

(Update 2) July 2011

Jambo tena (again) from Tanzania,

Classroom Décor

As we have some particularly artistic talent with us this year, an ambitious project we've undertaken is the painting of decorative and instructional materials throughout the classrooms. In past years, we attempted to tape to the walls the typical materials you'd see in a U.S. primary school: alphabets, numbers, colors, multiplication tables, etc. But in the sometimes dusty environment the tape never seems to last and we return each year to an alphabet of say, 18 letters on the wall. The painting is bright, colorful, and beautiful and kids are busy learning the 8 new letters ;-)



Construction

So, more about that Kilimanjaro size pile of sand we saw yesterday. Fine sand is the principle ingredient by weight in making the smooth final plaster coat for walls and the building's exterior. Of course, you can't actually buy fine enough filtered sand for the job in the local marketplace so a necessary, arduous, and time consuming job is throwing the sand with a shovel at a 1/8" metal screen and filtering out the innumerable small rocks. Sexy work, yes, but somebody's got to do it. Dave and Dan took it on as a personal mission and with help from others along the way finished the task by week's end.



No Good Deed Unrepaid

Dave and Dan of course needed extensive training and tutoring to achieve their mission and local Tanzania project worker Michael was their guide and mentor. Michael would work side by side with us – practicing his English and teaching us some useful Swahili. In getting to know Michael over the course of many conversations, he mentioned he had four children and the youngest (1 ½ months) was sick and was in need of medicine for his

illness. Michael only makes 5,000 shillings a week and did not have the 2,000 shillings to pay for his son's medicine; one of us gave him the 2000 shillings (about \$1.25!). Michael was so grateful to be able to help his son that he brought 3 cucumbers from his garden as a gift the next day! The people here appreciate our help, but are not looking for handouts – they want to give us what they can in return. Side note, we had the cucumbers for lunch that day and they were delicious!

Teacher for a Week

Terry Mulligan from Libertyville is making an encore teaching performance this summer on the heels of his extensive ~9 month visiting teacher role in 2010. In addition to Terry, we were blessed to have Becky Ryan, a second grade teacher from Boston specializing in English as a Second Language (ESL) along for our week in Mailisita. It's always great to have a teacher on the trip as Becky was able to jump right in and teach some math lessons to the children. And being from Boston, Becky was able to expose the kids to a little more variety of American accents than Terry's Midwestern neutrality. Becky commented that the kids are very bright and marveled at their energy and enthusiasm to learn!

Kwaheri mpaka kesho.