

# NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

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## Fruits of Hope...

It feels like I was only back for a blink and then school was on break. They say change is the only constant in life and that is true for Rwanda as well. While I was in Australia, I think three Teachers chose to leave FOH. This of course always allows opportunity for others to step up and that has certainly been the case here too.

## The College...

The College is still under construction, although it has certainly come along. Last I wrote I mentioned I had to write a concept paper and make the curriculum competency based. Well I can report that both of things have been achieved and now I am just waiting for a proof reader to get back to me before we present it. The hope is to start training in February, although this will also have to do with the completion of the building. Should it not be complete we may start training anyway in the existing buildings.

## Staff Interviews...

The nursery section will double in size in 2018 with a second class for each class, so January will see Fred and I interviewing for some more Teachers. This will make the entire school double stream, over 480 students!

'Tis the Season...



## Another Closing Day...

Closing day is definitely a day where the ladies have their hair done and everyone from the school cleaner to the principal dresses up! These lovely four teachers were the ushers for the day and wore their Imishanana - the traditional Rwandan dress for the ladies. The yellow, green and blue represent the colours of the Rwandan flag, and I hear that it does not matter which shoulder you wear it over, it is purely a preferential choice. I, on the other hand stuck to my kitinge dress and inappropriate heels for the position of the 'stage manager' for the day! Possibly the hardest job in the world trying to get people of a relational culture to be time conscious and follow a program!





### And... there's a two year old in the house!

Well to be cliché - where did that time go - what happened to the baby that used to live here? I now share a home with an inquisitive two year old who continues to bring much joy, love and laughter to our every day. Everything is exciting and new and just over the last three weeks she's started saying a few more words! Like when we are in church and I am holding onto her for dear life and she calls out 'stuck!' So I have to quickly let go in case people think I do actually have her in a holding cell!



'Tis the Season...



### Document Update...

We would dearly love to be home for the Christmas season just now, unfortunately we are **'still'** waiting for a decision on whether Flora is allowed to travel or not. Like I said last time, I have a new lawyer who is fantastic and seems to be doing a wonderful job. It seems we are now working a little backwards as we already have an adoption, but for the NCC (National Commission for Children's Rights) to approve the adoption they need to interview her father and maternal grandmother. This process should be underway and we are just waiting to hear from the NCC. Once the family has been interviewed and agreed that Flora is better off where she is, then I will have to have a home study for the NCC to decide if in fact she is better off where she is. And then maybe just maybe after all that, they will release the said document and she will be entitled to a passport and have the same rights as any other birth child to travel. Until this point, we are restricted to stay only in Rwanda.



So with such a restriction of not leaving Rwanda, there really isn't very much we can do to get away and relax. Just before I left to come to Australia I very much felt like I had Cultural Fatigue, and so this combined with a birthday weekend, we decided to head three hours out of Kigali to Gisenyi and had a weekend by the lake. The sand isn't quite the fine white sands of Sydney beaches, but the water was just as wet and my girl got to experience what it was like to have sand in between your toes, build a sandcastle and watch it fall flat by a bucket of water again! We may well be back up to Gisenyi some time very soon, to do it all over again! And if you're coming to visit us in 2018 - we'll gladly take you up there too!

I'd like to say I was clever enough to buy 27 white roses to commemorate 27 young years of a life gone too soon - maybe next year I will be that clever. On December 10th, Flora and I got some roses to talk about her birth mother who died on the 10th December 2015. She lost her life after complications of a caesarian, but she was able to give me the gift of life in the form of a little girl. A little girl who gets the joke and loves every component of life, will hug you so tight you feel like you are in a head lock, will give you a kiss just because, will tell you you are funny and blow raspberries on your belly! I do often wonder just what her birth mother was like - she has every character trait of a fun loving human being - so I can just say she must have been some of those things!



'Tis the Season...

We can't go into the Christmas season without a photo of the big guy! She seemed quietly confident and wasn't scared at all, we only got some very serious photos, but we have the photo!

So please, let us take the time to say thank you for your support of our adventures here in Rwanda for 2017. It was certainly another wonderful year of doing what we feel God called us to do. We love knowing that we have people like yourselves in our 'boat' - and feel like we can't do it without knowing we have you standing with us.

Whatever Christmas looks like for you, enjoy the season of festivities, of food, of family, eat some pudding for us and enjoy the time spent with love ones around you.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a wonderful 2018!

We (both) hope to be in Sydney for Christmas 2018!

Michele and Flora xo