

A PERSONAL LOOK AT CHUBBY CHUMS THROUGH THE EYES OF A SPONSOR

MY DAY WITH CHUBBY CHUMS

Today dawned hot and dry, but it was a day never to be forgotten.

We had planned to spend the day at one of the homes after a tour of the offices in Primrose Hill. The offices are wooden Wendy houses set up in the back garden. This is the hub of all collections and donations of all twelve Children's homes, as well as the training center, which is used to educate the community with up to date information and statistics of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Counseling is also done on these premises in a home - like setting.

Martin, Director/Founder of Chubby Chums, gave up his career to start this operation, and throws his heart and soul into it, sometimes working round the clock as he is on standby for the police and child protection units. He is often called by court in the middle of the night to fetch a child removed from their abusive parents.

We then decided to pay a short visit to one of the Homes: The Children's Home and Nurturing Center (Place of Safety) in springs. After an hour's driving, we arrived on the far side of springs, at what looked like a bush camp, dry red soil with little prefabricated buildings dotted about, and a beautiful old house which we were to learn was the Hospice and the core of the village. This was when the heartbreaking, but rewarding day began.

This particular Home houses 90 children, half of which are HIV positive or are in full-blown stage of AIDS. The other children have either been abused sexually, physically, and mentally and / or abandoned the tour of the Hospice was a revelation. Everything was so warm and friendly, so clean. As we entered the Hospice, we could not but help notice the "Wall of Remembrance". On this wall, Chubby Chums frames a picture of each little one which passes away because of HIV / AIDS. What was touching about the wall of remembrance is that below each child's name was a brief inscription of how each little one had lived its hard life.

Little babies fast asleep in clean cots, curled up and peaceful, totally oblivious to the fact that they have a life threatening disease hanging over their heads. Including the other 31 homes that Chubby Chums have in their care, they are responsible for approximately 2000 mothers and children infected with HIV / AIDS, and a total of 56.5000 children, of which about one third are Aids orphans.

We soon began to realize that the best thing one could give these children was not presents or sweets, but lots of hugs. We soon found ourselves with little arms wrapped around us from every direction. With the older children, although they were happy too, behind many of those faces lay stories of pain that none of we could ever imagine. The cigarette burns, the broken limbs, the bruises and bumps from being used as "human punch bags and footballs", not to mention the haunted looks on the faces of the young girls in the age group of seven or eight that have been raped or sexually assaulted.

Chubby Chums have done so much to help these children, not only by getting donations, but also by including these children and homes in their own lives. They try to visit each home at least twice a week to spend quality time with the children. What a rewarding day! You had to look at the positive side, if it was not for Chubby Chums, these children would have little or no future. The fact that we got to know Chubby Chums and the homes in their care has enriched our lives, as well as those of the children.

We are very impressed with the relationship that Chubby Chums has with all spheres of Governmental Departments.

Chubby Chums is also looked, by Government, as a source of knowledge and experience to assist them as they work on the ground, and in the field. The stipends that Chubby Chums receive are according to Government modules.

With Children Be Safe And Chubby Chums and The Team

Together we dreamt and built this dream A little one scared lost with nowhere to go
Chubby Chums hold out a hand and travels the road to a temporary safety care place.

Where there is love hope and care No more crying, hiding, No more fear.

No more sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect.

Our deepest thanks and appreciation:

Especially from our Children:

Whom now have a Home, a Bed and a Future? Our greatest inspiration.

Working Together to Safeguard Children