

...cont'd from inside page

own. I still couldn't get him to smile, but it was just amazing to see what a steady diet of nutrient-rich soymilk will do in just six months."

Our partners at the soymilk operations were unanimous in praise of the high-quality Canadian soybeans. One director, Kang, Kum-Ok at the Nampo Baby Home said: "The soybeans you sent from Canada are VERY good. We can produce high-quality soymilk from them. We are very happy with them."

First Steps, too, is very pleased with its Canadian soybean connection, Ontario-based Hendricks Seeds, and the willingness of its president, David Hendricks, to go above-and-beyond the call of duty to help First Steps, and by extension the children we serve. Hendricks has also sent some soybean seeds to North Korea which our partners are looking forward to planting in the spring, hopefully to supplement their soybean supplies by next fall.

The new electric soybean grinders that First Steps has been including with all its new VitaGoat machines are getting rave reviews. The grinders have minimal requirements and even with an erratic electrical supply, staff can grind enough beans to keep the VitaGoats running.



Hannah meets with Pak Hui-Suk, director of Unjong Kindergarten.

The two-year Sprinkles efficacy study that First Steps is conducting in conjunction with the Institute of

Child Nutrition has entered its second year, with about 34,000 children and 38,000 pregnant and nursing women receiving the acclaimed Canadian-developed micro-nutrient. So far, First Steps has shipped 3.5-million sachets which are "sprinkled" on food to combat anemia and other nutritional ailments. Preliminary study results after one year showed that the malnutrition rate fell from 56



Doctor (centre) consults with two pregnant women about Sprinkles.

percent to 32 percent among those who had been taking Sprinkles for a six-month period. Once the study is complete, it is hoped the results will clearly show that Sprinkles should be adopted on a national scale.

First Steps director Susan Ritchie plans to visit North Korea in



Soymilk gives energy for exercises.

February to monitor the installation of more VitaGoats and to scout future soymilk production sites. She will also be meeting with government and local officials to discuss various aspects of First Steps' ongoing

mission. Much work remains - while your prayers and support for the children are, as ever, much appreciated. God bless you.

Yes, I want to help First Steps feed a child.

- I have enclosed my gift of \$100 to purchase a milk can
- Here's a special gift of \$_____ to help purchase a VitaCow (\$6000) or VitaGoat (\$4000)
- Here's a special gift of \$_____ to help purchase Sprinkles
- Here's a special gift of \$_____ to help purchase soybeans
- Here's a special gift of \$_____ to help purchase whatever is needed

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
 BN: 87822 7511 RR0001. Gifts are acknowledged with an official receipt for Income tax purposes. For further information visit our website, www.firststepscanada.org or call us at 604-732-0195.

FIRST STEPS news

WINTER 2008



* Matt. 18:10-11 (NIV Bible)

First Steps is a Christian humanitarian organization reaching out to children in DPR Korea. First Steps is based at 3260 West 5th Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1V4 Canada. BN: 87822 7511 RR0001. Gifts are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes. For further information, visit www.firststepscanada.org or call us at 604-732-0195.

More VitaGoats and Soybeans Boost Daily Servings to 70,000

Dear supporters and friends of First Steps – greetings, and blessings to you all for touching the lives of precious children with your faithful prayers and support.

“He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.”

In a devotional rooted in these words from Isaiah 40:11, Charles Spurgeon wrote: “Who is he of whom such gracious words are spoken? He is THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Why doth he carry the lambs in his bosom? Because He hath a tender heart, and any weakness at once melts his heart. . . He must and will care for that which cost him so dear.”

We have seen the words of Isaiah in action in North Korea over the last year as more and more children are being nourished daily with a cup of soymilk. With its established and proven programs, First Steps finds itself more than ever being asked to expand its work. As a result, your continued prayers and faithful support are as important than ever.

This past summer North Korea mercifully avoided the destructive torrential rains and flooding that devastated crops in August 2007, but even so, this year’s harvest has

again fallen far short of providing the country with self-sufficient food security. That reality will once more leave millions of North Koreans dependent on international aid – and in light of the financial and economic turmoil currently sweeping the globe, that aid is likely to be inconsistent at best.

