

1/16/2017

Back from the Bush mission letter #4

I'm writing this letter sitting in front of my cluttered desk back home in Pa.... Home? Yep! I sit back in my chair enjoying a cup of hot coffee as I ponder events of the last couple weeks.

What an absolutely awesome trip..... Yes, some things went wrong; don't they always? But by far the good outnumber the not so good.

On Friday January the 6<sup>th</sup> we headed out in the bush for a 4 day adventure recording student info and taking pictures at 5 remote schools. This is a precious time of sights and sounds traveling in the bush.

This is a much more relaxed time of our trip. Times like a stroll down the dusty main street of Sanoyea saying hello to passers-by.

One of the important things we needed to accomplish in Sanoyea was to kick off the first step of the self-sustainability program we call Helping Hands. How it works: a school will start a business within the school, teaching students how to start and run a business. The profits will go towards paying teachers' salaries and will lower tuition costs to all parents. This is the first school, we hope of many, we will be introducing Helping Hands to.

We stayed the weekend in Sanoyea so we would have time to meet with Rev. Edwin Flomo and his team at Kirstin Marie Jenson Lutheran School. Their team is very excited at the chance to make Helping Hands work. We will give their team a couple weeks to put their first step plans together. Our team at GPC will have a meeting with Edwin and his team through Skype conferencing calls. Isn't technology amazing? We will review their first steps and plan the next steps.

Rev. Edwin Flomo asked Andrew and Sarah if they would like to give the sermon at Curren Lutheran Church in Sanoyea? They did a great job and now have their first sermon in Africa under their belts!

As I learn more and more about Sarah and Andrew and see their work, I am very impressed and thankful for their help. One story I'll share with you. The 2015/ 2016 graduating class at Phebe Community Lutheran School (PCLS) built a monument to honor GPC Tuition Sponsorship Program. On January 10<sup>th</sup> PCLS wanted our team to come to PCLS to dedicate the monument to the tuition program. Before the program started we were sitting inside a building out of the sun, and a student about ten years old came in and sat beside Andrew. Sarah and Andrew noticed the girl looked like she had down syndrome. She got up and walked outside and in a few minutes we heard loud commotion just outside our door. We found out a number of students had jumped the girl with down syndrome kicking punching and throwing her on the ground. She was wailing and teachers broke up the fight. The girl came back into our building and with dirty dress and tears still on her cheeks sat beside Andrew. Andrew immediately started talking to her, encouraging her, comforting her. Then it was our time to leave the building and Andrew got up and walked towards the door with his hands at his side and the little girl came to his side and their hands just so naturally clasped together. Wow! Isn't that exactly what our Savior Jesus does for each one of us when life kicks punches and throws us to the ground?!?!?. Way to go Andrew!

Thank you for your prayers for our safety and productivity. We ask that you continue to keep Liberia and us in prayer as we grow with God's Precious Children and Helping Hands.

In his service

gary & deb and Sarah & Andrew