

Friday, July 16, 2010

Jambo from Mailisita/Moshi,

And now there are four of us left in Moshi. The work week has come to a conclusion and most of the workers have more than likely arrived safely back in the States. The four remaining are closing out open items and we will depart Sunday night. I will try to give you a quick summary of what we accomplished this week.

Construction Site Activities

The first floor of the guesthouse now has all of the block loaded on the floor to complete all of the walls in every room. According to the site supervisor Ayloisi, the walls should be completed in two weeks and plastering of the walls should commence shortly thereafter. We spent the balance of the week after Wednesday hauling sand and gravel to the first floor used in the preparation of the undungo (mortar).

Father Val, Father Kawishe (Father Val's brother) and Nathan Partain held a meeting late this afternoon with Mike Mosha, architect for the guesthouse and school. Bawana (Mr.) Mosha works extensively for the Diocese of Moshi and has been involved with our project since inception. Mr. Mosha is pleased with progress to date on the project and the quality of the work.

Mr. Mosha did point out the increased needs for funds and lumpiness of the funding needs over the next twelve to twenty-four months. This is due to the fact that we are moving into the finishing and furnishing phase for the guesthouse. For example, we will need to order windows for the first floor in addition to doors for the ground floor and for the first floor. All will have lead times that need to be adhered to in order to keep the project on schedule. Communications will be critical over the next twelve to twenty-four months.

Father Val went crazy with fruit trees. He started with the idea that he would plant twelve trees but I believe he ended up closer to twenty trees. If all of them survive, I believe we will have plenty of fresh fruit for the guesthouse and children of the school. One of the workers on the site has been tasked with daily watering of the trees which entails filling up a five gallon bucket with water and lugging it around the site. I am glad I am leaving town after watching him carry that bucket around the site the last few days.

School Activities

After the departure of most of the ladies that worked with the kids in the classroom in mid-week, our activities with the kids consisted mainly of playing soccer (bunch ball) at recess and

talking with them while they had their lunch. I find it remarkable how well their English has improved since school started in January. Their English is considerably better than my Swahili.

Mama Lucy (Head School Mistress) and Father Riziki have started to plan for the next class that starts in January, 2011. They have reviewed a proposed budget with us which is very close to our projections that we assembled several years ago. They have identified an additional teacher to be added to staff and are prepared to order the books for next year. They will be placing an order in the next month with Father Maningi at Karanga Technical School for the construction of 22 desks which seat two students each. Mama Lucy has a constant stream of parents/grandparents at the school wanting to register students for next year's class.

Final Thoughts and Farewell from Moshi/Mailisita

I have been fortunate to be in Tanzania for a little over two weeks. We have made tremendous progress on construction of the guesthouse thanks to the number of volunteers that came from Libertyville and St. Joseph's Parish and the eleven college kids from the College of the Holy Cross. We all are going home tired and sore but satisfied with our contribution to the site and the new friends we made. We were well received by the workers on site and worked right alongside them as we laid block on the first floor.

The Stella Maris Primary School is a school that we can all be proud of being part of. The school is being led by a wonderfully dedicated woman, Mama Lucy. The kids enjoy coming to class and are being challenged daily to do their best. We are also very fortunate to have one of our own parishioners, Terry Mulligan, making a valuable teaching contribution to the school. His presence will truly be missed when he heads back home to Libertyville at the end of the year.

I hope you have enjoyed these update from Stan and I over the last several weeks. Please keep praying for the kids and family of Mailisita. Also, please continue to support the project here in Tanzania with your prayers, actions and any financial support you may be able to spare. We are doing good work here in Tanzania that needs your continued support.

Kwaheri and look forward to seeing you around town in Libertyville soon.

Asanate Sana,

Nathan