

First Steps: Gifts of Kindness



Soybeans are shipped from Canada to North Korea to make soymilk. One cup of soymilk costs just 3 cents, including shipping.

Donate \$ _____ towards soybeans.



A \$50 donation to the micronutrient Sprinkles program provides 18 months of sachets for a baby (6 to 24 months) and 9 months of sachets for a pregnant and nursing mother. A lack of nutrients in the diet impacts growth and brain development. Sprinkles prevents rickets and lowers the 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 nutrient-rich 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 a 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 Health Society and forward to: 3260 West 5th Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1V4 Canada
 BIN: 821724036 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

Please Recycle or Pass Along



Fall 2016

This letter is hurriedly written as a First Steps team embarks on a regular confirmation visit to North Korea. In addition to our usual stops, we'll also be assessing the situation on the ground after Typhoon Lionrock ripped through two northern provinces at the start of September.

Three days of torrential rain and flooding wiped out entire villages and devastated crops just days before the harvest was to begin. Hundreds of people lost their lives and more than 100,000 were left homeless. Complicating matters, a long, cold winter in which temperatures regularly dip below -25°C, is just around the corner. Please pray for all those who have been suddenly made destitute and placed in grave danger,

**“Therefore,
 whenever we have
 the opportunity,
 we should do good
 to everyone...”**

Galatians 6:10 [NIV]

We'll be visiting orphanages, daycares, schools and hospitals etc., to assess damage and needs. We will report what we find soon after returning.

Meanwhile back in July, an eight-member team visited soymilk-production sites and Sprinkles-distribution areas. Our group included three teenage boys: Sam Ross (16), and twin brothers Quinton and

Sebastian Carter (13). The boys were a great help, taking turns to check inventory, deliver items and take photographs. Despite the language barrier, they made friends easily everywhere they went, bringing fresh eyes and energy to our group.



Musan County has been inundated by flooding.

First Steps also visited Ryanggang Province to introduce micronutrient Sprinkles and soymilk programs to this remote northern part of the country, specifically Hyesan city, the provincial capital, and Samjiyon. We visited these two areas and met with our new local partners, discussing our programs and how we might improve the nutritional status

of the children, who in this rugged region are among the most stunted and malnourished in all of North Korea.

Our team delivered educational videos, monitors and solar batteries which will allow local doctors to introduce Sprinkles to pregnant women and their newborns in the area. In addition, we brought a VitaGoat machine to expand soymilk production.

As always, it was a privilege to meet the child beneficiaries and local partners we work with carrying out our two programs: providing soymilk to children in kindergartens, daycares and orphanages, as well as providing micronutrient Sprinkles to pregnant women and their babies. The visit was a good start in a new area and felt like an important extension of our ongoing 16-year relationship with the people of North Korea. We are blessed that First Steps has been invited to work in this area. Thank you for your support that makes this work possible.

Susan Ritchie - Executive Director

Tongchon Spotlight

Tongchon is near Wonsan on the east coast and is an area where First Steps has been working for nine years to provide soymilk to children. This time we visited the Tongchon Rosang #2 Daycare, a soymilk beneficiary, and the Tongchon Basic Foodstuff Factory.

Tongchon does not grow soybeans and is reliant on receiving beans from First Steps and the government, sometimes even borrowing from surrounding areas. We were told that when their crops are harvested, then they repay what they borrowed.

We visited the Tongchon Basic Foodstuff Factory, which has merged with the Tongchon Daycare and Kindergarten Supply Centre. This new site provides soymilk to 5,715 children in daycares,

kindergartens and elementary schools. They received three tonnes of soybeans from First Steps in June which they were using every day. Ms. Jo Ho-Yon told us: "I can't tell you in words how thankful we are for the help you are giving us."

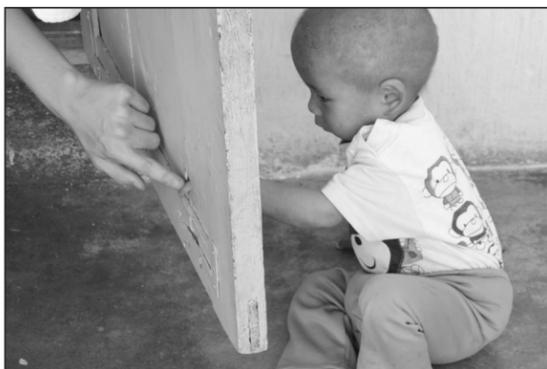
At the Tongchon Rosang #2 Daycare, we saw the children drinking soymilk and had a chance to speak with a visiting doctor who was doing her rounds. While some children were energetic, we also saw a number of children who

were visibly malnourished with rounded stomachs, patchy hair, etc. The parents of the children do a variety of work in the area such as caterpillar farming, nursery farming, road construction, teaching, etc. We trust that with continued support the children's nutritional condition will improve.

