

July 14, 2009

Jambo (Hello) from Tanzania,

Unbelievable is the only word to describe what Mount Kilimanjaro looked like last night at sunset and this morning. We had a cold front blow through yesterday afternoon (it is winter here) and really cleared the cloud cover out of this portion of Tanzania. I have made five trips to Tanzania and I believe yesterday afternoon/evening was the best I have ever seen Mount Kilimanjaro. As the locals say, "the mountain is smiling at us today". We will try to load some pictures on the website next week to show the beauty of the mountain.

Construction/Site Activities

There are no bricks outside of the Guesthouse tonight! Every single brick delivered to the site since Saturday is now on the first floor ready for the brick layers. We achieved this goal by noon today and spent the rest of the afternoon hoping that the next brick truck would not show up until tomorrow. We needed a brick break (and we got one).

What did we do if we were not hauling bricks? Some of us worked with the bricklayers to lay brick and mortar (undungo) the cracks after the bricks had been laid. We were able to raise the height of the wall two rows of bricks today. At the end of the day, we reloaded each room (six of them) with sand to make undungo tomorrow morning. Once again, today we had a good turnout of Parishioners at the site helping haul sand and straighten nails.

Why straighten nails? On the site very little goes to waste. In fact very little is wasted in Tanzania. The nails used for scaffolding and for concrete forms are continuously recycled. They are removed from the boards and are pounded straight again. One or two laborers sit on the ground floor pounding nails the entire day.

On the top floor of the building the carpenters are building the beam support system to hold the forms for the concrete beams that will support the roof. They have moved the wood used for the concrete pour on the floor we are working on up to this floor. Once again nothing on the site is wasted. In the United States most construction sites have a dumpster for construction waste—not here though.

The pour for the beams will take place after we leave Tanzania. Father Kawishe told me that they would use a cement mixer for this pour (most of the time cement is mixed on the floor) and a pulley system to lift the cement from the ground to the second floor. I wonder if that pulley system would work for bricks. Anyway, the next load of bricks shows up tomorrow.

Back from Kibosho with a gift

Matt Partain returned at the end of the work day from Kibosho, where he had spent the day with Dr. Allan Minja. Dr. Allan took Matt on early morning rounds in the pediatric, women's, men's, natal and general surgery triages of Kibosho Hospital. The rest of the day consisted of a tour of the facilities, nursing school and discussions with the doctors, nurses and residents of the hospital as well.

Matt brought two suitcases with him to the hospital filled to the brim with medical supplies. These were compliments of many people back in Libertyville and Dr. Nozika. They will help to bolster the limited pharmaceutical supplies the hospital had. Matt also noticed that there was medical equipment being used throughout the hospital that had been donated by Condell Hospital. I will tell you about the gift that Matt brought back from Dr. Allan to our group at the end of this letter.

Kids Program at the Kindergarten- a Note from Susanne Taylor

The children were very excited to see us arrive back at Mailisita. We were greeted by cheers from the classroom as one of the two teachers, Regina, tried to maintain order. It was a little disconcerting for some of us to hear the children loudly chanting "wazungu" which means "white people". We have decided that it is a term of endearment as the children were smiling broadly as they chanted it.

Today was School Picture Day. We photographed each child and recorded their names and ages. There were seventy seven children; 36 of them will be moving on to the Class One group next year (January) in the new school. The children are so beautiful and we presented each one with a hand made beaded bracelet after we took their photograph.

After the children had their lunch (porridge) they mobbed the front door of the rectory where we were having tea. We spent some time playing with them: football, soccer, swinging, leap frog, and taking more candid photos. The children love to see their photos after they are taken on the digital camera.

The afternoon was spent planning for our time in the classroom tomorrow and working on the guest house job site. The teacher, Regina, joined us in working on the job site. She has been taking English classes for the past year and is very excited to be a part of the new school. It is easy to see how the school will change the lives of all of the Mailisita community.

I learned today that the locals believe that laughing adds to their life span so I have been entertaining them with my limited Swahili. I think the people of Mailisita will live very long lives.

What is on tap for tomorrow?

More bricks are expected to be delivered and will need to be moved to the first floor. We have asked for an additional bricklayer so we can lay more bricks. It is our understanding that we could go up to four rows a day and right now we are doing about two rows a day. The kids program will be in full swing so there will be a lot of activities in the morning over at the Parrish.

So what state did the gift from Dr. Allan arrive back at Mailisita from Kibosho with Matt? Well we first have to clear up a critical point, it was not a chicken but a turkey and it will be extremely fresh when we have it for lunch. Matt helped Dr. Allan capture the turkey, tie its wings and feet and pop in the back of the truck for the ride back to Mailisita. We will let the cooks figure out how to get it ready for the pot.

Look forward to continuing this dialogue this week from the community of Mailisita Parrish!

Kwaheri (Good Bye) from the now only aching 13 in Moshi
From Moshi/Mailisita
Nathan Partain