower

REFLECTIONS cont.



Camp games were fun!



The orphan children so appreciated help with their reading. They did not want to stop!

Zambian counselors to run Get Connected! Camps for their girls in the future, and to inspire the oldest GEMS at camp to be counselors at future camps.

Am I “happy with the outcome?” I could not be more pleased. But more importantly, I believe that God is pleased with the truth that was taught, the work that was done, the love that was offered, and the relationships that were built. Thanks to all of you who helped support this mission with your prayers and finances. What an investment you have made!

Jan Boone,
Executive Director

SELFLESS GIVING

The GEMS Service Center recently received the following letter:

“My name is Savannah and I am seven years old. When I heard about the girls in Africa, I wanted to do something to help them. I came up with an idea to sell cards and send the money I made to the girls in Africa. I made about 80 cards and so far have earned about \$20.”

We also received a letter from Lisa, whose 12 year old daughter, Mary, has had a Dreaming God’s Dream calendar in her room all year to remind her to pray for her sisters in Africa.

“The only things we can keep are the things we freely give to God.”

C.S. Lewis

GEMS Built... Thank you for the many ways you are making a difference in the lives of young girls around the world in Jesus’ name. May this offering be blessed and used to help continue the Lord’s work.”

Through GEMS, girls are being empowered to do whatever they can— no matter how big or how small, to take a stand and make a difference in the world. Thanks to Savannah, Mary, and passionate girls just like them in GEMS Club all across North America, the lives of women and girls in Zambia are being forever changed!



A group of girls enjoying themselves while walking and learning along the Micah Road!



WALK THE MICAH ROAD EXPERIENCE

Have you ever experienced an onslaught of anxiety as you suddenly realized you forgot something? Has your stomach ever dropped or your heart started racing as you unexpectedly remembered an undone task, an overlooked promise, or a forgotten appointment? If you’re at all familiar with this sensation you likely see the value of a reminder. And, while alarm clocks, sticky notes, and calendars are all great ways to keep track of life’s comings and goings, we often need reminders of God’s truths, too.

Micah 6:8 explains the basic road map God lays out for each of our lives: we are to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. Over the coming season GEMS will be digging into this verse and exploring the depth of its meaning. As part of that journey, we will be hosting the *Walk the Micah Road Experience* in 26 different locations throughout the U.S. and Canada to help you remember what it looks like to walk the Micah Road.

The *Walk the Micah Road Experience* is an intergenerational walk-a-thon for the entire family. The one to three mile event will have three learning stations set up along the path that offer interactive, hands-on activities focusing on justice, mercy, and walking humbly with God. Each station will help walkers grow bigger hearts for helping others.

Everyone who participates is also encouraged to raise pledges for the event. A portion of the money collected will support GEMS Clubs in your local community, and a portion will be used to further the GEMS ministry in Zambia, Africa.

To register and find out more about the *Walk the Micah Road Experience* in your area, check out www.gemsgc.org or talk to your GEMS’ Club Coordinator.

THE CALL TO AFRICA

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Luke 12:48b

- Approximately **8,500¹ people die** every day as a result of AIDS.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is the **most affected** region in the world.
- Most estimates assume that by 2010, **25 million¹ children** will have lost both parents from the disease.



A young African girl we met while visiting GEMS Clubs in Zambia.

Unfortunately, the countries hit hardest by this pandemic are already struggling with poverty, hunger, and general economic strain—leaving the children, the AIDS orphans—little hope for the future. The immensity of this problem

can easily make it seem hopeless: so many children, so much sadness, so much pain.

Yet, as a ministry, GEMS understands that God calls us to be His hands and feet in the world—that He calls us to roll up our sleeves, put our own comfort aside, and dive into the hardship and heartache of a broken world—no matter how messy it might be. We have been given much, and much is expected of us.

So, with earnest faith in God’s leading, a team of women returned to Africa in April and trained 75 new women to be counselors and formed 16 new clubs. The women also visited with the momma and the children living in *The House that GEMS Built* and were encouraged by the faith and hope they found in the people they encountered.

In addition to training, the team met with the Minister of Home Affairs in Zambia and made considerable headway on acquiring land that will allow GEMS to significantly expand its influence in Zambia. God opened new doors, and the trip was filled with His presence.