Tongchon Musan Daycare Reflection

by Sebastian Carter

While the slightly older children were playing games under a tree in the yard, I joined the toddlers and babies who were sitting under a roof on the front porch of the daycare. One toddler started sticking his finger through a round hole in the daycare's wooden door. I would tickle his finger and he would pull it out, and then immediately put it back in the hole again! I would tickle it every time and he would pull it out again and again. When I stuck my finger through the hole, he would hit it back out of the hole with his hand. We played like this for a good while until he hit his head on the door and started to cry. That's when I noticed that he didn't seem to have a lot of hair on his head, and I wondered if he might be malnourished. Another little girl on the porch started to fall asleep while standing up, and I wondered if she was weak from malnutrition. I liked going to see the kids at the daycares, but moments like these reminded me of what First Steps was here to do. Soymilk is important for the children's health.



A toddler plays Hole in the Door with Sebastian.



Sprinkles beneficiary Ri Hyo-Yon and her mother Jo Un-Suk.



Sam, Quinton and Sebastian pose with ball hockey players at the orphanage in Hyesan.



Care to share some of your soymilk?

Introducing Sprinkles to Ryanggang Province

by Trevor Carter

Our first clinic visit in Hyesan was on August 2 at the Ryongbong Clinic. This clinic had received its first shipment of Sprinkles (we later found out our visit was the director's first encounter with foreigners). We were told that the clinic cares for about 18,000 people in the area, caring for people living up to one-and-a-half hours away on foot. The clinic clearly struggled to maintain a sufficient level of quality care for the infants and pregnant mothers in its area; we were told that anemia is very common, and that in the past three years the clinic had only received two shipments of iron

and folic acid tablets. It was clear that moms and babies will benefit greatly from Sprinkles.

First Steps delivered monitors, rechargeable batteries and solar panels so that the physicians can show instructional videos about Sprinkles. Mothers and pregnant women from the clinic were brought in to watch the video and their attentiveness was incredible to witness. It was clear that these women were eager to learn all they could about how to maximize their children's health. After viewing the video, the women received blankets as gifts. The blankets had been sewn by a First Steps supporter and were used to wrap donated medical supplies such as baby formula, wipes and medicines which are given to the clinics.

New Friends and Friendly Competition

First Steps visited primary and secondary orphanages in Wonsan, Kangwon Province and Hyesan, Ryanggang Province. We enjoyed meeting and playing ball hockey with the children. As seen in the photo, stunting is a serious issue, with our 13-year-old teens being taller than 16 and 17-year-old local children. Ryanggang Province in particular suffers from some of the worst stunting rates in the country, with over 40% of children being stunted.

by Quinton Carter

In Wonsan at the Kangwon Secondary Boarding School (orphanage), we played soccer

with some kids. The game was fast-paced and the kids were very skilled. Even though it was very hot and sunny we all kept playing hard.

During halftime, we sat in the shade and tried to cool off. Our new friends drank their daily cup of First Steps soymilk and told us what they wanted to do when they grow up. One of the boys said he wanted to go to university for sports and another said he wanted to join the army. After a short rest, we decided to play some frisbee. When we gave the kids a frisbee, they just stared at it blankly. They had

never played with one before. So we got to teach them how. Some of them really caught on fast and started to throw the frisbees to their friends.

After playing frisbee, we went back to the soccer game. We all played our hearts out and the game ended in a tie. I was so grateful that I was able to share time with these happy and playful kids in the orphanage, and to teach them about a sport that we take for granted. I think we left them some great memories after our visit. It was a great experience for everyone!



"In this photo, I am at the Nampo Kindergarten Orphanage playing with the kids. From the minute we came these kids were overjoyed. I would put my finger on a picture and the kids would all shout the answer loudly and as quick as they could. They had a passion for learning and being competitive."

—Sam Ross - age 16