

CHRONICLES OF PAST WEEKS (July 20 , 2020)
SPECIAL EDITION---“THE THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED!”



Greetings dear family and friends of Right Steps and Susana Homes! Once again I get the privilege of chronicling life at Susana Homes, and this week I have the honor and privilege of chronicling with my Hana.

The rains are here finally and in abundance! Our roads, or what we have left of them, make life almost impossible! And then there is the pandemic and the accompanying lock down!

In this week's edition, we pause to look at the many blessings of life which we take for granted. We also pause to honor those of our children who live in the shadows—who do not always appear in pictures and so are rarely mentioned. These are our children with disabilities—children who from birth have been afflicted

with one disability or multiple disabilities and who call Susana Homes “home” for good!

But before I do that, I would like for you to know that the lock down is finally taking its toll on us. Some things we took for granted have disappeared and for the first time in 20 years we have realized just how precious these blessings are. Take for example toilet paper! We never gave it any thought. Never knew we could ever run out of toilet paper; let alone buy it. So last week we go shopping for toilet paper. We bought two sacks of it for a total of 48 pieces. We shared it and by the end of the week, everybody was coming back for more! That is just one item. Add to this detergent, bathing soap, laundry soap, body lotion, tooth paste, shaving stick, disposable diapers, roll on etc. etc. The list is endless. Never did I imagine that we would run out of the stores of Indomie (Ramen noodles). We had to buy some because the children love it so much. But that's another story.



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You can say we are learning a lesson on how to count our blessings and I agree with you. The children still don't get it yet. So I took them to the store where we keep supplies on Saturday and it was completely empty. We have nothing in it anymore. Little Ray wanted to know if somebody robbed us—took all our supplies—and I was

tempted to say “yes! Because, come to think of it, we have been robbed—the pandemic and the lock down has robbed us of visitations from the many who love us and would make trips to Susana Homes to bring us these supplies! But in everything we are learning to give thanks and to trust that good days will return someday soon. So we are learning to be thankful for the many blessings of our lives at Susana Homes. We celebrate and honor our children with disabilities and the many afflictions that have made them wards of Susana Homes.



The first and oldest of these children (still at home) is Muna—our social butterfly and life of Susana Homes’ parties! Muna is at least 20 years old. She was left at our gates in 1999 and so claims Susana Homes as home. She has multiple disabilities from cerebral palsy to autism and too many other afflictions, even though she has never been formally diagnosed. Muna has come a long way--- from not walking, not talking, and not able to feed herself to walking, talking, able to feed herself, and actually helping with house chores! Muna is friendly, knows a lot more than we give her credit, will say things that no one else would say, and is the first to appear at parties and would

demand the microphone so she can make her own speech!

When our children are born, we expect them to be normal, healthy and a source of joy to our families. We expect this and we have them and so may never know the pain of families who have children with disabilities. Muna is a constant reminder to us that being born whole and normal is a blessing beyond words. Today we celebrate Muna and we hope we never take God’s blessings for granted!

Next is Miriam. The police brought Miriam to us in December of 2001. She had been left beside the road—the Port Harcourt/Aba Express Way—and she looked to be about 3 years old then. She had congenital cataracts and after 3 eye surgeries she is able to see some today. Miriam is also deaf and mute. She has other forms of mental problems that have never been diagnosed. Perhaps her inability to receive instruction in a language she understands is what frustrates her on a bad day. Bless her heart. A watching outsider might think she is our home patrol officer on a good day. She is most ‘at home’ when walking from one end of the compound to the other. Familiarity breeds contentment and she is most content with walking. When she is in the best of moods, she will wash plates, pick palm, or anything else she feels like doing; other than patrol the compound. Miriam reminds us every day not to take good vision, hearing and speech for granted. They are blessings beyond words!



Next to Miriam in age is Nosa(rachi). Nosa has been at Susana Homes since 2008.



The district Pastor of the Assemblies of God Church had placed her for care at Susana Homes. Nosa had been left inside the church building at Obehie—a small town 4 miles from Susana Homes. The police could never find who left her there. She looked about 3 years old or perhaps a little older. Nosa has paralysis affecting one side of her body—both hand and leg. She has selective mutism; but does definitely hear. Her mutism is selective because she will speak to her peers but never to adults. She loves to “sing” and will do so on top of her voice when no adult is watching. Recently she has started joining in the dances; not bashful anymore! This year she ran during the inter-house sports and she has the most beautiful smile of all the children. She is also doing more with her good hand — picking palm, sweeping her morning portion, and joining in everything that goes on at the home. Today we also celebrate Nosa and we hope we never take for granted the many blessings of our lives!

And next is Chief Grant. Grant turned 7 this past May. Grant is an adopted child whose adoptive mother died when Grant was about 18 months. When his adoptive mother found out Grant had disabilities, she went back to trying fertility treatments. She died on the operating table—leaving Grant abandoned a second time! But we did not know this at the time he was being placed--nor did we know he had a disability. But once I heard his story, I knew he would never have a home with that adoptive father. He gave me his word he would never abandon Grant, but he has just done so! We never saw him again after Grant was placed. Grant has some brain damage/retardation and some other affliction that has so far made the use of his hands and legs very limited. But he has come a long way—beginning to walk and feed himself even though half the food is all over him!





And the last but not the least is Princess Kamdi! Kamdi is the “trash bag baby” who was put in a trash bag and left along the road. The police brought her to us a little more than 2 years ago. Her disabilities are the most severe of all the children. She seemed to be in a continuous vegetative state and was just not thriving. She is probably 5 years old or perhaps a little older. She has started to thrive and flourish under Hana, her’s and Grant’s nanny. When Hana walks by or Kamdi hears her voice, she gets animated and starts laughing—not just smile, but laugh out loud! With Kamdi, it looks like we are in for the biggest surprise of our lives! So join us to celebrate Kamdi’s milestones. She sure is a reminder to all of us—to

not take God’s blessings for granted!

HANA’S CORNER

“Grant is not an orphan, he has ME!”



Hello Everybody! My name is Hana and I am Grant and Kamdi's nanny. Grant and Kamdi live in our guest house now. Grant is 7 years of age and Kamdi should be 5 or maybe 6, but nobody knows for sure. Grant was born with some difficulties but at least he can do little things like getting up by himself, holding his own bottle unlike Kamdi who can't do anything on her own. We can say that she has more brain damage than Grant.

Grant can feed himself some but his brain doesn't tell him where his mouth is so sometimes the food goes to his mouth while some falls to the floor. Kamdi can't eat solid food but semi- solid food. I blend her food—akamu with groundnut, egg, banana, vegetable oil, milk, and sugar. Then I put it in baby bottle and feed her.

Grant and Kamdi are good children. I like caring for them and I love them very much. My Mom is always thanking me for caring for them, but I don't mind doing it. They are my younger ones and I know that God loves them like everybody else too.

So until next time its Grant, Kamdi, and me, Hana; wishing you a joyful, safe, and uplifting time!

Love, Hana Hendricks





And look who is walking!
James Howard the 5th! Till next time, It's Chi and Hana!