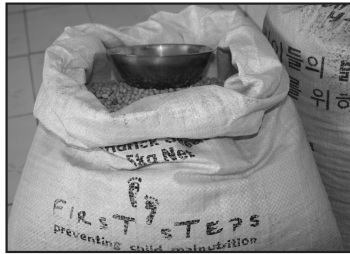


First Steps: Gifts of Kindness

First, a big Thank You! Your donations go a long way.



Soybeans are shipped from Canada to North Korea to make soymilk. A cup of soymilk costs 2.7 cents per cup including shipping.

Donate \$ _____ towards soybeans.



Micro-nutrient Sprinkles cost 2.7 cents per sachet. They prevent malnutrition starting in the womb. Sprinkles are given to pregnant and nursing mothers, as well as babies from 6-24 months.

Donate \$ _____ towards micro-nutrient Sprinkles.



20-litre stainless-steel milk cans are vital for storing and transporting soymilk from production centres to the children we serve. They cost \$100 each.

Donate \$ _____ towards milk cans.



The VitaGoat is powered by combustible fuel (wood, coal, etc.). It processes soybeans directly into soymilk and provides about 1500 cups of soymilk per day to hungry children. The main difference from the VitaCow is that the VitaGoat runs without electricity. The cost of the VitaGoat is \$4000.

Donate \$ _____ towards a VitaGoat.



VitaCows process soybeans directly into soymilk providing children with a warm and protein-rich drink. The VitaCow is powered by electricity and can produce 2000 cups of soymilk per day to feed hungry children. The cost of the VitaCow is \$7000.

Donate \$ _____ towards a VitaCow.

name _____
 address _____
 city _____ prov. _____ postal code _____
 phone _____ email _____

Please make cheques payable to First Steps and forward to: 3260 West 5th Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1V4 Canada
 BIN: 878227511 RR0001. Gifts are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.
 For further information contact us at: 604.732.0195 or www.firststepscanada.org

FIRST STEPS news

SUMMER 2012

Serving with an unwavering commitment

As we meditate on our June 12 - 19 visit to North Korea we are overflowing with thanksgiving to you, our prayer partners and supporters. We are thankful because we see how this ministry is sustained by your prayers and your finances and because we experience how the Lord uses each of us individually to accomplish His plans. We are thankful because we witnessed so many expressions of gratitude from our partners and children in North Korea. And we are thankful for the granting of a visa for a team participant from the USA.

We also returned with concern for the children and their beloved caregivers, for we see that it is those who are unwavering in their commitment to serving the children who are too often sidelined due to illness and long recovery periods. We see our partners give every ounce of their energy as they struggle to provide the most basic needs of water, food and shelter for the children even as they themselves succumb to illness. So we are immeasurably thankful for your prayers for the caregivers and for the medicines (CliniCases) and provisions that we pass on to try to encourage them and help ease their burden even a little. We in turn can be encouraged by the words of the deputy director of the Nampo orphanage.

"The vegetable soup that you sent is so tasty that the children could eat it forever. Until our vegetables start coming out, I can't tell you how important this soup is. And the apple chips are just perfect for the children's well-being because they can take a piece and hold on to it or put it in

their pocket for later. The vitamins are a little bitter and have a little aftertaste. But we tell the children that if you eat them you will grow bigger and taller, so they eat them and ask for more. You send all the things that the children like best and are good for their health. Whenever the truck comes and we



Soymilk is served at Wonsan Baby Home.
 photo Rachelyn Ritchie

receive a shipment, it's a joyous event. Thank you very much."

During our 8-day visit, our team of seven (Mary Kosberg, Phil Schafran and Aaron Schafran, Doris Kraske, Rachelyn Ritchie and Susan Ritchie) covered

over 700 kilometres, visiting six orphanages, eight soymilk production centres, five kindergartens, three medical clinics and one cooperative farm.

We confirmed the arrival of 10 new VitaCow food processing machines, one container including gifts of dried soup mix and apples from the North Okanagan Gleaners as well as canned mandarin oranges from Calkin and Burkes, one container of micro-nutrient Sprinkles and 100 tonnes of soybeans.

Thank you for being a part of this challenging work and for persevering in the confidence that God has provided an opportunity for First Steps to be a witness and a blessing to the children and the people of North Korea.

