



I've heard that you should take as many photos as you can in the first few weeks you are in a new place. After that, new and interesting things start to become commonplace. Daily life seems to be "normal" now, so I guess we have adjusted somewhat to life here. The school year at RVA is just about over, so perhaps I can look back at what we've seen and learned over the year.

Life at **RVA** is different. Even after a year I can't quite decide what is good and what is bad about it. We serve at a school that has an impact around the world yet we live life in a fishbowl. The people we work with are the people we see at church. They are the same people we see on our walks and at special events. Neighbors drop in to use our stove, borrow a few eggs, or have a cup of tea. We have shared our living space 24/7 with grade seven boarding students. We are serving God by serving missionary parents across Africa. It is only through God's provision that the school is celebrating 100 years of operation this year.

We had a chance to participate in **RVA Outreach Day** in May. I drove a van load of students and staff, along with Bernadine and Evan, to the Gift Orphanage about 30 km away. Twenty of us arrived with buckets of paint, brushes, roller, and drop sheets in hand ready to transform the interior walls of the orphanage with white paint. Patrick and his wife take care of eight orphans plus their own two children. Patrick claims



they function like any other family—they own cows, grow a shamba (vegetable garden), and their children are responsible to do house chores and attend school. Julianne stayed on RVA campus with her friends to participate in the "Extreme Choo Makeover" outreach. The students painted the inside of all the outhouses on campus. Julianne handled it well and was amazed how the wet paint covered up all the unpleasant smells of the choos. Quite an accomplishment for a girl with an extra weak stomach!



In June Bernadine had a chance to visit **New Life Home** in Nairobi. She writes:

"My friend Nancy invited me to join her and her family at New Life Home where she adopted her 5 year-old twins, Katie and Ben. New Life Home has an annual reunion every June for all the children who have been adopted from the home since their beginnings in 1994. They had quite a party with bouncy houses, balloons, games, and face painting! We got a special tour of the facility. This orphanage is nicely decorated, adequately equipped with furniture, absolutely immaculate, and very welcoming! New Life Home serves as the headquarters for many smaller orphanages in other communities around the country. The 100 blankets brought to New Life Home will be sent to the newer orphanages in Kenya that are just getting started."



The 1200 blankets that we brought with us have opened doors in ways that we never imagined. The "**Feed My Lambs**" project fell into our laps and quickly moved beyond giving blankets to needy families. Over 60 families have been visited, ministered to, and given some food. Over 200 additional people have showed up for the two monthly meals at the church. There is so much more need around yet we don't have the resources to fulfill the vision of the organizing committee. If they have the monthly meal at the church, there isn't enough money left to give food packets during visits.

We've seen some of the legacy of my parent's thirty-seven years in Kijabe. I'm periodically asked by missionaries if I have my father's ability to fix things. The missionaries come and go, but it is among the local people that seem to have the most memories of my parents. One man who worked for our family years ago who now grows strawberries and brings some to sell. He fondly remembers how much my father helped him -- and requests a loan to be repaid in strawberries as he has no income right now. One woman recalls my mother teaching her religious education in the '70s when she was a student in primary school. Many of the local women who work in homes recall the good times they had in Bible studies that my mother coordinated.



It has been a year of challenge, blessing, and learning. We look forward to changes and more challenges as we forward to the next year.

Blessings,

Michael, Bernadine, Julianne and Evan

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