

Greetings from Kenya!

Since the last newsletter my school has been on break between terms, but I have been just as busy as ever. After exams ended I met with ten girls who signed up for crochet camp (a substitute for my usual offering of math camp). I had brought yarn and hooks with me from the U.S. and acquired more here, so that there was just enough for everyone. My plan was to teach three basic stitches and help them get started on a project – they chose to make stocking caps, also called beanies or toboggans. To my surprise, half of the girls already knew how to crochet, having been taught in primary school. Those students helped the others learn the stitches. The next day I showed them how to make a ring and gave them the pattern, and by the third day most of the girls had finished the project or were well on their way. So the camp ended early, after just three days. (See photos)

However, two boys who heard me play recorder had been asking me for months to give them lessons (photo – music minicamp?). We've been meeting regularly since the break began, and they can now read music (just 5 notes) and play simple duets with reasonably good tone. I told them they could keep the recorders after I leave, provided they keep practicing and coming to lessons (as time permits).



The same two boys (originally three, but one dropped out) volunteered to help in the library during break, processing books to get them ready for shelving. Our librarian Madam Evelyn showed the boys how to cut out and assemble book pockets and to glue them, as well as date-due slips, into the books. We've had quite an assembly line going, with additional help from the school secretary. Most of my time is spent sorting through books and deciding which we can give to other schools for their collections. Meanwhile my former Kiswahili tutor Patrick, who recently qualified as a construction engineer, has been supervising completion of our new building (photo). It's almost ready to receive books!

In the midst of all this, I had a 3-day respite in the city of Eldoret, attending the last PC conference with my cohort. Mostly it was fun, seeing so many friends and staying in a "luxurious" hotel, where the rooms had hairdryers, slippers, a Quran in addition to the Gideon's Bible, and doors on the showers! The activities were light-hearted, except. . . (argh) we were informed of two more reports we must submit: a Description of Service, summarizing all the work we've done in 2+ years, and a Site History, telling details about our schools, home villages, and experiences living here. I suppose that's the price we pay for volunteering to work for a U.S. government agency (which, in fairness, does provide us with excellent health care, a generous living allowance, language instruction, and other support services).



Looking back, I see that this newsletter could be titled: "How I spent my Summer Vacation."

Love to all,
M/M