



TRIP TO AFRICA

The trip was AMAZING!!! All of us in the group came face to face with a new reality...God's world is much bigger and diverse than we ever realized! What an experience!! What a realization of our many blessings!

The Luke Commission (TLC) is an amazing place where they dispense medical care to the very poor, free of charge to all who need it in Eswatini. It is completely donor funded and is the largest recipient of food from the Niagara Christian Gleaners food!

We conversed with the people who started this medical facility. Echo and Harry VanderWal are creative, innovative, Godly, kind, humble, leaders, who have a heart for the Eswatinians. We saw the boxes and bags of Niagara Christian

Gleaners food being distributed and used!! Keep working at the plant on Springcreek Road, the impact is real!!

At TLC every person is considered a VIP (very important patient) There are 40 departments at this Miracle Campus and they are staffed by 500+ Eswatinians! Here, twice yearly they hold a cataract surgery clinic. Surgeons come, for a week, from America and remove at least 200 cataracts. People who were completely blind, got them removed and could see the next day! What a smooth orderly business it was! Patients were registered, given a place on a mattress in an auditorium, lined up in a corridor ready for surgery, surgery was completed and patients were led back to their mattress to rest.

It was a very professional, compassionate process!



The next day eye bandages were removed on the veranda. We met one lady who explained that she was so happy because now she could see whether her dinner contained ants!! Each patient was given an opportunity to voice how they felt about their experience and new found sight! The singing and dancing celebrated their recovery and gave praise to God for their sight!!

A few Different Department Highlights at TLC - Miracle Campus

Vending Machine Drug Dispensing! Using QRcodes and facial recognition to give each patient just what they need. Wow!

Vehicle Maintenance Department - Here all vehicles were checked, repaired, washed and readied to help patients return home or be picked up and drive us around.

Drone Department - Here 4 drones were managed. Using drones really speeds up emergency medical help especially with poisonous snake bites from Black Mambas and Spitting Cobras. Within 15 minutes medication could arrive at site, which may otherwise take up to 4-5 hours!! Very cheap, old cell phones are a great way for Eswatinians to communicate and are a must have for almost all adults. Regular, timely medications could also be delivered in this manner. Also packages of NCG food could be dropped off with these drones.

Woodworking Department - All crutches, canes and any wooden items were designed and made out of ordinary fire wood here! Patients went home with these sturdy well made aids. All the rectangular light shades, on the campus, were an original, unique design! Beautifully made of local wood! We were even gifted with a wooden decorated cane and a wooden map of Eswatini with blessings written by the staff.

The Kitchen - Here meals were prepared on a daily basis, not only for the patients, but also for the staff! We ate it too and it was good! Here we saw several boxes of NCG food piled on shelves. The contents were being used for preparing stews and soups. One item they particularly enjoyed using was the onions!

There were many other departments, but too many to highlight here.

Mobile Clinics - These clinics are held about every other year in remote places. Often people in these areas had been identified prior and were in need of a wheelchair, other medical help and food. A large truck brought wheelchairs and canes to those in need. It was special to see people trying out their new, blue wheelchairs! Also a bag of pain medications, toothpaste and vitamins were distributed to each person. Again all documented and by the staff to prevent misuse and crime. What a joy it was to see boxes of food being carried off to homes and adults and little children alike enjoying dried apples!

SeaContainer Dispensaries/Clinic - We were able to see one of these in operation near a textile mill. Many of the people needing medications and care

could walk to this location. Again all QR and facial recognition was employed. Each person was then given their medication in a bag that contained gospel tracts. Each person was also given a bag of NCG food to take along with the medication so their stomachs could handle the treatments.

Homestead Visits - Here we were able to see how most people in Eswatini live! Pastor Brian drove us to 2 homesteads. The bridge had been washed out by an earlier storm and people could not come to the TLC, so we brought along a basic food parcel containing rice, oil, salt and boxes of NCG food. We saw their homes, gardens, paths and outside cooking areas. The poverty was astonishing! Some children had very little clothing, the houses were made of cinder blocks and corrugated iron roofs, windows were in disrepair. There were many grannies, aunties and children, but very few or no men around. Once, what seemed like good housing was not being maintained because a whole generation or two had died from HIV or other related health issues. It was all the women could do to feed the children. They looked so pleased with the food and the boy was so happy with the soccer ball! We noticed different coloured cinder blocks on a single wall. We were told that as soon as people were able to buy some more blocks a new level would be added till the wall that was high enough to put on a roof. Rain water was collected off the roof to water the garden and do washing.

We met one energetic man who was kicked in his back, at about age 8, and thus crippled up and disabled. Somehow he got himself to TLC and applied for a job. TLC gifted this man with a job. He puts all the gospel tracts and parts of scripture that each individual received with their medication in plastic bags. He felt so blessed to be able to do this!

Niagara Christian Gleaners food is having an impact at The Luke Commission and beyond in Eswatini! So, dear readers, your time, energy, donations and prayers, most of all very much appreciated

As a group we were able to have devotions together, exploring scripture and our own western biases, eat great meals together, laugh about smells, borrowed comfortable pants and stiff kneed dancing! God has given us new friends in Eswatini and here in the Niagara area. We experienced God's abiding love and care on this trip and are very thankful!!

