

Tuesday

July 13, 2010

Jambo from Mohsi,

We have just finished work for the day and I am getting ready to head out for dinner at Father Maningi's home in Karanga. In the US we invite the priest over for dinner and in Tanzania it appears the priest invite you to dinner. I wanted to provide you with the latest news from the construction site and also update activities with the kids.

Construction on the Guesthouse

The main contingent from Holy Cross departed Tanzania last night. The pace of construction has slowed down with the departure of the ten helpful set of hands of Holy Cross students. It was sad to see such an enthusiastic group depart but they left knowing how much we appreciated their effort after a very emotional farewell address from Father Val over lunch at the rectory.

We worked extremely hard on Monday morning trying to get as many blocks up to the first floor of the guesthouse. We now have enough block inside to support the completion of the walls on the first floor. We will spend the rest of the week on the first floor laying block and moving block around for the blocklayers. Things are looking good for having the walls substantially completed by the end of the week and the floor completed by the end of the month.

We had a window contractor on site Monday afternoon preparing a bid on the first floor windows. If the contract is awarded in the next several weeks, we should be able to have windows on site by September. I will take a picture of the guesthouse later this week to show the progress we have made in the last ten days.

Father Val went tree shopping today and procured twelve fruit trees for the site. I wonder how Father Val came up with the number twelve? Father had a laborer on site dig his tree holes which were finished late today. He will be planting trees tomorrow.

Both Schools Up and Running

Both Stella Maris and the kindergarten at the Parish have been in session both days this week. Mary Ann Sparer, Marie Oliverie and Linda Creadon have led an effort to work with the kids at both schools on various fun activities to build both math and reading skills. They have also taught the kids new songs, along with the kids teaching the teachers some of their own local songs. Children at both schools are very excited to have the interaction with us in the classroom.

What did we do last Weekend?

I got an email from someone (they asked me not to use their name) that wanted to know what we did last weekend in Moshi. Saturday entailed an all day hike/walk around Moshi. We had twenty-one people in total on the all day excursion. On Sunday we went to Mashati Parish where Father Val grew up and I will talk about that experience in my next letter.

The hike started at 9:30 AM from the Uhuru Hotel where the Holy Cross contingent was staying. From the Uhuru we walked about 2 miles to the Upenda Children's Home for orphans. The home is run by the Precious Blood Sisters and has kids from infants to about three years of age. Our group got a tour of the facility along with a chance to play with the kids on their playground. A lot of tears and laughter were shed at this stop.

After the Upenda Children's Home, the group walked to the Karanga Technical School where Terry Mulligan also teaches English and is run by Father Maningi. The school is adjacent to Father Maningi's rectory and seminary where Terry is staying while in Tanzania. The Karanga School is for kids that do not make it to secondary school in Tanzania. Therefore the school has 170 kids from 14 to 22 learning various vocational skills such as bricklaying, carpentry, welding, sewing, and are currently starting an auto mechanics section. All the desks for Stella Maris were made at Karanga and most of the workers on site went to Karanga. Father Maningi hosted our group for lunch after our tour of the facility.

We left Karanga and started our final trek for downtown Moshi. Our goal was to reach the Leopard Hotel by 6:00 PM while making several stops along the way. We first made a pit stop at the Uhuru, followed by a visit to the wood carvers craft village, a stop at Kahawa (Coffee in Swahili) to buy coffee, a couple of stops at curio shops in downtown Moshi and an early dinner at the Leopard. In total we walked about twelve miles around the outskirts of Moshi and in the downtown area.

Time to wrap but in my next letter I will tell you about our visit to Father Val's youth parish of Mashati.

Kwaheri from Downtown Moshi