

Naledi Feeding Station Impacting Community
By: Sandy and Karen Baird

The primary purpose of this trip to Botswana was to assess the effectiveness of our ongoing feeding station in the Naledi slum of Gaborone. This ministry under the direction of Maruti James and operated as a partnership between Manna Worldwide and OBC ministers daily to 170 children. These children range in ages from 3 years of age to 16 years of age and all are residents of the impoverished Naledi neighborhood. Karen and I spent two days assessing the children and also assessing the general effectiveness of the ministry. We are happy to report that the children are generally healthy and have shown marked improvements in overall appearance and health due to the consistency and quality of the feeding ministry. We are also happy to report that Maruti James has developed a quality team of local leaders from the cooks to the youth workers who provide an effective atmosphere of Christian learning and fellowship. The Bible Study time was enthusiastically participated in and the games and sports brought a high level of energy to the afternoon. The most pressing ongoing need is for the kitchen to be moved onsite at the Naledi Fellowship so that the feeding program will bring the children to the church everyday to reinforce the relationship between the program and the church. Plans are underway for one of our close connection partners Alice Drive Baptist Church to address that need before the year is out. The community impact of this feeding station was in clear evidence during our trip as we witnessed direct almost confrontational Islamic interference. Because the program has attracted so many children and so much community notoriety the Muslim community has begun to feed people directly opposite the gate where the MANNA program operates. They pull up several times a week, while our program is going on, and open a car trunk with food in it and try and entice the children to leave our program and to come and eat with them. Although a sad display, this is evidence of the effectiveness of the ministry, and added incentive for us to continue the good work we have begun. At MANNA Worldwide we are so pleased with the progress of this ministry and are thankful for Maruti James and his staff as well as the partnership we have with OBC in covering the cost of this needy work.