



Perseverance and Joy

In June, a First Steps team travelled to North Korea's east and west coasts, central areas, and even the far north near the Chinese border—all in one week! We visited clinics, schools and soymilk sites to meet incredible men and women tasked with taking care of thousands of children. We saw carefully placed and meticulously maintained soymilk equipment. Best of all, we met the mothers and children we all care for so much.

Over and over, with the sincerity and intensity that is typical of these dear people, mothers told us how their health improved with Sprinkles. Many of the children were alert, cheeks glowing, eyes bright, full of joy. The mothers told us how their anemia, morning sickness, dizziness, and weakness disappeared. Children had grown in height and weight. In Hyesan, with a thankful smile, the provincial health official shared with us, "People don't understand how big a role Sprinkles plays in their health. But they see that someone in their family has taken Sprinkles and they don't get sick."

The 2019 growing season has been devastating for many communities. Soybeans and other crops have had small yields or none at all. The men and women we partner with display profound resilience and determination in the face of

these hardships. They take their job of stewardship seriously and do everything in their power to ensure the children continuously receive their daily cups of soymilk.

Wherever we went, these partners expressed their deep gratitude for the VitaGoats, VitaCows, soybeans, Sprinkles and other practical means of support you provide. At the Chongbong Foodstuff Factory they solemnly said, "Thank you for sending the VitaGoat. Please tell the people that sent that machine that we are thankful. Please also tell the people that sent the soymilk cans that we are thankful!"

We bring you their greetings; we extend to you their love and gratitude.

I, too, am grateful for each and every one of you who support this work. May we all persevere so that the children and women can have healthier futures. Thank you for making this work possible!

Susan Ritchie
Executive Director

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:2-4



Word Spreads About Sprinkles

“Every time you come to the clinic you hear about Sprinkles!”

At the Rimyongsu Polyclinic in Samjiyon, Mrs. Ri Hyang-Mi knew all about Sprinkles even before she was pregnant. She heard about them from her doctor. She



Mrs. Ri Hyang-Mi and her son

received a brochure. She even watched a 30-minute video. She was well informed! When asked what she would tell others about Sprinkles she replied, “I would say they are good for raising your children – the video tells you that – so that’s what I would tell them!” She needed no persuasion: after her son started taking Sprinkles, his diarrhea disappeared.

All of Mrs. Ri Yon-Mi’s cousins had taken Sprinkles. She read the Sprinkles brochure herself when visiting the clinic and then began taking Sprinkles after becoming pregnant. “I feel healthier and my dizziness has disappeared since taking Sprinkles.” She laughed, “My parents are more passionate about Sprinkles than I am. They make sure that I take them every day!”



Expectant mother Mrs. Ri Yon-Mi

Developed in partnership with North Korea’s Institute of Child Nutrition, First Steps’ Korean-language brochures, posters, and videos help doctors and their patients understand the benefits of Sprinkles. We are told again and again how much women like Sprinkles because they can read about them in their own language.

‘Morning and Night’ Soymilk Site



Outside the ‘Morning and Night’ site with local officials and factory staff. Note the steam design on the roof.

You may recall the devastating flood that washed away most of Yonsa county in 2016. Since the flood, First Steps has partnered here to provide soymilk and micronutrient Sprinkles to help improve the health of the local women and children.

They shared with us how the VitaGoat is the perfect fit since it can be used without electricity. From the “steam” design on the roof, to the conservation of precious heat, to the glass wall which allows people to see the soymilk being produced; no design detail was overlooked, no opportunity was neglected.

One thing remains to be completed on the building. The front sign! In conversations the building was repeatedly referred to as “Canada House,” but the name decided on was ‘Morning and Night’ site. We like this name!

For “It is good to proclaim His unfailing love in the morning and His faithfulness in the evening” (Psalm 92:2).

We look forward to visiting them all again and are grateful and honoured to be working in a community that places such a high priority on providing soymilk to the children.

After receiving a VitaGoat last summer they made it a top priority to build a new site to house it. Our partners were proud to show off the new building in June.

Soy milk – A Community Effort

Pochon is nestled in a valley on the road between Samjiyon and Hyesan in the far northeast of the country. Soybeans are hard to grow here. The altitude and short growing season are more suitable for potatoes. Producing soy milk for nearly 2,000 kindergarten and daycare children here is difficult for them. Since 2017, First Steps has been partnering with the local foodstuff factory, providing a VitaGoat non-electric soy milk machine,



Kindergarten students diligently tracing their hands

stainless-steel soy milk cans and soybeans.

We walked to a nearby kindergarten and spoke with some of the students. One child piped up, “Soy milk tastes good!” and another joined in, “It makes you stronger!”

At the far end of the school there is a small room that has temporarily become the community soy milk production site. We met two of the three staff who produce the soy milk every night. These two young women explained the process to us: soaking the beans begins at 3 p.m., and then at 8 p.m. wood is prepared for the boiler. From 9 p.m., they make three batches of soy milk each hour, working through the night to ensure that the soy milk



Ms. Shin Mi-Ran and Ms. Kim Un-Hyang with a new stainless-steel soy milk can.

is ready for delivery by 6 a.m. In the morning the soy milk is picked up in a local propaganda van and delivered to the daycares and kindergartens. We love this community effort! And wherever we go we encounter grateful hearts. “Thank you for sending a good machine,” they say. “The children love the soy milk!”

Interview with Kayla Black

Kayla Black has visited the DPRK with First Steps nearly 10 times. Our summer intern Genna and volunteer Terry interviewed her.

What does a typical day look like when you go to North Korea?

It’s a pretty intense schedule! We usually leave the hotel around 7 or 8 a.m. The schedule will include: clinics, where we speak with Sprinkles beneficiaries and doctors; soy milk factories where we talk with workers about the equipment and the soybeans they’ve received; and soy milk beneficiary locations such as daycares, kindergartens and orphanages where we talk to the kids and their teachers about the soy milk.

What stands out when you visit?

The people, the community focus in First

Steps’ programs. Our North Korean partners genuinely care about the health of the children and work hard to provide for them. The people making and delivering the soy milk are often the parents or even grandparents of the kids who receive it. When we ask them about their challenges they say, “I’m just so happy that the children are able to have soy milk everyday. I’m so glad to be able to help make it.” First Steps equips our partners with soybeans and machines, but it is our partners, the local people, who produce the soy milk and supply it to their local kids. They understand 100% why soy milk is good and are so motivated to do the work.

Same thing for the Sprinkles program. It’s thanks to the doctors who go out and tell moms why Sprinkles are good for them, show them the video, remind them to take them, that First Steps has the program it does today. The health officials, the doctors, the nurses, are all working together for the health of local women and children—many of them having experienced first-hand the benefits of Sprinkles.

What is your pro-tip for anyone joining a First Steps team?

Wear slip-on shoes! You take your shoes off and on twenty times a day.

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.



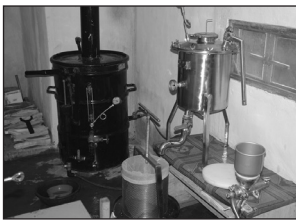
Micronutrient Sprinkles are sachets containing a blend of vitamins and minerals that are added to food. Sprinkles prevent anemia and rickets and lower the rates of diarrhea and pneumonia, the leading causes of death in children under two years of age. A \$50 donation to the Sprinkles program provides 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.

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