



Images and Letter from Jason and Jennifer Caslavka. Jennifer is a teacher in Philadelphia, PA.



Chimoza students are proud of their school. And they should be. Their test scores routinely out perform the government schools. There is no litter, no graffiti, no name calling, no fighting. The children meticulously sweep their floor with a bundle of twigs then wash off the concrete with a scrap of old fabric. As you enter the room, the children all stand and greet you in unison, "Good morning Sir/Madam!" They remain standing until asked to sit. If a teacher leaves the room while the children are working (there are 5 teachers for grades 1-7) the children will continue working in silence until they have finished. If they finish and the teacher has not returned the children will typically sing a song as they wait seated at their desks.



Once class is dismissed the children calmly and orderly file out of the room and politely ask for a ball if one is available. (We brought 3 balls, an act that gave us a status similar to that which an American student would give their favorite celebrity.) The game of choice is "Netball." A game in which girls and boys (and often teachers) run around throwing the ball to their teammates as the other team tries to take it away. No score is kept. No winner declared. The children simply run, jump, throw and catch with beautiful smiles on their faces shouting the name of the person holding the ball so they can be the next to catch. The children not involved in this game, or playing Football (soccer) can be found clapping hands with one another singing, as in "Patty Cake" or simply watching.



While there one of the things we were tasked with was setting up a library. The books had been shipped over by Chris Bradshaw and her "African Library Project" ([www.africanlibraryproject.org](http://www.africanlibraryproject.org)). We sorted them into age appropriate categories and alphabetized them. As we did this, many of the children would peek through the windows at us with curiosity. We would invite them in, hand them a book and they would sit in silence for an hour at a time flipping through the pages and sounding out the words.



These children thirst for knowledge and we should do everything we can to quench it. Chimoza... Zambia... Africa has a bright hope for the future that AIDS, Economic injustice and western indifference cannot snuff out. The problems in Africa are not insurmountable. I implore all who read this to act now. The education of these children will change the world and break the vicious cycle of poverty. I have yet to meet an African looking for continual hand outs. They're looking for opportunities. They want to be self sufficient. Education will make the difference.

