

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.



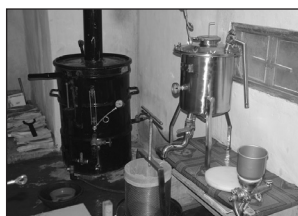
A \$50 donation to the micronutrient Sprinkles program provides 18 months of sachets for a baby (6 to 24 months) and 9 months of sachets for a pregnant and nursing mother. A lack of nutrients in the diet impacts growth and brain development. Sprinkles prevents rickets and lowers the rates of diarrhea 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 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



Summer 2016



**Your love, Lord,
 reaches to the
 heavens, your
 faithfulness to
 the skies.**

Psalm 36:5

It's been more than 15 years that First Steps has been serving in North Korea, thanks to God's foundational and continued blessing of this work.

It's also thanks to all of you who have joined in providing your prayer, financial and volunteer support to make a tangible difference in the lives of children and families. Without you and without the work of the Lord in our hearts, this ministry simply wouldn't exist! The Psalmist was absolutely right when he wrote: "Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."

It's a privilege to reach out together with each of you and to positively impact young lives in the name of Jesus. Following our most recent visit in May to orphanages, daycare centres and clinics, as well as meetings with officials, First Steps remains invigorated and thankful for what God is doing in the hearts of those He loves in North Korea.

We strengthened relationships at each location we visited and especially enjoyed hearing from those on the frontlines who are helping to make soymilk and micronutrient Sprinkles a reality in the lives of children, pregnant women, new mothers and their newborns.

While we were made aware of the hardships facing North Korea as food production in 2015 reportedly dropped by almost 10 percent from 2014, it was beneficial to hear first-hand from our partners about the local impact of last summer's drought in the areas where First Steps serves. At the Waudu Supply Centre for Children, the director explained how

they were only able to harvest 50 percent of their regular soybean crop due to the drought.

Still, our partners are optimistic for this year's harvest. At the Wonsan Koksan Foodstuff Factory, nearly half of the 250-member staff were out in the hills planting soybeans for three days when we visited. We were told that this year farmers were using better rooting techniques and planting more beans. They were also very appreciative of the beans that First Steps had recently sent. The director told us they had just run out of domestic beans when First Steps beans arrived—a timely blessing.

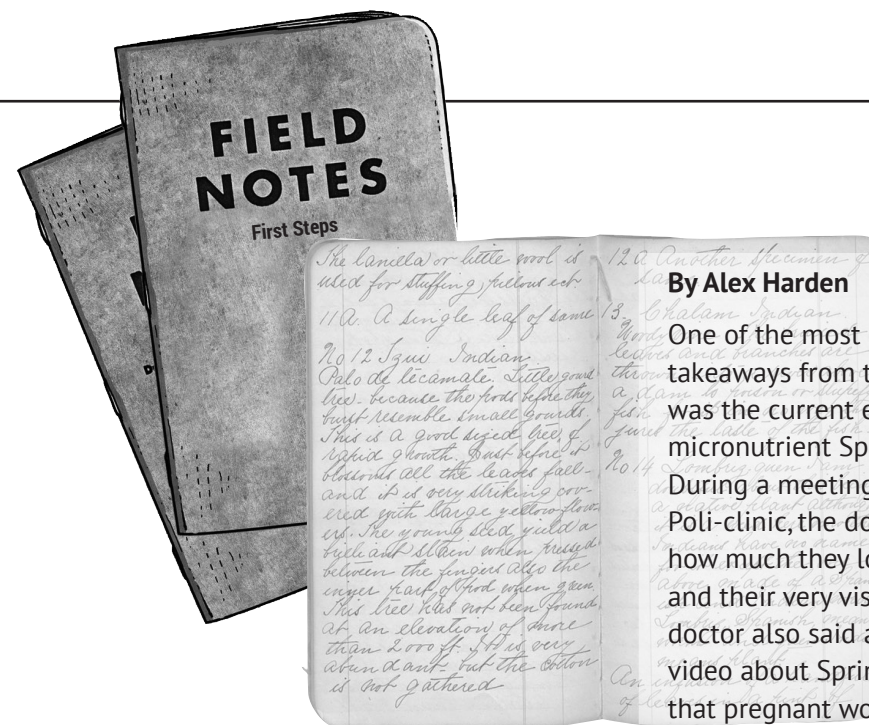
This year First Steps has begun to expand the micronutrient Sprinkles program into Munchon (the second largest city in Kangwon Province). When discussing this with the Institute of Child Nutrition, they explained how important education is, saying: "The whole family needs to know how beneficial Sprinkles are to align their interests so that if the mother forgets to take her Sprinkles, her family members can remind her how important it is to take them." Fortunately, our new partners in Munchon will be able to use the same educational videos, brochures and posters that have been used in other areas.

First Steps is also introducing the Sprinkles program into the far northern city of Hyesan and has been asked to consider introducing the soymilk program as well. Stay tuned and please be in touch at any time with input, comments or questions. Blessings to you.

*Susan Ritchie
 Executive Director*

FIELD NOTES

First Steps



By Phil Schafran

One of my favourite memories from this visit was meeting the director of the Waudo Supply Centre for Children, near Nampo on the west coast. When we visited she mentioned how much they like First Steps soybeans. She said the beans smell and taste great, making better quality soymilk.

