

## First Steps: Gifts of Kindness



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

Donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ towards soybeans.



The micronutrient Sprinkles program provides 18 months of sachets for a baby (6 to 24 months) and 1 year of sachets for a pregnant and nursing mother at a cost of \$50. A lack of nutrients in the diet impacts growth and brain development. Sprinkles prevents rickets and lowers rates of diarrhea and pneumonia, the leading causes of death in children under 2 years of age.

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 1,500 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



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**IT'S BETTER TO HAVE  
 A PARTNER THAN  
 GO IT ALONE. SHARE  
 THE WORK, SHARE  
 THE WEALTH. AND  
 IF ONE FALLS DOWN,  
 THE OTHER HELPS,  
 BUT IF THERE'S NO  
 ONE TO HELP, TOUGH!**

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10 (MSG)**

First Steps returned to North Korea twice this summer for its second and third visits of the year to confirm the arrival of soybeans and spend time with some of the young children we're reaching. The team also met with First Steps' local partners to learn whether the soybean shortages reported earlier this year were still cause for concern. In the Spring Newsletter we talked about how the most recent soybean crop (2013) was adversely affected by heavy rains during the growing season, which meant germination was poor. During the second visit we learned that the situation had worsened. There had been little rain since the spring downpour, causing the soil to dry up and making it harder for the seedlings to emerge. Site managers at soymilk production centres in the cities where First Steps works shared their increasing concern. Mr. Ri Chun Sik, manager at Bongchun Food Factory in Wonsan, said: "This year is very dry. Please help with soybeans because we have a drought and the crop is not looking like it'll be very good." In Nampo, we heard similar things. At Nampo Foodstuff Factory one official told us this is the "worst drought in 50 years. The fields are dry and there has been no rain." While the drought was mentioned

often during our 7-day visit, our local partners would always thank First Steps in the same breath for its continued support and the soybeans that have been sent. It is with a concerned but thankful spirit that First Steps extends the appeal and thanks of our partners in North Korea to you. During our third visit in August we met with our partners at the Academy of Medical Sciences and Institute of Child Nutrition to discuss expanding our micronutrient Sprinkles program. At a tuberculosis hospital we had the chance to see how severely children can be impacted when they don't receive Sprinkles or proper nutrition. We saw a little girl awaiting surgery, bent over at the waist and not able to stand straight because the TB had entered her spine. Yet when pregnant women and their babies receive Sprinkles, they are much less vulnerable to TB and other life threatening diseases of the poor. Your ongoing generosity has enabled First Steps to assist children in North Korea and we're patiently trusting in the Lord to create an opportunity for us to respond, as needed, in the coming months so that we can endure the hardship with our partners – it's better to have a partner than go it alone.



## Focus on Wonsan: Sprinkles working wonders

by Hamish Ross

Travelling to the city of Wonsan on the east coast of North Korea with First Steps gave me a more accurate picture of what daily life is like for the average person living outside of the relatively lavish lifestyle enjoyed in the capital, Pyongyang. The highway from Pyongyang to Wonsan is in poor condition and heavily marked with potholes, making the bus ride long and bumpy. Along the highway are large work brigades that have been assigned to hard manual labour (like harvesting wood), which they dutifully carry out every day.

In Wonsan, it was encouraging to see First Steps' Soymilk and Sprinkles programs in action. While both programs are good and efficient methods of preventing

child malnutrition in North Korea, further expansion is being met with new challenges. First Steps' Soymilk program is its oldest and largest program but the questionable North Korean power grid can be problematic for the soymilk-producing machinery. Although First Steps' motivated local partners are usually able to keep everything running, it's tough. The news out of Wonsan that encouraged me most is the success of the Sprinkles program in preventing malnutrition in pregnant women, nursing mothers and babies. Sprinkles are highly cost-effective and simple, which I think are the best things about them. They don't rely on the power grid and are largely free of

complications. I was very pleased to see healthy babies and happy mothers. One thing that stuck out for me was an older pregnant woman who told us she was unsure about her pregnancy due to feeling very weak, but felt much better and confident her unborn child would be healthy after taking Sprinkles.



Soymilk is soy delicious.

## Meet our newest local partner: Mrs. Park Soon Shin

Mrs. Park Soon Shin became the Director of the Primary Boarding School in Wonsan at the beginning of June (her predecessor, Mrs. Park Bong Sook, retired for health reasons). When the First Steps team visited her at the beginning of July, she'd only been working for a few weeks. Even though our schedule didn't allow us to meet for long, her sincere commitment to the children in her charge was obvious. Mrs. Park's husband is cooking and caring for their 15-year-old son because she often isn't home until 10 pm!



Dedicated to her job seven days a week.

She lovingly ensures all the children (over 500) are OK before she leaves. "When you are working among the children, even when you are thinking you have to get home, the time flies by and before you know it, it's 9 or 10 pm," she said. Although Sunday is her day off, she still comes in. Mrs. Park told us: "I am not at ease unless I come and see the children on my day off."

## First Steps' Feature Child: Jong Suk Keong

Suk Keong, 14, is a student at the Secondary Boarding School in Wonsan. We interviewed him in July and enjoyed learning more about what a typical day for him is like. Like many 14-year-old boys, Suk Keong's favourite subject at school is sports. If he had his choice, he'd prefer not to study physics. He plays on one of his school's two basketball teams. He shyly told us that his team is better and he's a main player. When he's not on the basketball court, he enjoys eating North Korea's famous raengmyeon or cold noodles.



Happy going to the hoop.

## Oh Yea, she's a cutie

Oh Yea Kong was six months old when we met her and her mother in July. Yea Kong recently started receiving Sprinkles daily with her solid foods. Her mother and doctor were so excited by how healthy young Yea Kong is. The doctor pulled out her measuring tape and showed us how this little girl is much taller, heavier and bigger than other babies her age who haven't received Sprinkles. Although her arms must've been getting tired as she held her baby tight, Yea Kong's mother couldn't stop smiling. It was so encouraging meeting this mother-daughter duo and witnessing the impact Sprinkles, enabled by your generous contributions, is having on lives in North Korea.

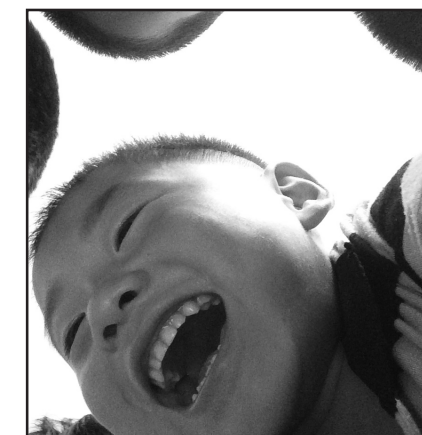


Sprinkles makes for smiles.

## Laughter is contagious

Spending time with young children living at the orphanages that First Steps provides with nutrient-rich soymilk is what we like most about

travelling to this country. Although the children may be shy at first, they're always eager to play with us. A tried-and-tested way to have them overcome their shyness is to



Happy kids get the picture.

take their picture and show it to them. Within minutes they'll be giggling at the silly pictures appearing, grabbing hold of one

another to pose and barely able to stand because they're leaning in so close to the camera. Soon enough everyone is laughing, the language barrier is broken and we are pleasantly reminded that laughter has no language.