

BLACKIEONAMISSION

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Little Leila...



This is little Leila, who was found to have problems with her eyes, thanks to our CBC medical team. If you joined us at our Trivia night in August your monetary donation helped to pay for Leila's cornea transplant - so bless you for helping the sight of a young 12 year old who is about to embark on her high school years.

Australia Day...

Australia Day didn't go unnoticed, Flora and I found ourselves at an Australia Day BBQ where the other 'foreigners' were introduced to hamburgers with pineapple, beetroot, egg and onions - a little overwhelming for some. Dessert was followed by Tim Tams, Iced Vovos, Pavlova and Lamingtons - which was difficult for some to even say let alone swallow!



Teacher Training...

We had two weeks planned of teacher training before the teachers came back to work for the new year. While I did actually teach some curriculum, I introduced lots of games and ice breakers interspersed throughout the sessions. My 30 years in Girls' Brigade was not a complete waste after all! Here they are playing duster hockey and didn't they love it! Talk about competitive though - they kept me accountable in my scoring I can tell you!

In December we interviewed and employed four new teachers, one of the new Teachers said to Fred, during the training, that they felt unworthy to Teach at such a great school. She had never been offered training before starting school, but was just placed in a classroom and started work.





Mentoring the Nursery Teachers...

Part of Fred's vision is that he will have a nursery school that is a model school for others. So part of my role has been to mentor the nursery teachers. This has been a fun challenge as they are so receptive to new ideas and change and what is best for the children. Traditionally Rwandan classrooms have been a lot of rote learning. At Fruits of Hope the nursery section have brand new buildings that are being used today for the first time. We classed it a privilege to be given a clean slate to set up the classrooms, however we wanted to. These teachers said that they wanted learning centres - the biggest challenge with that is, there is no budget and no resources to set up learning centres. Thank goodness for baby formula tins - they have been transformed into containers holding home made educational resources.

The new nursery classrooms...



Here she is - Baby Flora...

She's now all smiles - she wakes up laughing and she smiles, coo's and giggles all day long - no Im not making this up - she really does! She is an absolute delight and she has mastered the difference between day and night - sleeping on average 11 hours each night with one feed generally at 3am but is back to sleep again by 3:30am! No Im not making that up either - she's just wonderful. She has a little party trick, when you say - "Where's the Lizard?" She pokes her tongue out at you - on cue every time - crazy cute - joy of my life for this season!



This is Lea who has been an absolute treasure, in this photo she is playing the baby formula tin as an African drum and Flora is exposed to her Rwandan culture through drumming. Not only does she care for Flora, she cleans my house, washes my clothes and re makes my bed every day. She has been a great help. She comes

at 7:30am when I go to school and she leaves at 5pm when I come home from school. So my commitment to training teachers has certainly not been compromised, rather I have been



blessed to offer employment to a young girl from the community who was searching for a job.



A Few Funnies...

The language barrier is pretty much a daily occurrence here in Rwanda, and even when you have learnt a few words and phrases it doesn't always mean you are right to enter the world of fluent conversation. Yesterday I gave Lea a list of fruits and vegetables to buy from the markets, potatoes, carrots, apples, courgette (zucchini) and a few other things. When she came home she handed me 'colgate' toothpaste and asked where she should put it. I asked her why she bought toothpaste and she said, "You wrote colgate on the list!" Hmmm - no I didn't - show me the list - she pointed to the courgette - so I googled zucchini and showed her a picture of it - she went back to the market and came home with the biggest zucchini I have ever seen!

My Boy Jonno...

I sponsored Jonathan throughout his primary education and came over for dinner the other night. I offered him a soda and he asked for citron. I told him that citron was my favourite too but I was having water this time. He replied with, "Like Mother like Son!" Oh bless him - you don't always realise how the teeny tiny small things you do can make the biggest impact and difference to a child's life. It is also a joy to watch kids like Jono grow and develop into great teenagers. Now he has gone back to boarding school for the new school year.

My Fridays...

On Fridays I have been selling bagels at the US Embassy for J.Lynns cafe who are my team members. The Embassy has now finished and so, one of the projects I have been working on is taking photos of



the workers and their products for the website. All of their workers are locals who have been trained up to learn a skill so that they can earn an income. It's a wonderful ministry to see the enthusiasm of the women as they work and make their Bagels and donuts. When you come over to visit me - I will take you there for a coffee!

Reality check...

So Monday is 'put out your garbage (trash)' day, so we gather all our garbage from the past week and we sit it on the front step, waiting for the garbage collectors to come and pick it up. Sounds easy - yep it is, just remember however, that these days my garbage (trash) is 90% dirty nappies (diapers), so it's less than pleasant - and there are many flies involved! Having said all of that, I also cleaned out my fridge this week and threw out some skanky looking carrots, soft tomatoes, limp slimy basil, and some crinkled up cherry tomatoes. After making my lunch, on Monday I took my garbage outside to the collection waiting to be taken, only to find four workers standing around my garbage bin, sharing (eating) my soggy cherry tomatoes and other food scraps! All I could think of was the flies and the dirty nappies! Oh what a privileged life we live, when what we throw out as our scraps are actually somebody else's daily bread - maybe next week I should make sure there is something more substantial for them!

Blackieonamission...

Just a reminder to keep me here in Rwanda working with the teachers and transforming lives for the better, I am reliant on the generous support of people like you. If you gave last year to blackieonamission.com for a \$1 a day, maybe you might like to make another contribution this year to keep me here just a little longer. One of my biggest up coming needs is to look at buying a car. I am now transporting Flora across town to visit her Dad twice a week and taxi fares are adding up. Every small donation helps towards the bigger needs - so bless you for blessing me - means the world!

