



# the calling

a worldwide christian schools® publication **Summer 2013**



## Shedding Seeds Like Maples

I like everything about maple trees - how they look, how they grow, and how they change through the seasons. I especially like the helicopter-like way maple tree seeds softly but thoroughly cover a wide area.

Many of you are aware that we lost our co-worker Steve Geurink to cancer recently. Steve and I would often talk about trees, and it was easy for Steve to connect nature to God. I was thinking about my conversations with Steve while in my backyard watching seeds spin to the ground.

Maple trees have a fantastic seed distribution system. The scientific name for the seed/wing combination is *samaras*, but most of us call them “whirlybirds” or “helicopters”. Because of these wings, a healthy maple tree can shed hundreds of thousands of

seeds over far more ground than would otherwise be possible.

We have all observed how the ground around a maple tree changes in the spring. Seeds and their wings literally cover it to sprout, lie dormant, or feed the soil. Even though only a small percentage of seeds become trees, the ground (or neighborhood) is forever changed for the better.

A good school is like a maple tree, slowly improving the ground it covers. Thank you for supporting efforts to make schools more like these trees. •

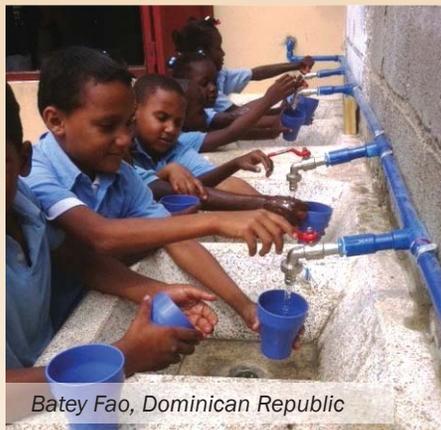


**Scott Vander Kooy**  
President, WWCS-US



## Water for Fao

*“Water 4 Wisdom” Brings Clean Water to Jerico School*



Batey Fao, Dominican Republic

Each day, 4,000 children around the world die from drinking contaminated water. Water-related illnesses are the cause of approximately 443 million of the absences noted on school report cards each year.

The goal of WWCS partner “Water 4 Wisdom” (W4W) is to address

a lack of access to clean water in Christian schools. In April, a W4W team of 12 volunteers traveled to the Dominican Republic to replace a broken water filtration system at Jerico Christian School in Batey Fao, piping it directly into the school’s kitchen.

“The cooks were so excited,” said Ruthie Hubers, a substitute teacher who co-founded W4W two years ago with her husband, Butch. “At first the kids wouldn’t drink it. But when they saw us drink it, they knew they could trust us.”

The W4W team also spent time talking with teachers and other community members in area villages about their goals for the future.

“There is such a sense of pride in their schools,” Hubers said. “They sat down with us and gave us lunch and a synopsis of what their goals were in one year, five years, ten years. It was so impressive.” •

Learn more about involvement opportunities with Water 4 Wisdom at [wwcs.org/water-4-wisdom](http://wwcs.org/water-4-wisdom).

## Mwalubemba School Thrives in Face of Drought

**ZAMBIA - An Update from Marlon Phiri**



THE STORY: In 2011, WWCS facilitated the U.S.-based Steve and Claudia Zebell and family in coming alongside a

Christ-centered school project in the small village of Mwalubemba, Zambia through the Worldwide Hands™ program (*The Calling*, Fall 2011). The Zebells and WWCS partner Reformed Open Community Schools (ROCS) built a school that would serve a population of families who were, at that time,

*Continued on next page...*

without an educational option for their children. Here is an update from ROCS representative Marlon Phiri on the Mwalubemba Community School project.

**M**walubemba Community School is situated about 20 kilometers from the capitol city of Lusaka, and seven kilometers from the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport. The school was started by the community, with support from the Reformed Church in Zambia, Chelston congregation. When it began, Mwalubemba had 50 students. This number has since grown to 218 pupils - 89 boys and 129 girls.

Mwalubemba School has five teachers. With financial, material and technical support from Reformed Open Community Schools (ROCS), the teachers have received training in teaching methodologies, classroom management skills and social support for children, as well as school management. A committee of parents also received training in leadership and management.

