

SAYING GOODBYE...

Bundling the memories of nearly twenty-five years into a few short paragraphs can be a daunting task under any circumstances. When those memories involve deeply satisfying shared experiences, well... let's put it this way... saying goodbye to the people and places that are Paxton Ministries feels almost overwhelming.

Our journey with Paxton Street Home began with a letter from founding Administrator Beth Frey in the spring of 1985. After three wonderful years in Zambia, our term was coming to a close, and we wondered about the next chapter in our lives. Beth invited us to come and join the staff at Paxton Street Home. They needed a maintenance man. Thinking that we would stay for about a year while we decided how to continue our careers, we decided to accept the invitation and moved into our little apartment on the second floor in October 1985. Well, it's been a good (and long) year. With Chris working in Maintenance and Marlys in Activities, we soon found ourselves putting down unexpected roots. This was a community that welcomed us, and we immediately felt at home. Less than a year later, the entire community welcomed our little Kendra into her big new home. Two years after that, Trevor arrived to a similar reception. Much more than a place to work and live, here we belonged, and here we would stay.

Over the years our roles would change, but the sense of community and belonging never faltered. Marlys helped out part-time wherever needed while juggling the responsibilities of motherhood. Her journeys took her into Housekeeping, Food Services, the Thrift Shop, and, most recently, into Social Services full-time as the Medications Coordinator. Chris became the Administrator in the fall of 1987, and although his role and duties evolved and the organization grew, there he will remain until June 30, 2010—our final day!

Chris's mom used to say to us, "I think you should stay at Paxton Ministries for the rest of your lives." She loved this place, but she also understood that a part of our hearts always remained in southern Africa. They felt it too. In 2003, Chris's parents were laid to rest in Zimbabwe after they died there



in a tragic automobile accident. In my heart, I (Chris) have known that probably the only job that could pull us away from Paxton Ministries would be something overseas, likely in southern Africa. However, we believed that the possibility of something opening up that fit with our passion and gifts was unlikely. Neither were we looking to leave Paxton Ministries. But, God knew our hearts and the need at Macha Research Trust (MRT). He opened the doors for us to return to southern Africa. On August 29, we will depart for Zambia, and a new chapter of our lives will begin. Chris will assist with administration at MRT, a rapidly growing and globally respected medical research facility that is affiliated with Macha Hospital, an institution of the Zambian Brethren in Christ Church. The malaria research conducted at MRT has literally saved the lives of hundreds of people, especially children, in the Zambian Southern Province. I am not a scientist, but I can help facilitate the operations of this thriving institution. Marlys will volunteer at the AIDS clinic in the hospital.

Knowing that we are needed in Zambia does not ease the pain of leaving this place that we love so deeply. These buildings alone hold many memories. We can hardly walk down a hall or into a room without recalling a conversation or renovation that occurred there. So much more than the halls and walls, though, are the people. These are our friends. Our collective journeys, walked together, include times of laughter and tears. We remember Tom's memorial service and when Irene died. Those and many others were times when the community found comfort in coming together in shared grief.

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