

## 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.



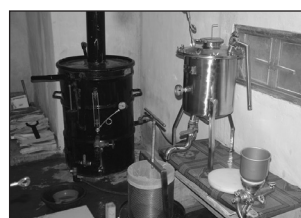
A \$50 donation to the micronutrient Sprinkles program provides 18 months of sachets for a baby (6 to 24 months) and 1 year of sachets for a pregnant and nursing mother. A lack of nutrients in the diet impacts growth and brain development. Sprinkles prevents rickets and lowers the rates of diarrhea and 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](http://www.firststepsCanada.org)

Please Recycle or Pass Along



Winter 2016

## Goals and Guidance for 2016, Reflections on 2015



**THE FAITHFUL  
 LOVE OF THE  
 LORD NEVER  
 ENDS!  
 HIS MERCIES  
 NEVER CEASE.**

LAMENTATIONS 3:22

In the Book of Numbers, Moses was instructed to select 12 staffs, one from each of the leaders of the ancestral tribes. He was told that one would sprout, indicating who would be God's priestly leader. The next day, Aaron's staff "had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds." (Numbers 17:8) While an astonishing event, this is sometimes exactly how explicit God can be when He wants to make a point, giving us certainty that when we are in the service of the Lord we can be assured that He is fully in charge of His mission, for He is sovereign, He is love and He alone can save.

It's in this spirit that each of us who are part of this First Steps' family (God's mission) can look forward to what God will do this year, with the love, prayers and support of those who have a heart for children in North Korea. Looking ahead, we anticipate the expansion of micro-nutrient Sprinkles into Munchon, the second-largest city in Kangwon Province, where more than 2,000 babies are born each year.

In 2015, thanks to your prayers and generous support, First Steps sent 4.8 million sachets of micro-nutrient Sprinkles, three VitaGoats, one SuperCow, 200 tonnes of soybeans, etc.

First Steps also made three visits to the DPRK last year, with new developments each visit. Most recently Susan Ritchie and Kayla Black visited from December 1-5.

In Pyongsong, we visited three orphanages and a potentially-new soymilk production site. The orphanage directors all expressed their sincere thanks for seeking to help the children, showing a real desire to establish a partnership with First Steps in the area.

Back in Pyongyang we were able to meet with officials from the Institute of Child Research to discuss expansion of the Sprinkles program.

While we originally thought that winter conditions would preclude visiting Wonsan, upon arrival we found our vehicle had 4-wheel drive and was capable of making it through the wintry passes! Driving along we saw hundreds of workers labouring with handmade tools to break up and remove the ice and snow from the road.

At Wonsan we visited two soymilk production centres, the Wonsan Secondary and Primary Boarding Schools, a local daycare and a hospital. At the soymilk factories, we saw staff working long hours to produce the daily cups of soymilk for the children. At the schools the children were excited to see us and met us outside despite the frigid weather. At the hospital we saw physicians attending to patients in pitch darkness and cold for lack of electricity. One can't help but feel the utmost admiration for these individuals who give their all, despite the many daily difficulties they face.

*Susan Ritchie  
 Executive Director*



### Meet Ri Ryu-Gyong:



Age: 17 years old  
 Home: Wonsan Secondary Boarding School (orphanage)  
 Favourite Classes: English, Music and P.E.  
 Favourite Colour: Purple  
 Hobby: Writing  
 Dream: To become a teacher or a writer  
 Fun Fact: She taught us a few slang words for "cool/handsome" in Korean:  
 멋있다 (maw-sheet-da) and  
 황홀하다 (hwang-hole-ha-da)

### Why Soybeans?

Historically, both Korea and China have valued soybeans as one of the five sacred grains called "ogok," and for good reason. They are considered a "complete" nutritional source containing essential amino acids, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein, and fat that the human body needs. Children who drink soymilk regularly show marked improvement in energy, skin condition, and growth.

Typically, one cup of unfortified soymilk (the very same that First Steps supporters help provide) contains just over 130 calories, about 10% of the necessary daily caloric intake for a child aged 4-8 years old. As well, each cup of soymilk provides 10 grams of sugar, 8 grams of protein and 4 grams of fat, all of which are essential for a child to grow up healthy and strong. And of course it also tastes great!



Soybeans await transformation to soymilk.

### Pyongsong Kindergarten Orphanage



Orphanage director Kim Ryo-II.

The Pyongsong Kindergarten Orphanage is home to 130 children between the ages of five and six. Director Kim Ryo-II has worked at the school for 18 years and has go on to be great people, and with supplemental nutrition (soymilk) we see that happening before our eyes every day. So the teachers are very thankful." Kim explained that the children receive 200 ml of soymilk in the morning and again in the afternoon. We had the opportunity to observe a class of five-year-olds. They laughed and enjoyed having their pictures taken, hamming it up for the cameras.

been the director for the past two years.

Last year, 44% of the children did not meet the standard height for children their age. Still, director Kim is hopeful and said that their nutritional status is improving: "The children's nutritional status has to be good for them to go to elementary school and



What a bunch of cut-ups!

### Factory Spotlight: Bongchun Children's Foodstuff Factory

During our last visit in December, the First Steps team visited the Bongchun Children's Foodstuff Factory where the staff had finished changing the layout to improve their steam production. This busy place provides soymilk to about 20,000 children daily.



Lineup of VitaCows at Bongchun.



### Ri Yong-Ok

We spoke to Ri Yong-Ok, a new employee who had just started working a few months before. She said she has learned nearly everything now. Her co-workers explained how to make the soymilk and then she got to actually do it, so learning was not difficult. She begins work between 7 and 8 a.m. and finishes at 6 p.m.

### Kim Ki-Won

The happy man pictured with Kayla Black is another long-term partner who has worked at the Bongchun Children's Food Stuff Factory for 10 years. A fermentation expert, he thinks bean-based foods are the best, in particular soymilk. We took his picture with Kayla and he joked that she looked like she could be his younger sister.



Kayla and Ki-Won—lookalikes?



### Seo Moon-Sook

Ms. Seo has been working at the Bongchun Children's Food Stuff Factory for more than 40 years! She is dedicated and passionate about what she does.

When we asked about her hobbies, she declared that it was making delicious soymilk and serving the children! She says it's fun to watch the children because, "they get all excited and clap when the milk truck comes and the older students thank us and say that we have worked hard!"