

Blackieonamission - April 2016

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April – a Month of Remembrance

The 7th April 1994 was the beginning of the genocide in Rwanda and so every year it is now the day of remembrance and the start of 100 days of mourning. Every morning I wake up there is already a hive of activity in our community. I can hear the birds tweeting, the roosters crowing, the cows mooing, someone's radio playing, babies crying and a copious number of mobile phones ringing. On the 7th of April, however you can literally hear 'nothing' - all day long, there was not a soul to be seen or heard - the whole community was quiet - ask my how the rooster knew not to crow or the babies were kept quiet - I don't know - but there was certainly an eerie silence across the land. For one week everything closed down at 1pm and everyone attending community meetings in the afternoon where genocide

And then this week on the 25th April I had the privilege of attending a 'dusk' service with the Australian Ambassador from Nairobi to commemorate our own day of remembrance. It was a lovely service shared with fellow Aussies and followed by an Australian BBQ complete with home made 'meat pies' made by a Canadian!



Wreaths for Anzac Day....



Some Training of Staff...

J.Lynn's Café where I work on a Friday were looking for some staff training, so in true African style I got a phone call at 3pm on a Monday (was going out for a 30th birthday dinner at 6pm) and was asked if I could do a three hour training for the next day – sure lets give this a crack! So we did – and it was great – who needs to plan and prepare for weeks just do what you know and do it well. We had a session on ‘teamwork’ and it was fantastic. We did a little theory and then we had a couple of practical session too and used some of the games that had already been used before in previous places.

Our International Teams Team also did two days of training as we talked about ‘strategic development’ for two days – it was actually fun and good to hear about all that ITeams is involved in. Robbie and Stef who are on the left in this photo unfortunately left us in early April as their two years in Rwanda was up. They are going home to US to have their first baby and then off to Scotland to study for one year.



Everyone stand on the mat and see if you can flip it over, without your feet touching the ground?



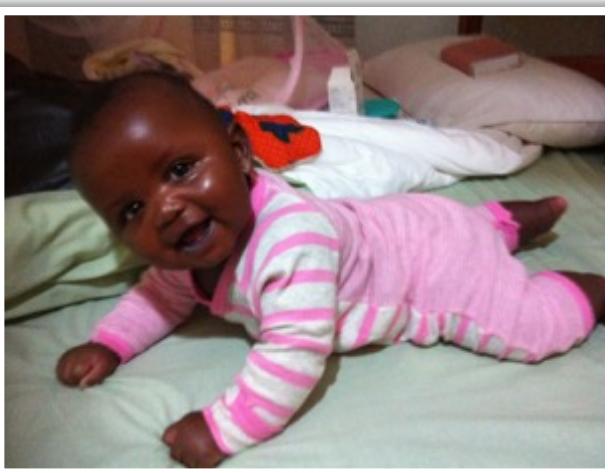
Get your whole group to the island safely!





A land of contrast and at times great sadness...

This is a house I walked past last week, it is literally across the road from me and up the hill. There are two tiny little ones standing in the doorway and just behind them there is an open fire to keep warm and to cook possibly their only meal that day. It's just another house - yeah sure - but now it makes me realise how incredibly privileged the lifestyle of baby Flora is. Is it right or wrong she is living with a westerner - I'm not up for that debate but I can tell you that her Mum had four children to four different men, none of whom were to be found when she died. The other three children went to live with their Grandmother in the village but she couldn't take Flora as well. Last weekend we heard that Flora's sister, the next one up who was four years old had died from 'complications'. So this was a reminder to me that Flora is absolutely in the right place and her life may well have been spared from a life of poverty, malnutrition, malaria and early death. How fortunate she is to now be eating four meals a day, having a hot bath everyday and sleeping for 12hours every night in a comfortable warm bed.



I was always told that the rainy season came in April - the REAL rainy season, sure it rained in October and November but the REAL season was to be April. Well they were jolly well right - on the night of March 31st it started and it was probably the heaviest rain I have ever heard. Some locals were saying it was the heaviest in over 40 years! I was surprised Flora slept through it, it was so heavy. The next day we woke to find that the school had a retaining wall collapse and a mudslide into the brand new nursery classrooms. One of the nursery teachers had a wall in her house collapse and my house girl Lea lost the wall to their outdoor kitchen. We also learnt that 5 people in the local community lost their lives from collapsed walls and roofs and 8 people across the nation had died.



Some boys walking home from school in the rain, using a large leaf as an umbrella to keep them dry!

Flora and I went to a Jazz concert on the 1st and it turned out to be a comedy of errors, the power went out about 3 times, on the second time about 20 people stood up with their mobile phones, using the torches shone them on the orchestra so they

could read their music. Then the rain came, the windows which were too high up to be closed by hand were open and we started getting wet, just a little at first. Then the roof started leaking and people around us all started moving away. I had her in a pram and our baby bag is black - the roof was leaking so bad that there was hail stones on the black bag! As they say - only in Africa!



They say a picture paints a thousand words...

It never ceases to amaze me the things you see out the window of the taxi - yes its better to watch what is going on out the window than trying to watch the driving!

Another classic Rwandan T.Shirt....I do wonder if *HE* knows what it says in English!



Yes this is Mr Ikea himself delivering his dining room tables and chairs - all pre assembled mind you!

And then if you need your bed delivered - well it actually comes by foot / or head however you look at it!