We now have more than 40 VitaCow and Vita Goat machines operating at various sites, and together they are providing a serving of nutrient-rich soymilk to more than 70,000 children daily. We thank the Lord for each hungry child that is blessed through your generous support.

Here is a roundup on our activities over the past year and a report on our final trip of 2008: In the fall, a team comprised of Hannah Visser (project manager) and supporters Vania Levans and John Holtkamp was able to monitor the implementation of five new VitaGoat soymilk machines, as well as to confirm the arrival and distribution of another 200 tonnes of

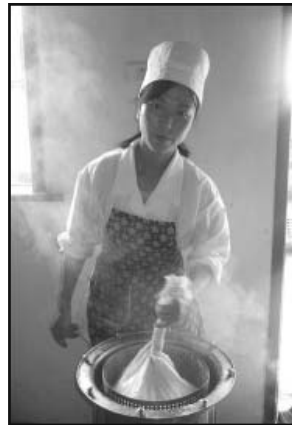
soybeans that will keep our facilities running at capacity through the winter.

Hannah was particularly pleased to report the installation of a new VitaGoat at a nursery school in a very needy part of Nampo, a west coast port city where First Steps’ soymilk program is now reaching more than 15,000 children.

The children at the Nampo Weekly Nursery school run in age from newborn to age 5,” said Hannah. “They board at the school all week because their parents are working, and go home one day on the weekend. The nursery staff are really excited to have a VitaGoat to provide a consistent source of protein for the children.”

Another highlight for Hannah was seeing 6-year-old Su Nam Kim at the Nampo Kindergarten Orphanage. When Hannah first met Su Nam last April, he had third-degree malnutrition (the most serious stage), weighed only eight kilograms and was unable to stand up or speak.

But this time I didn’t even recognize him,” said Hannah. “When I asked about Su Nam, the director’s face lit up and she took me directly to see him. What an improvement! He had doubled his weight in just six months and was able to walk on his



Busy at the Nampo Foodstuff Factory.



Vania inspects bags of soybeans in Nampo.



Hannah holds a healthy baby at a clinic in Nampo.

Vania and John's Impressions



Vania Levans



John Holtkamp

John Holtkamp is a farmer from the Rimbey, Alberta, area and he traveled to North Korea as a representative of Rimbey Christian Reformed Church:

I went to North Korea to see how First Steps operates there after our church donated funds to purchase two VitaGoats. We visited different soymilk facilities, nursery schools, kindergartens, orphanages, supply centres and co-operative farms, as well as meeting with



Nampo Babyhome girl hugs John.

various officials. “The children were well cared for, but their growth seemed way behind because they weren’t getting sufficient nutrition. We heard

repeatedly how a daily serving of soymilk was helping. I was very impressed with the influence First Steps has and the work that it is doing. I think it’s great that First Steps is buying its own equipment and supplies, and then ensuring that it all gets to the right place. Hannah did an excellent job leading our group.

“My most memorable moment came when we visited the Nampo Baby Home. We watched some children drinking soymilk (like little calves) and then had a chance to play with them. At one point I had two kids holding onto my legs. I picked up the little girl for a while, then set her down. But she kept holding on to me, so I carried her around for a while longer. It really touched me and I wished that I could take her home with me.”



John joins hands with some new friends.

Vania Levans is from Ottawa. Her family and friends made a donation to buy a VitaGoat and she brought her flute to perform for the children she met in North Korea:

I was excited to see first-hand the work that First Steps is doing, checking on all aspects of their operations at a number of locations. Over and over we heard the gratefulness of the Korean people and their desire for more soymilk machines.



Vania checks VitaGoat in Nampo.

“We had the opportunity to stick little plaques on all the new VitaGoats to indicate which church or individuals had donated each machine. These inscriptions were in both English and Korean, and included a verse from Proverbs.

I repeatedly got the feeling that God is setting up something special here. Please remember to pray for the precious people and the purposes of God in that nation. “I really

enjoyed playing the flute for the children – it was a way to pray for them.

“Now that I have had a hands-on experience in this deprived land, I look forward to making presentations to groups on behalf of First Steps. We saw so much need – but also how the Lord blesses this mission. In the name of Jesus, First Steps is doing wonderful things.”



Vania plays her flute at a kindergarten.