

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

Write to me....PO Box 1288 Kigali, Rwanda | Keep in Touch | Or call me on +250 784444742

For nearly three years I have been writing two newsletters each month, one for news and one for prayer points. The last three months time and a busy life has not allowed this to happen - so I apologise. Needless to say as of 2017 you will be receiving bi monthly news from Rwanda! And if you didn't know there were two such newsletters then please visit blackieonamission.com and sign up for whichever one you are missing out on!

Visiting the locals

My Nanny Lea, was desperate to have me come and visit her in her home. We decided to wait until my Mum was here and so Mum along with Flora and I sat at the bottom of the hill in a fogged up taxi waiting in torrential rain - thinking he will never drive up there! Well sure enough he floored it - couldn't see a thing out of any window - oh except maybe the semi trailer truck that was blocking the way and some how miraculously we got to the top of that hill to survive another day and tell another story. It wasn't quite over yet and I don't even know if I can do it justice but houses here are basically built on top of each other wherever you can find a square inch to call your own! So we had to walk down a narrow little lane way - almost too narrow for our golf umbrella, then we literally had to jump - yes I mean jump - over what was now a rushing river down the laneways before we could even get to the gate that was affectionately known as 'home' to our sweet Lea!

We tried to take our shoes off at the door because as you could imagine the red dirt was now thick red mud and we were somewhat filthy, but no they insisted we leave them on. It was a lovely afternoon, yet so humbling, we were offered drinks but none of the family had a drink. Their house was literally a mud house and we were privileged to sit in the sitting room and be hosted like royalty yet they live so simply - my house must look like a castle to Lea and all the things I have must be overwhelming. It was a reality check for me to understand how our worlds are literally 'worlds apart'!



Flora turns one!

Well her real birthday was on November 20th but we had a Peppa Pig birthday in October when Nanna and Cousin Tianah were visiting us. We all had the 'bunny' cake for our first birthdays - so Flora did too. On her real birthday in November we went to her Dad's church and had more cake with the congregation there, all of whom remember her Mum and this time last year and today rejoice in seeing a healthy and happy one year old.

Three generations of hands...

We had eight weeks straight of visitors and well it was just a little sad to say goodbye to each one of them. We are believing we will see everyone again - in Sydney - 2017!



Training staff at J.Lynne's

During November I trained the staff at J.Lynne's and we looked at our identity - what is our identity, in our family, in our community, at J.Lynnes, and in Christ. It was interesting because some of them really grasped the idea and for others it was far too foreign for them to even contemplate their identity in their family when they had been abandoned or they had lost their entire family during the genocide.

This came up because for some of them they live very much the traditional Rwandan culture and so when their children are sick, their default is to take them to the 'traditional medicine man' AKA the witch doctor.

As part of our training they had to look into the mirror and say what they saw and what they liked and then they had to look at the person next to them and say what they saw about them. While at first, it seemed some what intimidating they all coped really well and some wonderful things came out - it was actually a very powerful exercise for these ladies to hear positive character traits about themselves.



School Closing Day...

In November we saw another great end to the year this year and had a wonderful closing day with all the usual pomp and ceremony that comes with finishing a school year. This young man pictured, used to sit on the outside of the fence of the school playing in the dirt while watching the kids who could afford to go to school play in the playground. In 2012, when we brought over our first team from my church one of our team mates felt compelled to pay school fees for this little guy, who, back then, was only tiny. This year he literally ran across the playground and proudly showed me his awards he had earned - one for Kinyarwanda and one for Reading. Two great skills that will change the course of his life - his mother tongue and knowing how to read english! So when you think your small gifts don't count - remember every small gift combined makes a massive difference in a child's life.



So while school is off - holidays I hear you say - no such luck! There has been construction happening since school finished with a new storey of classrooms that has been built. We have been through the interviewing process to find some new staff and still we need a French Teacher as Rwanda has decided they want to be french speaking again and all children will have national exams for French by 2018.

Fred and I have also been through the Teacher training curriculum with a fine tooth comb so to speak and have booked in the date of January 30th to present the curriculum to the Rwandan Education Board. So I shall keep you posted as to how that goes!

And so December comes along...

Flora and I had a very 'Australian Christmas' joining some Australian friends for lunch and eating cold meats and salads followed by pavlovas, rocky road and lamingtons - is it any wonder I had a food coma on boxing day!

Just before Christmas we went to the Christmas Cantata, a tradition started last year and this year I took my taxi driver, sponsor son and our Nanny and we went out for dinner afterwards - they were all completely blown away by the presentation - probably not ever seeing so much 'production' in a production before! It was nice to bless them.

We also joined in a Christmas party along with a secret santa and both received gifts there. Then one of the local churches were collecting all sorts of things to bless the poorest of the poor in their community and we were able to buy some food to send their way too.

One night last week when Charles my taxi driver picked me up I asked him how he was and he told me he was cold - so I sent Lea down to the markets to buy him a jacket for Christmas. That's another story in itself, but the punch line goes like this - when he came to pick us up for Church on Christmas morning and Flora handed him the gift - he cried like a baby - and that was before he opened it - then he cried some more when he realised it was useful. When he picked us up on Tuesday morning he was wearing it and you couldn't remove the smile from his face - to me that is what Christmas is all about giving to others and watching their joy unfold - when a grown man cries because he probably has never received a gift before - reminds me of that first Christmas and the joy that baby Jesus was to bring to the world.

Blackieonamission...

It's one year today since I moved into my house - do you remember me looking for accommodation last year - well that year has passed! Next week, I can say that I am coming home 'this year' - at this stage my Visa expires in August and I plan to come home for about four months before coming back to Rwanda, possibly in a different position, as in I won't be writing curriculum but rather I will be implementing curriculum and mentoring Teachers into the role of Trainer. If you feel like you could continue to support the education of nursery teachers in Rwanda and ultimately support myself and Flora, either by a one off gift or a monthly giving please visit my website blackieonamission.com and we would be forever grateful for your support.

2016 was certainly an eventful year for me, one which I never really saw coming but one that has been of great blessing and much joy to be the 'Mumma' to little Flora. I trust that 2017 will be a great year for you, a year of good health, some wonderful belly laughs, and some great memories to cherish - Happy New Year everyone!

