

Tanzania Update - March 2017

I really have no idea where the time goes, but it seems like every time I turn around it is past time to send you an update on all the happenings here in Geita!

As usual, things have been moving forward full steam. Since my update last month, we have had one more child return home, one child adopted, one child almost adopted (we are waiting on a paperwork correction before we can allow the family to take the child), two children start with our Maisha Matters program, 4 more children placed at Neema House (and another one coming that I received a call about just a few minutes ago), four children from villages receiving intensive medical care and support in hospitals (two are now placed at Neema House), and we have offered educational support for three children in a village. We have visited and chosen another home for our oldest child who has technically aged out of Neema House. We have had an inspection from the local Social Security office that we passed with flying colors and we are putting pressure on the Commissioner's office in Dar Es Salaam to issue us our renewed Children's Home License that will soon expire (a process that we initiated TEN MONTHS AGO!).

We have built our banda for the livestock and now are the proud owners of three goats (two females and a male... which of course means that baby goats are in our future). We should be collecting three piglets (two females and a male) next week and another man has told us that he is planning to give us a sheep. We are quickly learning how to care for these animals that we never imagined we would own!



We have introduced our teammates to two different families to begin Bible studies with them on a weekly basis. We have made tentative plans for four more children to return to family within the next month or two. We have posted for a new social worker position and I will be doing interviews for that position all day tomorrow. We have discovered that Neema House had a problem with bedbugs (likely brought in by a child from a village or hospital) and had to completely debug the entire home and replace all of the mattresses. We have now implemented new policies for sanitizing all items and clothes brought with a child when they first arrive and weekly checks of the beds to address any issues before they become widespread. On top of this, we are continuing with homeschooling, and though some days are definitely better than others, we are very pleased with how things are going. Scott attended the East African Men's Retreat in Kenya, at the beginning of February, where he was able to connect with many other missionaries, including Alan Howell, and have a period of devotion and respite. We have also celebrated two more birthdays (Isaac and Asher).



I think that is a complete overview of our last month. This is a photo of our new banda (stable) for the animals. We constructed it at the back corner of our yard, behind the house. It has wire at the top to prevent other animals from getting in and eating them (we had baboons in our yard yesterday!!). One side holds the goats and the other side will be for the pigs. I had intended to take more photos of the building process, but I ended up being gone to villages or hospitals most of the time while it was being built (which only took two days!) and I forgot to ask Scott to take photos. I'll send more photos once the piglets have been moved in as well.

I have also attached a photo of our new freezer. We LOVE it!! We were excited to be able to find an upright freezer instead of a deep freeze because it is so much easier to locate things! It also freezes our ice trays twice as fast as our small freezer over the refrigerator. We still have not figured out what to do with our old freezer, however, because it is not as easy to dispose of things here, so right now it is sitting in our laundry room. Thank you so much for helping to coordinate donations to help us with these unexpected expenses!!!



We are planning our annual trip to Arusha to meet with the Directors of the Neema House there. Though our organizations are run separately in America, we are under the same registration locally which means that we must operate with some uniformity. However, the home in Arusha tends to forget that we are connected in Tanzania and has made several changes / additions without formal clearance through the registration which has the potential of causing us problems long-term (problems similar to those that the Church of Christ missionaries were having right after we moved here). We do not think they are doing anything intentionally maliciously, but we suspect that they are operating with old-school methods (the people that started it were missionaries in Tanzania 45 years ago when things happened very differently) and that they are likely paying a lot of bribes or making under-the-table arrangements to make things happen and get visas approved, etc. It creates definite risks of causing problems. Our hopes are that we are able to help them understand how we must work together and follow all of the new laws to prevent becoming the target of an immigration investigation. Additionally, we have found that it is good for us and the other directors (who are another couple around our age) to be able to sit and discuss challenges that we are facing that other missionaries are not able to understand. We hope to make that trip in a couple of weeks.

Since returning, my goal has been to actually take one day a week off without any work or setting foot at Neema House. I am happy to say that this has *mostly* been successful. Having children in the hospital have put a slight wrench in that plan over the past couple of months, but I am definitely being far more successful than I had been before furlough. I realize that it is still not nearly enough given the exceptionally long days that I work (since it really has added up to only about 3 days a month so far), but at least it is progress (really, it is!)! I am hoping that with the addition of another social worker, I will be able to pull back even more.

Anyhow, that is us in a nutshell!

Cheryl