As we continue to follow God’s lead, much work is yet to be done. More funding is needed for the Esther School for underprivileged and orphaned children as well as a library and

a Service Center, additional resources are required for training more counselors, and money needs to be raised to purchase Bibles and supplies for clubs already meeting.

We ask that you would prayerfully consider financially supporting the GEMS ministry and the work we are doing in Africa! To find out more about how you can get involved visit www.gemsgc.org.

¹USAID

IT’S A CELEBRATION!

GEMS kicked off its **50th Anniversary** celebration in North Carolina this past summer at the Annual Counselors’ Leadership Conference. Women worshipped, learned, and celebrated together as we looked back at the history of GEMS—thanking God for His unending faithfulness to the ministry, while looking ahead to all that He has in store.

“This year I just grew in my faith,” noted Elizabeth Rasper, Club Coordinator of Ray Mountaintop Church in Ray Township, MI. “[Conference] shows me more and more—this year especially—that I need to take time and stop and listen to what God is telling me,” adding that what makes Conference especially appealing to her is “just to be around all these women who love God—who love the Lord so much that they just have to share it.”



Three GEMS Counselors from California enjoying the 50th Anniversary celebration!

Mass meeting speakers and a diverse range of sectional opportunities ministered to women and helped prepare them for the year in club. Counselors were also introduced to the Annual Theme: *Walk*

the Micah Road, and journeyed to their community, country, and world to discover more about God’s walking requirements for our lives. In addition, women had the opportunity to meet Barb Vredevoogd and Shirley Lautenbach, the first two Calvinette/GEMS Executive Directors. The entire experience was refreshing and inspiring for all who attended.

As we continue to celebrate this momentous anniversary throughout the year, we would like to thank you for your continued prayers in support of all of our counselors and clubs!

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Make checks payable to: **GEMS Girls’ Clubs**
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2009 GEMS ANNUAL COUNSELORS' LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The 2009 GEMS Girls' Clubs Annual Counselors' Leadership Conference will be July 23rd – 26th at Redeemer University College in Hamilton, Ontario. GEMS Counselors will gain valuable insight into their work with young girls and be refreshed and renewed in their own spiritual walk with the Lord. Pastors, please encourage your GEMS Counselors to attend! An early-bird registration special will be available on the GEMS website in mid-October and will run through February 13 of 2009.

PRAYER POWER NEEDED

- Please pray for the thousands of women and girls who are returning to club this fall. Pray that God would energize counselors and use them to reach out to girls everywhere in His name.
- Please continue to pray for *The Call to Africa*. Pray specifically that God's leading would be evident as plans are made for the Esther School, a Service Center, and a community library.

GET CONNECTED! CAMP



A group of GEMS at camp take a break from volleyball!

Exploring the depth of God's truth in order to connect with Him, early teen girls from across the US and Canada will have a chance to attend Get Connected! Camp in the summer of 2009. Please

join us in praying for the camp directors as they begin to plan and prepare for this event. Pray also that this camp experience will inspire and encourage girls to live lives that clearly demonstrate an intimate walk with their Heavenly Father.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR GEMS

In June, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church adopted a recommendation "that synod express gratitude to God for blessing GEMS Girls' Clubs for fifty years, noting in particular the ministry's global expansion, most recently in Africa," and, "that synod express appreciation for the time and talent given joyfully by the leaders and volunteers in the GEMS ministry, praying that the Holy Spirit will lead the ministry into the future."

GEMS is deeply honored by this recognition from the CRC denomination, and we praise God for His continued faithfulness to this ministry!

GEMS 12TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

GEMS would like to extend a special thanks to all of the sponsors and golfers who participated in the 12th Annual Golf Classic in Grand Rapids, Michigan on May 16. Your faithful support continues to allow GEMS to grow and reach out to even more girls in Christ's name. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!

Thank you to these businesses and individuals:

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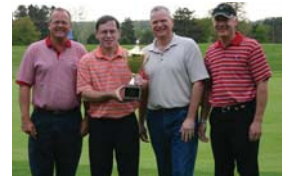
Two golfers enjoying the beautiful weather!

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The winners of the 2008 GEMS Golf Classic!

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A golfer warming up on the driving range.

