

Second Saturday Net

August 2004

Zimbabwe



Interview with Miriam Gondo

I recently visited Miriam in Portland, Oregon where we celebrated her 20th birthday with a wonderful Zim-American meal at the home of my friends George and Rosannah Stone, who live at Cascadia Commons. That was on July 27th, and three days later we did this interview:

Nubra: How was your trip from Zimbabwe to the United States?

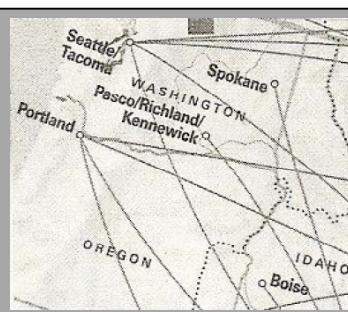
Miriam: It was fun! When I saw my family waving goodbye to me at the airport I suddenly realized how much I was going to miss them. I was kind of scared at first but then I met a lot of kids who were young and excited about traveling so I got very excited too! There was a group of students from the University of Zimbabwe who were going to study in China for six months. I realized it's not only me leaving home and then I relaxed. It was my first time on the plane and I thought I was going to throw up but I never did. I watched a lot of movies—I never slept the whole time. At first I wasn't going to eat the airplane food because of the way it looked, but there was a nice lady from Germany sitting next to me who told me I should try some, and it was really good!

Nubra: What was your first impression of Portland State University?

Miriam: I felt so small because the university was so large and everyone was so mature. In my speech class I did very well. I talked a lot in class—the teacher liked me a lot so she was always asking me to talk about things... I gave a talk about women in Africa and another talk about my Shona culture. I was able to get a movie about African women from the Association of African Students Office at PSU that I showed to the class. It was very good and I was amazed to find it! I also had to take a writing class even though I didn't think I needed to take it. One of the essays I wrote was about the sense of home and I did very well on that paper. We also had to write about the effect of the media and I said I thought they were mostly negative—people mostly want to imitate what they see in the media so girls are becoming sexually active at a young age...

Nubra: How is it for you being here so far?

Miriam: Portland is a beautiful place to stay in and study. There are a lot of friendly and helpful people that I have met along the way. I must admit that I am still going through culture shock—everything is so different. The way people carry themselves around and the food they eat is also very different from what I am used to. I have also noticed that the American life is so fast. People are always busy working two or even three jobs a day to make ends meet. I did think that America was a place of fantasy and money was not hard to get. I have experienced otherwise. Unlike in Zimbabwe where children go to school and still live with their parents sometimes even after the age of 21 most kids in America move out and live on their own at the age of 17 or 18. That may be a reason why America is so successful because children actually start earning money at earlier ages and start budgeting while they are young.



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PROCEEDINGS OF ZIMSECONDNET MEETINGS

Sent by Miriam Gondo
February 9, 2004

I decided to send you mail and tell you about what we have discussed so far at the zimsecond saturday network

- (1) We told the people the duties that you designated and what is expected of them. However Clive who you had assigned as financial officer along with Linda is nowhere to be found. We decided to let Ribetsi work with Linda on this post.
- (2) We went on to discuss about what concerns our community at the moment and what is affecting the young Africans in Zimbabwe. People came up with the issue of the sudden increase in school fees by most schools in some being about 200 percent. This has caused a lot of students to drop out of school and an increase in unemployment rate, prostitution, stress on the parents side, street kids increase and abuse as well as theft.
- (3) Having discussed all these we came up with an idea to do a fundraising project and try to assist some of these kids. People being young and energetic thought a modeling contest to start with can raise some money. It has to be in order and have a theme about education and we also need to make sure that security will be available.
- (4) The models will come from Highfield schools and other schools. The function can be hosted at a local hall in Highfield. We will also draft up a budget to come up with the costs expected and profit we may make. I will send that to you when I have it at hand.
- (5) We will also get young artists to come and perform so that they can send a message to the people about the importance of education.

So mainly our theme would be the importance of education but a function will be a good idea to lure people and get their attention. I also told the guys to come up with short stories or poems that I can send to you. Although most of the Highfield guys did not manage to come, Ribetsi and her father were there and I was so happy with the hospitality that Mr Mashoko gave. It was wonderful and the meeting was just great. We also are meeting this Saturday again to discuss with others.



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Sent by lati Gondo
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Oreen Kehle, Gwen Fischer, Mavis and Phyllis Murahwa, Ribetsi Mashoko, Miriam Gondo and Charity Ndoro
UZed College Flats St Kilda Rd. *photo by nef* July 2003