

We had a wonderful, blessed trip to Uganda. Our trip began with 4 large suitcases (totally 200 pounds) filled with school supplies and medical supplies, thanks to many of you who contributed supplies or money. Our destination was a school for 1,000 children grades K-6 in the largest slum in Kampala, Uganda, where our daughter Beth is currently teaching.



On our first day in Kampala, the school had prepared a banquet lunch, and the children had practiced songs and dances to welcome us.



We explained our Thanksgiving Holiday to them, describing how difficult it was for the early settlers, and after the first harsh winter and new harvest, the settlers got together with the natives, and gave thanks to God for all he had given them. We pointed out that in the same way as the early settlers and Indians feasted together, they had welcomed us to Kampala, and prepared a feast for us. We then presented the gifts. The atlas was a big hit. The principal of the school very proudly told the children that she had visited many schools in the area, and this was the only one that had such a fine book.



When we got there, the only pictures hanging on the walls were hand-made maps, and signs the children had made in class. Many of these children were born with HIV/AIDs, because their parents were infected. The sign is their affirmation that they are valued and have important contributions.



We presented the school with eight large laminated maps. Most of the children had never seen a map of the world. The teachers were also very happy to have so many new supplies. In addition to the eight maps and atlas, we brought five hardcover dictionaries, five thesauruses, twenty sets of flashcards, seven whiteboards and 500 dry-erase markers, 15 staplers and thousands of staples, 30 rolls of scotch tape, over 700 colored pencils, 1,400 pencil top erasers, 40 pencil sharpeners, and many more supplies, including some basic medical needs.



The children and teachers were very grateful. We explained that many people from our church had donated to make these gifts possible, and they expressed their gratitude towards all of you for your generosity. The people of Uganda are very warm and welcoming, and the children followed Randy and I around, hoping to get in a picture with us.



We stayed with our daughter who has a two-bedroom apartment next to the school. The picture on the left is of the school, and the picture on the right is the view outside of Beth's window. While this is a highly impoverished area, it is a very safe area; there is virtually no violent crime. Everywhere we went we were greeted by smiling faces and people calling out "Hi Muzungo," a Ugandan term for white people said with respect. Ugandan's view Americans with respect, and appreciate all the foreign aid which has come from our country.



When Beth came to Kampala, the school chose the top student to live with her and help her navigate the local markets. Beth quickly came to love Bridget, who calls her "Momma Beth." So we became her "grandparents". Bridget's mother, Innocent, a widow with 7 children, warmly invited us into her home as her "sister and brother".



As many of the poorest people of Uganda, Bridget and her family live in a one-room house measuring about 8X10 feet, with no running water. The family shares a toilet with hundreds of other residents, and carries their water from a common spigot. Innocent graciously prepared Sunday dinner for us, cooking outside on some charcoal canisters, the only “stove” for many families.



A great way to get around Kampala is on a “Boda Boda”. For about \$1.00 you can get a ride; the more that pile on the merrier. While there are plenty of Boda Bodas in Kampala, there are very few “Muzungos”, and most of them stick to cars, so we got quite a few stares from the locals as we travelled through the streets.



After spending time in the school and neighborhood, attending Beth’s church, we headed to Queen Elizabeth National Park for a 3-day safari. Here are a few of many of the animals we saw, and we got to enjoy much of the beauty and wonders of God’s earth. But by far, the most meaningful thing for us on this trip was meeting and getting to know the wonderful people of Uganda, and being able to share with them from all that God has given us.





