



Soymilk brings out the dimples.

**“Thou changest not,
Thy compassions
they fail not.”**

James 1:17



Trusting God in Uncertain Times

Greetings to you from First Steps. We are so grateful for your faithfulness, prayers, and generosity. Thank you for walking with us even during this time when many of you have trials of your own. The summer season brought successive natural disasters to North Korea. Not only did they experience a historically long monsoon season, with many consecutive days of torrential downpour, but recent typhoons Bavi, Maysak, and Haishen caused additional flooding and damage to many areas in North Korea. This includes three regions in Kangwon province where First Steps has worked for 18 years. In all, tens of thousands of homes were destroyed and tragically, lives were lost. The country was already facing a poor harvest, exacerbated by the shutdown of the border which among other things has prevented fertilizer and seed imports. The compounded effects of severe climatic

events, poor harvest, and restrictive anti-COVID measures has left the country in a tenuous state.

In our last newsletter, we shared about the nearly 100 tonnes of soybeans that



Rebuilding Yonsa after a storm in 2016.

God had protected from being distributed within North Korea. Incredibly, it remained in storage until COVID-19 began to affect supply

chains and North Korea shut its borders. Then later, we heard from our partners in North Korea that the beans had recently been shipped to eight of our soymilk partner sites in three provinces, reaching more than 80,000 children with much needed soymilk at exactly the right time.



Soybeans from Canada waiting to be distributed.

God’s loving kindness remains constant throughout every hardship. Despite delays, your prayers and support have enabled us to send 40 tonnes of soybeans

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from Canada and 7.2 million sachets of micronutrient Sprinkles from Malaysia. These shipments have arrived in Dalian, China, and we now wait for the reopening of the border between Dalian and Nampo for the final leg of their journey.

It should be noted that our shipments travel from Canada to Korea via ship. Once they arrive in Dalian, they are unloaded and put in a bonded warehouse in China until they clear customs. They are then reloaded into containers to be shipped from Dalian, China to Nampo, North Korea on a Korean feeder vessel. Due to a huge backlog of containers idling in Dalian, the containers are not being shipped on a first-come-first-serve basis but in the order of the priority that the Korean government assigns to them. Our reliable North Korean partner organization has reassured us that they have “completed the internal procedures” for First Steps shipments and that our



Pure joy in pre-pandemic times.

containers “will be the first to be onboard once the nation-wide emergency measure gets relaxed regarding COVID-19.”

Cooperation from government officials is critical in this process and it is at times like these that we see the fruit of years of developing relationships with our valuable Korean partners.

As we pray through this season, we are reminded and encouraged of the Lord’s unwavering faithfulness and his boundless mercies – for ourselves and those in North Korea. Because of God’s great love and his compassion for those we love and serve, we are filled with hope and continue to wait on the Lord. We are so grateful to be able to continue partnering through this season.

The Psalmist writes, “He is near to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” As we follow God to hungry children and under-nourished mothers, we stay close to His heart and remain committed to following His leadership and guidance in our work.

The people of North Korea need your prayers. Over the years, we have seen up close their perseverance and resilience despite ongoing trials and pain. Even so, we look to the living God to lift them up, and steady their feet in difficult days. Thank you for your continued support through these challenging times and for your prayers which surround the children, babies, and mothers in North



Eager faces filled with energy and hope.

Korea, keeping them safe under the refuge of the Most High.

This past season, many of us have been stretched and grown in ways we never anticipated. Perhaps it has been a time where we have also increased our understanding of human finiteness, and can reflect more readily on the uncertainty of life. What a gift it is to learn and relearn that we must rely fully on the Lord, because without God’s blessing our efforts are in vain.





The Height of Helping

The laughs and cheerful shouts of children filled this bright Monday morning in November in Sinmiri Kindergarten in Hyongjesan, North Korea. The sound of children playing rang like an announcement of health and hope to us as we unloaded our van and approached the school.

While the students enjoyed their morning snack, we asked the Kindergarten staff if we could speak with the tallest and shortest boys and girls in the class. Height and growth are key indicators of nutrition in children and we were curious to compare with past experiences and log data for the next visit.

The teacher brought over two boys named Song Kwan and Un Gwang. Song Kwan was the shorter of the two and the “strong and silent” type. He stood up as tall as he could and told us his favourite thing to do is to ride the play-horse in the playground. Un Gwang was the tallest in

the class and perhaps also had the widest smile! His eyes lit up as he described his journeys down the elephant-shaped slide in the playground. Normal growth and development requires high levels of protein, so it was no surprise when Un Gwang told us his favourite foods are soymilk and injogogi, or “bean meat”.

Son Gyong and Su Ok matched the sunny day in their blue and yellow coats. Su Ok, the tallest girl in the class, said she also loves the elephant slide, but added,

with a competitive twinkle, that she loves to go down it fast! Su Ok, on the other hand, told us that her favorite part of the playground was the climbing frame, but explained that her favourite activity of all was studying. Despite the differences in height of Son Gyong and Su Ok, each one has a brighter future thanks to a daily cup of soymilk which helps them to receive the nutrition they need to be physically active on the playground and mentally engaged in the classroom.



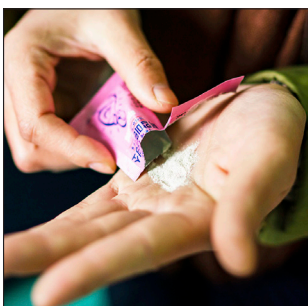
Song Kwan (left) and Un Gwang (right).



Son Gyong (left) and Su Ok (right).

A Mother’s Tender Love, God’s Fatherly Care

RyongSu Polyclinic was the second stop for us in the Nampo area on this bright and chilly November day. We arrived at noon, and were excited to meet Maeng



Sprinkles: a tiny package brings a huge impact.

Young Sook and her baby, Han Yeon Ju. They were cozied up in thick winter coats and fuzzy blankets

and greeted us with warm smiles.

We were able to speak with Maeng Young Sook about her experience with micronutrient Sprinkles sachets. Since her daughter, Han Yeon Ju (almost two years old), started taking Sprinkles, she has been active and playful, eating well, and remaining healthy. Mom has seen her own benefits as well. “When I started taking Sprinkles,” she told us, “my gums stopped bleeding and the spots on my face disappeared.”

Though North Korea may seem far away to many of us, the sites and sounds

of healthy children in a community is something anyone can understand. This mother’s pride and joy over her healthy daughter is recognizable across any cultural barrier or geographical distance. In a time when the world is facing countless difficulties, including natural disasters, disease, and political tension, we are reminded of the precious beauty of new life. When we see these kids and their moms we see our Lord’s heart and sense His smile. When we talk with them we feel His love for them. We thank our supporters for their generosity and prayers to protect and nourish these lives.

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.



Micronutrient Sprinkles are sachets containing a blend of vitamins and minerals that are added to food. Sprinkles prevent anemia and rickets and lower the rates of diarrhea and pneumonia, the leading causes of death in children under two years of age. A \$50 donation to the Sprinkles program provides nine months of sachets for a pregnant and nursing mother and 18 months of sachets for a baby (6 to 24 months).

Donate \$ _____ towards micronutrient 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 cost of a VitaGoat is \$5500.

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 a 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 visit our website at www.firststepscanada.org

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