

DAY 1

Construction: (JD)

1. Inspected the chicken houses and they looked good. The person in charge is doing a good job and following procedures. Kenchek has recommended that the number of chickens needs to be increased for each house and that is being looked at.
2. JD checked the floors in all the buildings at the school to see which ones need to be repaired. He has found a person he trusts who will look at repairing them. This will need to be done over the time period that the children are not in school. It will take about 4-5 days for each classroom. JD is continuing to research the best way to get this done.
3. The Trade School is under construction. It will take about 8 months to construct (we are 2 months in now). JD met with the architect to make some recommended changes. The changes are being made on the drawings.

Ann:

Ann is here gathering data for her doctorate research project. She is not running the clinic this year. She was able to see 10 classes today to get their weight and height measurements. This data will be compared to data that was collected in Sept. and March. She will have another data collection in July.

Ann also relayed a story to us about one of the teachers, Joyce who lost her husband last fall. Kenya had a doctor strike last year and that impacted many who were in need of treatments from doctors. Joyce's husband died from a lack of treatment for high blood pressure. He died from a stroke. Joyce is very special to those of us who have worked with her for several years. Our hearts ache with her.

Mental Health (Sharon Cook):

Sharon was able to meet with 4 of the children she and Steve met with last Sept. She found that most of them were much improved. She will continue to see the children who needed follow up work. She will also be compiling a list that need to be further researched.

Admin (Naila, Ashley, Deb, Janis and Rachel)

1. We saw 4 classes today. We were very impressed with the letters written by the Form 4 (12th grade) students. Naila and Ashley took the pictures and Naila tried a new approach for the high school pictures. We met with the teachers this morning and they were a big help in getting corrections that needed to be made to the rolls. We appreciate all of their support in our interrupting their classes.
2. Tomorrow we will meet with the 10th and 11th grade classes. Sunday we will finish the high school students.

DAY 2

Construction:

1. JD met with the plumber to go over the plumbing issues in the group homes. The building themselves are okay, but there are plumbing issues that need to be corrected. JD received an estimate on the repairs and will go forward with the plumber.
2. Met with Lafarge to learn more about concrete for topping the floors in the school. JD and the contractor both learned a lot about the mixing ratios. JD felt it was a good meeting for all concerned.

Ann

- 1, Completed 8 classes today (weight and height measurements). One child was taller than her scale and she had to add something to get the additional height!
2. She has 9 classes go to.

Sharon

1. Met with more children today.
2. Continued to investigate the mattress and sheet situation the group homes.
3. She is also looking into uniforms.
4. In general, she thinks the children are doing much better.
5. She and Ashley are looking into visiting the girls' boarding to have discussions with them.

Admin:

1. We saw 4 secondary classes today. We started the class by introducing ourselves in hopes we could give them ideas about what to put in their letters. We also opened with letting them ask us questions. There were many good questions, but we did have a couple of hilarious questions. One boy wanted to know how old we are. Another student then asked if we were alive during WW1---hahahaha.
2. We were impressed with the letters today.
3. We saw 3 of the college students today. They are doing well and we are excited to see their maturity.

Overall, a very good day!

Tomorrow we go to church in the morning then see students in the afternoon.

DAY 3

We started our day with the most wonderful church service. We were blessed by many groups singing (and dancing) for us praising the Lord. One of the high school students read a scripture from Esther, then another students explained it to the congregation. This was followed by a skit by some of the high school girls from the boarding house. The point of the skit was to not sacrifice your moral standards for material possessions. The main scripture for the sermon delivered by Samuel Njau (a guest pastor) was from Genesis 37 and 41 where Joseph describes his dreams to his brothers (and they hate him for it) and his life after that. The point of the sermon was that God sometimes speaks to us through dreams and puts a desire in us. His example was that he had wanted to be a pastor since he was seven. He emphasized that they need to learn to listen to God (even in dreams) and follow their dreams (when they will glorify God). He pointed out to the students that each one is unique just like their fingerprint. They should follow their own dream and not someone else's. We want to be an original, not a photocopy.

The only team working today was the Admin team. We saw the Form 2 (10th grade). Ann was collecting her data on the same group. We had mild chaos as we tried to do multiple things at once. We did survive however.