In 2012, the school embarked on a feeding program. This was done with support from the Zebell family of the United States of America through ROCS. The feeding project focused on chicken rearing and the growing of maize and beans with the goal of feeding the vulnerable children of Mwalubemba community, enabling them to stay in school, learn actively by improving their concentration levels and enabling them to progress to higher levels of education.



*Mwalubemba Community School in Zambia, while under construction in 2011.*

The school started with six chickens for its rearing project and by November of 2012, we had a total of 28 chickens. With support from the local chief, the school also acquired a field and planted maize seed and beans.

These projects are managed by the school committee, teachers and the school children with support from the general community members. The committee rented a field for the school and provided space where the chickens are being raised. Monitoring, feeding and ploughing was done by the teachers and the parent committee, while the weeding of the school field was done by the school children. Some of the chickens were sold to raise money for school needs, including part of teacher support.

**We are hopeful that this is a great start for more sustainable partnerships.**

Unfortunately, the maize and bean crops could not do well due to poor rainfall that was experienced in some parts of Zambia, including Lusaka. This is a disappointment for the school and the community of Mwalubemba, as well as for the supporting partners who worked so hard to ensure that the feeding program was a success. We covet your prayers in trying again next year.

Meanwhile, we had good news: the Ministry of Education gave the school 60 three-seater desks. We hope these desks will improve the attendance of the pupils and make their learning area more comfortable.

Furthermore, with support from the Zebell family the school has now



*TOP TO BOTTOM: a) The school's maize field, b) chicken project and c) donated desks*

been fitted with doors and window panes, making the classrooms more conducive for learning and teaching. The school would like to thank the Zebells for their great faith and contributions in ensuring that learning at Mwalubemba successfully takes place and continues in a much more favorable environment.

On our own it would have been practically impossible to get this far. We are grateful to ROCS and to the Zebells for demonstrating their faith in the success of the school through their support. Most importantly, we are grateful for their prayers and for not giving up on us. We are hopeful that this is a great start of more sustainable and wonderful partnerships and relationships that will help ensure that Mwalubemba Community School succeeds! •

**Learn more about schools in Africa** by contacting Dale at [ddieleman@wwcs.org](mailto:ddieleman@wwcs.org). Support the work of WWCS at [wwcs.org](http://wwcs.org).

# Destiny Academy Opens in Yangon

MYANMAR - An Update from David\*

THE STORY: In the Fall 2012 issue of *The Calling*, we highlighted the WWCS year-end campaign for new schools in Myanmar, led by WWCS partner David\* and his church-planting center. An initial \$20,000 was sent by WWCS to Myanmar and used as start-up funding for a new school that will serve middle class families in the city of Yangon. The goal is for the new school to run with full community support from the third year of operation. "When we start a preschool, we not only focus on the children and their curriculum, but we purposely involve their parents," David said. "Once they catch our vision [for the school], the parents are very willing to come alongside us" (*The Calling*, Fall 2012). The new school, called Destiny Academy, opened in June. Here is David's recent report on the work that was done in preparation for its grand opening celebration. Thank you for your prayer and financial support for this exciting new project!

## Dear Friends,

Destiny Academy opens on June 3! We hired a local carpenter who

TOP: Families arrive for orientation

BOTTOM: Destiny Academy preschool facility



has completed 95% of the outdoor play area. It includes a double swing, a wooden tower conjoined by a bridge, and a slide. In addition to this, there is a basketball court which could be used as a soccer field for the little kids. We have purchased many of the items needed for an indoor play area, including basketball hoops, a slide and several other play items. This year we will have two classrooms, one for age 4 and the other for age 5 (kindergarten). Each room will have air conditioning installed, four round tables for three or four children each, a cabinet for each child, a teacher's cabinet and a television set.

We have also met with some parents to discuss the affordable price without compromising the quality of education. Our purpose was to build rapport with them and at the same time communicate our value and mission. We agreed to charge Ks 25,000 (about \$25 USD) per month. For every ten students admitted, one can be given a full scholarship. Preference will be given to children of church planters who work in remote villages.

Uniforms have been selected, and fifty of them will be ordered in the next week with a logo on the left hand side. The logo is made of a large shield with a Bible in the center and an anchor attached to the Bible.

