
TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

Martin Werner, and Nancy Winters

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The Last Day of School

Who can forget feelings that come with the last day of school? We planned to plant trees with the students on our last day this year to reinforce the concept that each of us can help to slow climate change, but before getting into that I want to very briefly outline the first 49 days.

For the first 45 days we presented **new** material - vocabulary, grammar, science - essentially every day. It was intense for both the students and teachers. We held class for 7.5 hours on each of those days. Days 46 and 47 were a comprehensive review of material from the previous 45 days of classes. Day 48 was a 4-hour comprehensive final exam for the students and a marathon grading session for the teachers. On day 49 we briefly went over the final exam and announced the students who will receive 4-year scholarships from TTF donors to attend Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary (which is a boarding secondary school). We also gave each student a "certificate of completion" for our course. It was a day of celebration!

That brings us to day 50 - the last day of school. This year we arranged to buy 300 trees and we asked the students to come to class and bring their hoes for tree planting. We were given permission to plant in three different areas, including along two sides of our classroom.

However, there was a really big storm during the night before our last day. It washed out the roads. People in Manow said it was unlike any storm they'd ever seen in that area. We wondered whether the students would show up at all, considering the storm and the fact that we'd finished the formal course on the previous day. Well, every

student did come and 20 of them brought their hoes for tree planting!



We got news early in the day that the trees could not be delivered because the roads were impassable. So, we set the kids up with books, puzzles, paper and colored pencils and everyone had a great time. Then, mid-morning, 100 trees were delivered by motorcycle which somehow navigated the boulder-strewn roads. We were still having a light but steady rain, and decided we shouldn't pressure the kids to go out in that weather and mud. We asked for a vote. You may have guessed, every student enthusiastically decided to plant the trees! So that is how we spent the rest of our last day. Summary - we had fun with a wonderful group of students!

Note, the money for the trees was donated by Betty Hummel. We decided to make the tree planting a tribute to her sister, Dot, who had passed away October 1, 2023. Dot Quaintance taught this course in 2011 and is very fondly remembered in Manow community. *Asante sana*, Betty, and *asante sana* Dot!
Marty

Odds and Ends

One of my goals for this year was to take time to enjoy the students. Despite the demands of teaching, I did take time to reflect and enjoy them. Here are some snippets of the patchwork of joy the kids brought us.

- Each morning, Ester would wait at the corner of the church to watch us walk around the corner of our house. Then she and another one of her recruits would dash towards us smiling, and say



“Good morning, Mr. Martin. Good morning Mama Nancy. Good morning, Mr. Jordan.” They would gently relieve us of our bags of myriad teaching aids, quizzes, books, soccer balls and jump ropes and

carry them to the classroom for us. We enjoyed short and pleasant early morning conversations with Ester on our way to class. For both Ester and the teachers this was a privilege! *Asante sana, Ester.*

- Debora was perhaps the shortest girl in the class. She was also the feistiest. Even before she could express herself in English she would march up to us on break accompanied by Hellen who translated. Debora was determined to let us know of a wrong that we needed to right. By the time we got to the first aid unit, Debora’s oral skills no longer required Hellen to translate. I had drawn a red and blue colored chalk diagram of the heart and lungs to show how blood gets oxygenated. I told the students that they didn’t need to copy it.

Debora told me I must not erase it until I gave her crayons to color it in her notebook. I said, “Having that drawing in your

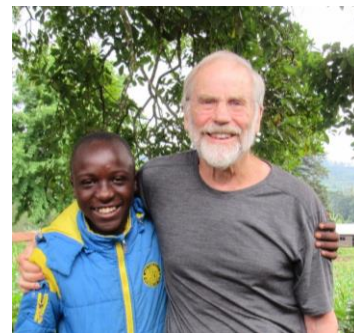


Tumaini left, Debora right

exercise book is not important.” Debora’s

response, “Well, it is important to me.” *Asante sana, Debora.*

- The day we walked to the spring that feeds the community water system, Tumaini stuck with me every moment even when I lagged behind the faster walkers. *Asante sana, Tumini.*
- Christopher bonded with Mr. Martin (Marty) almost from the first day. He had said that he wanted to be a researcher when we did the early unit on careers. He had been “a middle of the pack” student until we began the more science based units; then he took off. Marty challenged him to keep striving to do better. Finally, he soared! The last day of class, Christopher said goodbye to Mr. Martin, then immediately turned, sobbing into my arms because he didn’t want Marty to see him cry. *Asante sana, Christopher.*



Nancy

Living in Community

I was given a bigger picture understanding of how the members of the Manow community work together for the good of the community and how we are fortunate to fit within that framework. The community shares love in service and builds a strong living chain of loving relationships that in turn support the community. And I am truly grateful for our part of it.

Many years before we see our Pre-Form 1 English students, Mama Gody (aka Ngwitika) and Mama Heri have helped pre-school children learn many of life’s basic skills. The pre-school began in 2009, as we did. The two teachers engage 70 students between 2 and 6 years old. Many of the students arrive up to an hour before class and wait quietly and yet enthusiastically for their teachers. Each morning, Mamas Gody and Heri maintain strict discipline while teaching reading and basic arithmetic skills. When the students graduate they

enter primary schools at either Manow or Lwangwa Primary Schools where the teachers love getting these children because they are more prepared than most children for school.

Seven years later we have some of these same students in our Pre-Form 1 English course. When we finish our 10-week course some of these student attend Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary (MLJS), others attend Kabula and Lwangwa Secondary school. The teachers in these schools have told us how well prepared our students are for their secondary studies.

These students continue their education beyond the community but come back on vacations to help support their families. Many have attended universities to become teachers, doctors, accountants, and computer science majors. They may not find work here in the tiny Manow community, but they will continue to support their families and the community. One of our students Elieza Mwalwiba (a Pre-Form 1 English course graduate of 2009 and MLJS graduate of 2013) completed university in electronics engineering has established a business and family in Lwangwa.

It is awesome - an honor and a privilege - to see long chain of love and service come full circle. I am grateful to all of the people in Manow and in the US who have supported this experience for me and for all the volunteers who have shared love and service with the community – filling all of our lives to overflowing!

Nancy

Volunteer to Teach!!

If you have been inspired to teach as a volunteer in our 3-month Pre-Form 1 English program, please let me know by email: wintersnl49@gmail.com P.S. You do not need to be a certified teacher.