We had a bad storm yesterday afternoon and lost power a couple of times so I did not get to send the notes last night. We were able to start putting together the teacher gifts. I did not mention earlier that we were unable to get printer cartridges for the printer we have so we had to buy a new printer. We are behind in printing and laminating the pictures, but hope to catch up tonight after David gets us some cartridges for the new printer.

We are all well and safe so no one needs to worry.

DAY 4

Praise God, we got the printer cartridges today and caught up on all the picture printing, laminating, and cutting. The whole team pitched in to get it done. What teamwork! We can go forward from here and be on schedule.

Construction:

JD continued to look around the school and ran across some electrical issues that will be taken care of this week. He and Mike were able to locate the tools needed to repair the floors and will be checking further on them later this week. He inspected the floors on the first floor of the Primary building and found them to be better than those on the second floor, the walkways, and the stairs. He met with the engineer for the trade school and he is going forward with all of the redesigned that JD proposed. While he was here, the engineer looked at the load bearing issue in the office area of the Primary school. A structural engineer has been called in to make recommendations for correcting the problem.

Ann

Completed 6 classes and saw make ups from those absent yesterday. She now only needs to see those who were absent when she did their class.

Sharon

Sharon saw several more students from Home 4 and interviewed them. She and JD have identified the mattresses that need to be replaced in all the homes. Mike and David priced mattresses today and they will be purchased this week. Ashley and Sharon met with the girls in the boarding house this afternoon. The girls braided Ashley's hair while she was there. They had a good visit and have been invited to come back tomorrow.

Admin

We saw the Baby and Middle classes---both pre school--- this morning. The Baby class finished coloring their pictures quickly, so Janis gave them stickers which they immediately put on their faces. Naila and Ashley had to remove the stickers before they could take their pictures---lesson learned, wait until after the pictures to dispense the stickers! I was able to see the children Allan and I sponsor this afternoon as they are all in the 4th grade. We started sponsoring them when they were in the Baby class and it is fun to watch them grow. I also saw two of our students who attend special schools. They are so faithful to come back for verification each year. Additionally, I saw 2 students who are applying for scholarships.

Dave Kennedy

Our super shopper is at it again and purchased all the nuts, coffee, tea, and jam for us today. He was also my hero because he got the printer cartridges we have so desperately needed. Way to go Dave!!! He carries Mike with him and has him in training for his replacement.

All in all we had a very productive day!

DAY 5

We started our day with a devotion meeting with the teachers. We had prepared gifts of jewelry, scarves, ties, school supplies to give to the teachers as a thank you for the work they do. I tried to express our appreciation for the love and care they provide to the students at Mountain Park. The students are thriving which is a testament to what they do.

Construction

On Tuesday, there is a devotional service for the students. David, JD, and Mike attended the service and were asked to speak to the student body----none of them like to get up in front of a group so this was a real challenge for them. JD then assisted Ann in going through her stored trunks and inventory what she has so she will know what she need to buy for next year. This was a much bigger job than it sounds as there are about 30 Chic-fil-A coolers stacked 6 high full of supplies. He then met with the structural engineer about the issue with the support of the second floor in the primary building. The recommendation is to install a steel beam supported by beams on each end. The end beams will be installed on concrete footings. Tomorrow he will go to get the plumbing supplies and the plumber to install new sinks in all 4 homes.

Ann

Inventoried all the trunks and prepared her list. She met with Boniface and the teachers to compile a list of all the students who need new uniforms. She finished all her height and weight measurements and met with the teachers to get a list of those students who get 2 meals a day 5 days a week as opposed to those who get 3 meals a day 7 days a week. These will be her comparison groups for her dissertation. Ann purchased a cabinet to store the meds she will leave behind with Joyce for small medical treatments during the year.

Sharon

Sharon completed all evaluations and will write a basic report. She will visit all the homes tomorrow to compile a list for the purchase of the mattresses. JD will get those either tomorrow or Thursday.

Admin

We complete 4 classes today. We saw the Baby class which is always a lot of fun. They are so precious. We also saw the Top class and the 7th graders. We were very pleased with the letters written by the 7th graders and think their sponsor will be also. I saw another college student and 3 trade school students.

DAY 6

We had another wonderful day, except for David and me who had a night of upset stomachs. We had to spend the morning at the house, but got better as the day went on. Everyone else is fine.