We are now addressing the most important item: the curriculum. We are still working on selecting books; however, we have one primary teacher, a very qualified teacher with

several years of work experience with children who will work with age 4. We are seeking one assistant teacher and are also in need of primary and assistant teachers for age 5.

With just a few weeks before Destiny Academy is officially open, we have had many parents pick up the application form for the academic year 2013/14. We are excited to see what God has in store for us in this. Sometime next week, I and the staff will meet with all of the parents and share with them the vision and mission of this school, and how we could join hands in raising up leaders for the next generation. •

David

## JUNE E-MAIL UPDATE:

June 3 marked the first day of Destiny Academy. After three years of planning and prayers, the Lord has finally brought Destiny into existence.

We hope to evangelize, disciple and educate kids for the glory of God. Please continue to pray for the Academy as we journey forward. We appreciate your partnership and your investment into this vision.

FYI - If you have any college students or anyone else seeking overseas volunteer work with kids, Destiny is open! - David

Learn more about schools in Asia by contacting Scott at [svanderkooy@wwcs.org](mailto:svanderkooy@wwcs.org). Support the work of WWCS at [wwcs.org](http://wwcs.org).

\*Full name withheld for the purpose of partner security in Myanmar



## Reflections on the Life of Steve Geurink

WWCS staffer of 15 years completes his journey on earth

On June 12, 2013, WWCS Vice President Steve Geurink passed away from cancer at the age of 52. Steve dedicated 15 years of his life to the ministry of Worldwide Christian Schools®, primarily as its Program Director for School Construction and Facility Improvement, including the leading of Worldwide Hands™ teams. Below are three staff reflections on Steve's commitment to his friends, family and work at WWCS.

The empty office next to mine, Steve's office, is a daily reminder of his absence both as a WWCS colleague and friend.

Among office items still there are photos of his family, the most important part of his life. Steve and I had many early morning prayer times together, talking and praying about and for our families.

A few tools lay about too, handled by thousands of volunteers who swung hammers side by side with Steve, building one classroom, one school, one dream-come-reality at a time.

A wood-burned block, the shape on it patterned after a group photo of Steve with his own church volunteers, depicts the importance he placed on getting people of God in touch with one another, building

relationships with people of another culture with whom they would have otherwise never worshiped.

A folded blanket sits on his desk, as if waiting for Steve to wrap it around himself for a few minutes of rest during those long months when he faithfully came to work, no matter how he was feeling.

The emptiness I feel is in his physical absence only, as I look over his office full of these things that tell us his story and give us a glimpse of who he was, and is, now in memory.

He always signed off his letters and emails with this, "Serving a Mighty God, with You" – yes, Steve, you did – and oh so well!

- Dale Dieleman

Steve was passionate about his work. He loved to stop in to our various offices on his way to the coffee maker and bounce ideas off of us regarding school projects he was working on, often in Guatemala, a country that was close to his heart. Steve needed that regular human interaction with his co-workers, and a break from his computer screen. He thrived on the presence of others.

Steve was a serious guy who was driven by the goal of achieving access for more children to the news of God's love for them. He made a point of keeping it light though too, telling us about the new gadget he'd rigged up to water the office plants

near his ceiling, how we shouldn't drink decaf coffee because of the chemicals involved, how incredible his children were, which farm cat he was terrorizing that week and which of his chickens was laying.

Steve has been a substantial part of what has defined us over the past 15 years, and he will be missed, deeply. - Emily Klooster

Steve was a big bear of a guy with a huge heart for God, his wife and children, as well as his ministry in this world. His laugh was always genuine, and his play on words with Dale (Dieleman) as co-conspirator kept all of us laughing.

He loved to talk about his children and their achievements. He was so proud of them and shared pictures and stories every day.

Steve was passionate about his work at WWCS and put all of his energy and faith into action. He believed in the Great Commission and spent his life serving God and spreading the Good News to thousands of children and their families. He was a very good man. We need more like him in our world. We will miss him.

- Holly Aungst



Steve Geurink, 1960 - 2013

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**OUR VISION** To glorify God by ensuring that all children have access to Christ-centered education.



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