**Director’s Report – Patricia Ellsworth’s Visit to Twitti Primary School, Zambia, May 2018**

Patricia made her bi-annual trip to Zambia from May 8 to June 1, 2018. Brenda Phillips, a New Brunswick teacher at **Simonds High School** in Saint John, accompanied her. Each year for the past several years, the students in Brenda’s Grade 12 World Issues class raise funds to assist a Twitti School pupil to meet the costs of education. Her classes have supported three Twitti pupils over the years. Since Brenda was enjoying a Leave from teaching for one Semester, she chose to go and find out about Zambia firsthand, to meet her current sponsored child and all the school family at Twitti, and to visit Africa for the first time. As a bonus she met another of her sponsored children too!

Brenda and Patricia decided to spend a few days at Victoria Falls to begin their visit. After a warm welcome at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport from TPS Director Arthur Maonde and several teachers and students of Twitti, they went by bus to Livingstone. With Jollyboys Backpackers Lodge as home base they explored the area and participated in some of the activities the Jollyboys staff set up for them. First of all was a visit to Victoria Falls, 1,708 metres wide and 108 metres high, 1½ times wider than Niagara Falls and twice as high! No matter how many times one stands beside Mosi-oa-Tunya (the Smoke that Thunders), there is always the feeling of awe inspired by its beauty and power. They also kayaked, and cruised at sunset, on the mighty Zambezi River, rode horses nearby, and travelled to Botswana’s Chobe National Park to see a variety of wildlife. The return bus ride ended the personal part of the trip. Let off by the intercity bus driver at the head of Lilayi Road, they walked down to the school. When someone along the way called out: “Hello Patricia!”, she knew she was “home”.

The next two weeks were exciting, emotional, and very busy! Patricia and Brenda were joined at Anina’s Lodge by **Friends For Zambia** Director Shelley O’Callaghan. Usually Shelley and Patricia are there in alternate years, so it was a pleasant change to share duties and then compare notes at the end of the day.

What were the tasks undertaken? The following, in point form, is a summary of the highlights. Patricia has included here duties that were performed individually, in pairs or as a group of three:

* **Interactions with the Twitti School family**:
	+ We were the guests of honour at a Welcoming and a Farewell Assembly (of 427 children, 13 teachers, 5 administrators and 8 support staff), which featured songs, recitations, dances, speeches, gifts, laughter and tears! And so much pride of accomplishment by everyone!
	+ We talked with, and photographed, the 30 children sponsored by Canadians, as well as visiting several of their homes, to help us prepare meaningful reports for the sponsors.
	+ We ate lunch each school day at the Maonde home (or a box lunch brought to us at school when we were too busy to walk next door).
	+ We planted a bottlebrush tree and signed two plaques marking the establishment of the new Play Park on Twitti grounds.
	+ We rode on the seriously overcrowded school buses during regular runs, and saw for ourselves the need for more transportation.
	+ We distributed donations brought from Canada including pens, pencils, markers, rulers, soccer balls, books, clothing, pairs of jeans, shoes, and other small gifts.
* **Spending time with Mrs. Lydia Maonde, Former Director and one of the Founders of Twitti School**:
	+ **Friends For Zambia** hosted a Retirement Celebration in honour of Mrs. Maonde at Sandy’s Lodge. A lovely meal was shared with family and friends who gathered to recognize Mrs. Maonde’s achievements.
	+ There was a visit to Mr. Simon Maonde’s grave with Mrs. Maonde.
	+ We reminisced about the past and heard in detail from Mrs. Maonde the story of the Maonde family.
	+ On Sunday we attended the morning service at Holy Cross Cathedral in Lusaka with Lydia, her daughter and granddaughter.
* **Meeting with outside organizations**:
	+ A US charity involved in education in Zambia wanted to share experiences.
	+ A teacher at a nearby private school was interested in making educational connections with Twitti.
	+ We made final arrangements at a business in Lusaka for the preparation of the Simon Alexander Maonde Excellence Award plaque to be placed in the school.
	+ We visited officials at the Lafarge Cement Company in an effort to re-establish a valued partnership between Lafarge and Twitti School/**Friends For Zambia** as plans are made for future repair and construction projects.
* **A visit with His Excellency, First Republican President Kenneth Kaunda**, in his home in New Kasama. This was a thrill for Patricia and Shelley in particular, as we had lived in Zambia in the early years of his Presidency following Independence and had met him when he came to Namwala Secondary School in 1970, and 1971.
* **An overnight visit to Namwala Secondary School** in Southern Province, where Shelley and Patricia taught as CUSO volunteers. We accompanied Mrs. Maonde and shared many memories of our years lived there as we toured the school and walked past our former houses.
	+ We also met with three former Twitti students now studying at Namwala Secondary, and connected with the school Administrators.
* **Meetings at Twitti Primary School with . . .**
	+ the 427 pupils of TPS - in their classes, on the school grounds, in the community, in their homes.
	+ members of the Administration (the Director, the Financial Officer, the acting Head Teacher) to discuss the current state of TPS and plans for the future.
	+ Twitti teachers - as a group and during visits to classrooms, including the new Art and Music lessons. We were impressed by the work of the teachers and the success of their students.
	+ Twitti Parent Teacher Association. There were about 100 parents and teachers in attendance at the meeting.
	+ parents and guardians of the sponsored children as the Director discussed concerns with them and encouraged communication among the members of that group.
	+ parents of past and present recipients of the Simon A. Maonde Award for Excellence.
	+ Munya Garden Sheds, the company engaged to build the new Play Park, financed by **George Street Middle School**, Fredericton, NB. We were pleased to sign a contract with this company and receive a timeline of when the work would be done. We had preceded this session with a visit to a school in Lusaka where the company had completed a play park.
* **Making purchases with money raised in Canada**:
	+ A shopping trip by bus to Bata Shoe Store in Lusaka with the sponsored children. They each selected and purchased a pair of school shoes and a school bag with money donated by individuals and schools in Canada.
	+ Another shopping trip to Lusaka to buy school supplies and instructional materials for Twitti, using funds raised at the April 2018 Book Sale at **George Street Middle School** in Fredericton, NB.
	+ We participated in the Lilayi Education Trust Board Meeting. **Friends For Zambia** is a voting member of the Board.
* **Spending social time with our Zambian friends**, visiting them at home or going out for a restaurant meal, was a very enjoyable part of our visit.

As usual after a trip to Zambia I am filled with gratitude for the wonderful way in which we are welcomed, accepted, organized and informed. Thank you to everyone!

Patricia