Smiles of true joy Rachelyn Ritchie

This picture melts my heart in a special way and I'd like to tell you why. In North Korea, I think smiles carry more significance than just an expression of friendliness. Often, the children in the schools and orphanages would smile for the camera, beautiful big smiles, because they knew they were supposed to. However what stuck with me, is the many times I was able to see the true joy behind their smiles - anything from laughing at a silly face,



Smiles of true joy. photo Rachelyn Ritchie

or just the excitement of meeting a new person, and then their smiles meant all the more because I sensed they were real.

In this picture, the small girl on the left is probably about 4 or 5 years old. When I stepped into that room of kids, she came to me, and as I bent down to say hello she wrapped her arms around

me and remained there for as long as she pleased, completely comfortable just showing love, and she didn't even know who I am. I know that the goals of First Steps are rooted in love, God's love. Well, to see a child reciprocate the love you want to show them is a truly memorable feeling.



Rachelyn Ritchie sitting on bags of soybeans. photo Aaron Schafran

Taking a closer look Mary Amendt

A day in Nampo with First Steps was a significant experience for me. I've lived in Pyongyang for a year and a half, yet it was really meaningful for me to catch a glimpse of 'real' life outside the capital.



Waiting for the visitors. photo Aaron Schafran

Living here in many ways is not easy, especially knowing how difficult day-to-day life is for a large portion of the population. It was so encouraging and hope-inspiring to see the Vitacows and a Vitagoat at work, producing milk for thousands of children! It blessed me tremendously to observe numerous children throughout the day; at the Nampo Baby Home, the Daedae-ri Cooperative Farm Kindergarten, and the Nampo Kindergarten Orphanage. As someone who sees life in the DPRK on a daily

nourishing and life-giving work of First Steps, maybe someday they will have a chance to learn His Name, too.

That is my prayer for the lasting impact of First Steps here in the DPRK.

basis, I can truly say the work First Steps is doing is the hand of God in this nation. I am so thankful to the numerous donors, and volunteers for the money, time and love that pours into the children of the DPRK. God knows these children by name... and because of the



Waving to the visitors. photo Rachelyn Ritchie

"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Mark 10:13-16

Just like your favourite grandma Mary Kosberg

Oh! She is precious!
Oh! She is creative!
Oh! She is loving!

Sure, that description fits the darlings we saw and touched....but I'm referring to Mrs. Jung Jung Sook, director of the Wonsan Kindergarten Orphanage.

She enthusiastically shared with us some of her 'creative' ways with the food staples she is provided. By varying the menu, plain and mundane as it is, she has nudged the children under her care to be excited about eating - and we all know kids eat more and are stronger if they enjoy eating.

She doesn't just rehydrate the dried soup, she adds some tuna, and they beg for more. Thus a can of tuna becomes a more interesting soup! The dried veggies are sometimes served in a dumpling - another twist to 'sameness.'



Mrs. Jung Jung Sook photo Aaron Schafran



Preparing soymilk. photo Rachelyn Ritchie

God bless Mrs. Jung and her loving staff for caring for their children as mothers, making a home-cooked meal. Her children don't just get a meal, they get some love in every bite.

I was touched by the dedication of the directors and caregivers I saw in action. Just think of your favorite grandma. She's chubby, be-speckled with



Mary Kosberg snuggling a happy orphan. photo Rachelyn Ritchie

knobby, worn hands, the arthritic rocking gait, and oozes love. That's the kind of person I saw over and over again. The smiles of the teachers, the encouraging facial expressions of the music leaders, the 'hands on' to the sheer masses in the face of less than ideal conditions and ratios. It looks to be a pretty thankless, energy-draining job. But it's being done with love - all they can muster.

Almost without fail, the women of these many kindergartens, orphanages, boarding schools, and baby homes thanked us for our visit and our concern, escorting us out to the gate - not with a mere business handshake, but instead with the hand-holding grip of partners and friends, waving farewells until our bus drove out of sight - like your favorite grandma.

Happy children in an imperfect world Aaron Schafran

Given their circumstance and living conditions, it was surprising to see how excited the children in these pictures were to see us. They all seemed to have the same goal as the rest of us, to live happy and healthy lives.



Wonsan Primary School Orphanage. photo Aaron Schafran



Wonsan Primary School Orphanage. photo Aaron Schafran