Construction

Mike and JD purchased the plumbing supplies--urinals, Asian toilets, small sinks. lots of PVC and fittings for the plumber to begin the installations tomorrow. This will take about 2 weeks. They made a list of all mattresses that need to be purchased for the group homes.

Ann has butt-fatigue from sitting and inputting data all day!

Sharon completed the last of the files. She is compiling a list looking at the children who were depressed last year compared to this year. She has seen a marked improvement in the girls. She also went visiting the house parents, but the ones she needed to see were not at home. She will interview some of the girls in home 3 since the house parents moved to this house from house 4.

Admin

We saw 5 classes today. Grade 1 sang songs to the team---beautiful. The 8 Purple teacher talked to Janis about how grateful they are that we make them feel so special. He even asked us to join his class for the class picture! Naila and Ashley delivered the toothpaste to the Pre-school so they could see them taking their daily nap. What a sight that is. We delivered toothpaste to the other classes we have seen. A highlight of the day was watching Joseph teaching the 7th grade class a science lesson in the courtyard. He was teaching them about mixing water to water combinations as well as oil to water combinations. I complimented him and he asked if I liked his portable lab.

I saw several students who are applying for college or trade school scholarship. After Utunzi approves the applications, we will make recommendations to the Board for us to grant the scholarship. We currently have 6 students on scholarship at trade schools or colleges.

Another day completed. The Admin team only has one more day of taking pictures and seeing the children. We will visit the 2nd and 3rd graders.

Day 7

We had our last full day of work. Tomorrow we will be doing make up for those who were absent, and having a recognition assembly in the afternoon. I have forgotten to mention in my last updates that the internet has been spotty and if you have not heard from your loved ones, that is why.

Construction

The toilets in two of the homes were installed today. The mattresses are here!. JD spent the day in Nairobi purchasing the equipment to repair the floors in both schools. He was also pricing ceiling tiles for the upper floor in the primary school. He also purchased sealer and hardener for the concrete floors.

Sharon

Pulled 8 charts from House 3 and interviewed the girls. They are getting along fine with the new housemother. She also interviewed some of the boys from House 1. When the boys had to go to the boarding home during the interim period waiting for the new house parents, they were very happy there and did not want to return to Home 1. The boys who were interviewed were okay with the new house parents.

Ann

Ann met with the teachers to go over the evaluation forms for her research project. She has had a hard time identifying who was filling out the forms. She was able to determine that in the meeting and set up a coding system for future evaluations. Debbie did the hygiene speech to the secondary students covering, teeth brushing, deodorant use, face washing, etc. She also talked to them about eating sugar cane and the damage it is doing to their teeth. Each student received a health kit. Mike identified the girls by having them raise their hands. Since many of the girls have shaved heads and wear athletic suits, it is hard to tell the girls from the boys.

Admin

We finished seeing all the classes today. We had the second and third graders. We were entertained with a song at the beginning of each class. Were also able to complete pictures and letters from students absent earlier in the week. Ashley took the pictures today for the classes. We will complete make ups tomorrow, then attend the assembly.

Day 8

We completed our assignments today and spent a wonderful afternoon at the awards assembly where the top 3 students in each class received a certificate of achievement. A little way into the program the rains came and when you are sitting in a large room with a tin roof and no ceiling, it is impossible to hear anything. The Director, Reuben Robi, stopped the program and the children sang until the rain stopped. We continued on with the awards. We also presented the teachers with a "bonus" for all of their hard work. It was fun to hear the children cheer when their teacher got the envelope. You could definitely tell the favorite teachers. On our way back to the house, the rain started again and we barely made it in before the downpour came. We had a bad storm and lost power. It just came back on a few minutes ago.

One of the highlights of the program was a recitation of a thank you letter written to Ann Kennedy for all of the work she has done over the past 15 years. I was sorry she had to miss it. Reuben gave us a copy to give to her.

We are all packed and ready to go to the safari. We leave at 7 AM to travel to Sweetwater Reserve. I think we will be stopping at the equator on our way which will be fun.

I hope we have given you a quick snapshot of our time here. It is such a special place for me, and I delight to see the smiling faces on all of these children. God truly has a special purpose for this place and it is obvious He lives here.