The Waudo factory is a small operation with just one VitaCow machine and one VitaGoat. The director said she particularly liked her wood-burning VitaGoat because it wasn't dependent on unreliable electricity, which often sidelined her electrically-powered VitaCow. She made a passionate request for another VitaGoat so she could make more soymilk for the children without worrying about the electrical supply.

When we returned to Waudo for a short visit five days later, we found a huge pile of tree branches (5x5x7 cubic feet) had been delivered outside the soymilk factory. The director told us all those branches would provide fuel for the VitaGoat, but first they had to be chopped up to fit in the burner. It's labour intensive, but a reliable way to produce soymilk.



Stack of wood to be chopped for VitaGoat fuel at Waudo.

This director was also growing a vegetable garden on the top floor of the building, where First Steps had previously helped by getting windows installed to let sunlight in to make the garden grow. She was also raising three pigs next to the garden which would

be sold when they'd grown bigger, with the proceeds being used to buy more wood to fuel the VitaGoat. Her resourcefulness is impressive.

Overall, I was impressed by all the local committees in Wonsan, Munchon, Pyongsong and Hyongjesan. The people work very hard to make and deliver soymilk daily for the children in their communities.

By Madeline Harden

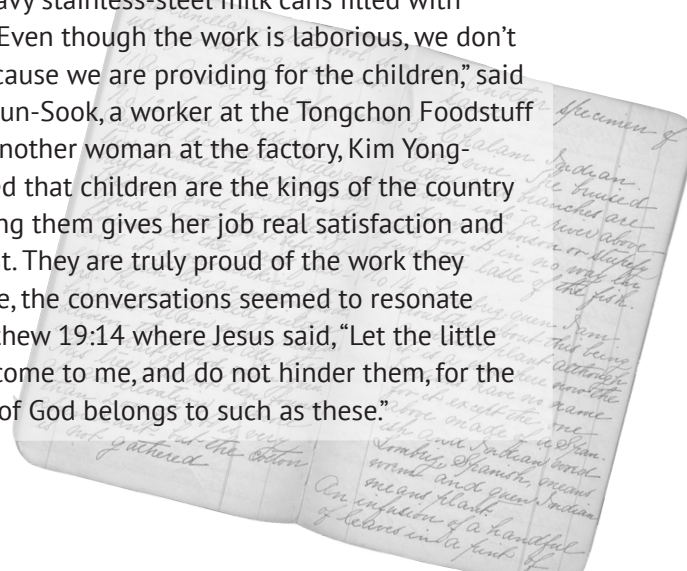
First Steps' visits to North Korea are all about gathering information, usually confirming the arrival and proper distribution of recent shipments of soybeans, Sprinkles and various pieces of equipment. But sometimes fresh knowledge comes from unexpected sources—like grandmothers!

When we visited the Haeon Daycare in Kangwon Province, the director told us she knows the children are growing when they drink soymilk because the grandmothers notice. After the hardships of raising their own children, the grandmothers now see that the faces of their grandchildren are much fuller, rounder and prettier – and they're convinced the difference is due to the daily cup of soymilk they receive thanks to First Steps.

I was also struck by the dedication and love for children shown by our working partners in North Korea. Making soymilk is not an easy task. There are shifts in the middle of the night; in winter it's freezing and there's no heat in buildings; and the work is hard, moving bags of soybeans and lifting heavy stainless-steel milk cans filled with soymilk. "Even though the work is laborious, we don't feel it because we are providing for the children," said Mrs. Ri Youn-Sook, a worker at the Tongchon Foodstuff Factory. Another woman at the factory, Kim Yong-Hwi, added that children are the kings of the country and serving them gives her job real satisfaction and fulfillment. They are truly proud of the work they do. For me, the conversations seemed to resonate with Matthew 19:14 where Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."



Curious kids watch visitors as they await their cup of soymilk at Haeon Daycare.



By Alex Harden

One of the most exciting takeaways from this trip for me was the current expansion of the micronutrient Sprinkles program. During a meeting at the Sopo Poli-clinic, the doctors raved about how much they loved Sprinkles and their very visible benefits. The doctor also said an information video about Sprinkles is being shown every day at the clinic so that pregnant women in the area can learn about the health benefits for themselves and their babies. Sprinkles are a simple and very cost-effective way to prevent malnutrition in pregnant and nursing women and children under two.

After meeting with the doctor, we went next door to meet with a few beneficiaries and hear their stories. The pride on the faces of the mothers with their healthy growing babies was so incredibly heartwarming. They were so excited to have their photos taken and show off the remarkable effects of Sprinkles on their beautiful children. After hearing such positive feedback, it is so wonderful to hear that soon more women and children will be reached by this amazing program.

I also had an interesting encounter with a gentleman named Kim Cho-hun, who has been working at the Nampo Children's Food Factory for just two months. As I took some notes on the machinery in the factory, he snuck up behind me and started reading over my shoulder. I quickly learned that he could both read and write English. He then borrowed my notebook to read and tell me a bit about himself. He recently moved from Wonsan with his wife and 14-month-old daughter, Sun-Myong. He previously had worked as an economist and his hobbies include practising English and playing baseball. He enjoys the company of his co-workers and excitedly teased and pointed out his friends who were hard at work making soymilk.



Proud new mom shows off her Sprinkles baby at Sopo Policlinic.



Alex shares her notes with new friend Kim Cho-hun.