

(Update 1) July 2011

Jambo and Greetings from Tanzania,

We* arrived in Mailisita July 10th to spend a week working on the project and most importantly, with the children. Twenty-somethings Terry Mulligan and Lauren Clatch arrived weeks before us and were already in the full swing of teaching each day in the classrooms.

The school is looking and operating like an established institution at this point with thirty-some 2nd graders and forty-some 1st graders as well as seventy plus Kindergarten and Pre-K children. The teachers are very busy all day long between teaching classes and grading papers in every free moment. Preparations have already begun for adding a new batch of 1st graders in January and graduating the others up a grade – providing they work hard!

The Guesthouse construction phase is nearing completion and we remain on schedule to open by the end of the year. It is an impressive structure and we remain confident it will be a successful venture. Recall that the Guesthouse is the economic engine that will in the future pay the teachers and buy the food for the children – making the school self-sufficient.

On our first morning, the children greeted us in song with a rousing rendition of, “My School” – an English language ditty about their school and teachers. In response, we sang...uhm, well...we smiled a lot and as usual felt awkward we didn’t have a song to perform for them, as seems to be the custom. With pleasantries exchanged, it was time to get to work.

On the construction front, we were expecting to be building the security wall for around the Guesthouse, but a closer inspection revealed that the footings had not been poured nor the 50-lb blocks on site. Instead, there was a Kilimanjaro size mountain of sand and a makeshift metal screen for filtering out the rocks in it...uh oh.

On the school front, we spent much of our first day getting to know one another and reading lots of books with the children. Our library of early reader books continues to grow and with over 200 titles, I’ll bet we have the most extensive school library in the region. This is an easy boast because we’ve never seen a school yet with any library.

Many children’s books have been donated to the project over the years and this year we had the opportunity to organize their library. Our teenagers led the charge, under teacher Terry’s direction, to categorize and color-label the books. Now the children can easily come into the library and select an appropriate book to challenge them. The reading of story books is not common at all, but we’ve found, not surprisingly, that the children love it and learn English quickly from reading.

Kwaheri mpaka kesho. (Goodbye until tomorrow)

**MAILISITA
FOUNDATION**

* We: Dan, Jo Anne & Sean Coughlin; Dave Braun; Becky Riley; Laura, Rachel, Ally & Lauren Clatch; Stan, Susanne, Nick (14) & Lauren (13) Taylor; James Taylor (baba yangu); Abby (17) & Carrie (15) Johnson; Adam (16) Noonan; Terry Mulligan; and Fr. Val Laini (retired)