

Partner Follow Up Report

Partner Group \_\_Freedom Fellowship (Greer, SC)\_\_\_\_\_

Person completing form \_\_Mark H. Johnson \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of project \_03September-10September 2010\_\_\_\_\_

Date of report \_\_25September 2010 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Accomplishments**

We picked up where the Alice Drive Baptist team finished on the new feeding station on the grounds of Naledi Baptist Fellowship in Old Naledi. We worked from Monday to Friday having arrived late Friday night (3Sep). We experienced an incredible day of worship on Sunday, 4Sep, with Naledi Baptist Fellowship. Donny Kauffman, executive pastor at Freedom Fellowship, delivered God's word to the Naledi Baptist congregation on that Sunday. Worshiping with the Naledi Fellowship family was instrumental in setting up the team's experience BEFORE we starting working on the construction. We also joined the Tuesday night prayer meeting at Naledi Baptist praying and encouraging one another. On Thursday, we were able to go and help the feeding at the current feeding station (Tlamelo). The team helped with food prep and worked with the kids during the feeding and Bible story time. By the end of the week, the feeding station was up on all walls with window frames. Only one wall was remaining for completion prior to the station being prepared for the roof. We are thankful that we were able to see the construction move forward so fast in 1 week and we are humbled that God will continue to use this feeding station to provide for the most vulnerable children for generations to come.

### **Lessons learned**

Mixing concrete on the ground is hard work and a heavy load that takes time and energy. We found working earlier in the mornings with some afternoon breaks the best approach. Lucky for us, the humidity was absent and even with temps in the 90's we kept hydrated thanks to having a very large cooler on site. I can't stress enough how important the cooler was for the team. We kept ice (from Spar in Game City) with cold drinks always available. That allowed us to work hard during the days.

Going back to the mixing of concrete on the ground, I found out on the following Sunday that Open Baptist had a concrete mixer sitting in the shed unused. While it would have been a big help for the Freedom Fellowship team, it was a waste of project money and time for the Alice Drive team to NOT have the use of the mixer when they were putting in the foundation the week prior.

Naledi Baptist Fellowship congregation members did come out and help during the week, some almost every day of the work week. Having the congregational members working beside us fortified the bond that we forged by being onsite and working so hard. It would have been much easier for us to send money ahead and pay for workers. It made the difference to be there in person working beside the people of Old Naledi for their future. They know we now have "skin in the game" and that is what Close Connections strives to foster, a relationship of many levels between the churches in the US and the churches of Botswana and Southern Africa.

### **Steps to be taken/ suggestions**

Building projects for sister/plant churches should have enough priority to warrant the use of equipment that Open Baptist has at their disposal.

OBC was gracious to offer the use of a church van during the week. We couldn't have had such a successful week without the use of the van. I would recommend that OBC make a small fee part of their standard van use. Because OBC is often left with maintenance bills and repairs, it's not fair for our partner teams to not offer some compensation back to OBC. That should be an understood part, not something that OBC should have to ask for when loaning out vans to teams. To make that a standard practice, I suggest that a standard fee be set (a range of fees could be used dependent on how many/how many days, etc) AND communicated clearly to teams travelling to Botswana. Being aware of the fees ahead of time will make planning easier for teams' trip budgets. Teams should work to make sure OBC can continue this van ministry for future team visits.

### **Other comments**

Freedom Fellowship plans to remain fully engaged with Naledi Baptist Fellowship. We do not see the construction of the feeding station as the end of our trips or our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Old Naledi, just one small step. Our team is thankful for the logistical support and guidance that OBC offers. Your church is the hub to all that takes place on these trips, many times behind the scenes. We are forever in your debt and pray prayers of thanksgiving and blessings for your ministry. Special thank you to Jeff and April Sukup and to Scott and Tonya Shipes for making our trip a successful adventure we will never forget!

**Please use additional pages if necessary; please return to Desmond Henry (desandlara@gmail.com) or Jeff Sukup(jeffs@stfchurch.com). Thank you**