
TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

Jordan Johnson, Martin Werner, and Nancy Winters

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Shukrani (Gratitude)

Amidst hustle and bustle of our preparation for the journey, I was suddenly overcome with the deepest sense of gratitude for all of the people whose help and support we depend on for the success of this program. It has been an upwelling of joy and humility. Joy for the amazing community that comes together to provide the resources (time, effort, skills, and finances) – and passion for the success of our annual Pre-Form 1 English program. My gratitude wraps the Board of Directors I love as they have worked so collaboratively and consistently this past year on transitioning the organization. It warmly embraces:

- The 22 volunteers who have given of their time teaching the Pre-Form 1 English program, sharing their love and skills with the students, and befriending community members;
- members and staff of Gloria Dei for their passion and prayers for the program;
- the greater Olympia community for faithfully donating and attending fundraisers;
- past volunteers and friends who serve at the fundraiser making it a joyful celebration;
- Adopt-a-Student sponsors who support the students of our Pre-Form 1 English students;
- all 20 of the scholarship sponsors who are putting our graduates through secondary school.

When we arrive at Manow, that deep gratitude overwhelms me again as we interact and depend on so many people in this community from staff members who give willingly of their time (specifically Martin and Joshua have demonstrated their passion for the program through their herculean efforts on our behalf, our dear friends Ngwitika,

Elieza, and Owden, to name a few, who grace us with their remarkable friendship, and affection.

Working together we are making a difference in the lives of many, many young Tanzanian students. I am grateful to the depth of my being for each and every one who has been part of the work. Students' lives have been transformed, volunteers' lives have been transformed, and my life has been transformed. *Asante sana! Nashukuru sana!* Nancy

The Teaching Team

Our teaching team this year is Nancy, Jordan, and me. This will be Nancy's sixth year teaching the pre-form 1 English course; it will be my third. Jordan, a new graduate from the University of Arizona, will teach it for the first time. TTF teaching is on his detour before law school.

Nancy accompanied other volunteers to Manow for a two or three-week orientation even during the six years she didn't personally teach the course. She is very well known and greatly appreciated in the community. No matter where we go, we hear greeting to her from students, people working in the fields and merchants at the market. It borders on celebrity status! She knows the curriculum by heart and is a very spontaneous and effective teacher.

Jordan is very curious and outgoing here. He has lots of questions for people we meet. It's fun to watch how people immediately engage with him. And, he's a real hit with the students! He also has very effective teaching skills, and is quite serious in front of the class. That all changes during tea and break time, when he becomes one of the gang – playing soccer, tag or just generally “horse play.”

Marty

Opening the House

The house was in pretty good shape when we arrived. As usual, Ngwitika had cleaned it and she had our first dinner in Manow waiting. Left overs lasted for several days.

Every year, the condition of the house is a concern when we first arrive since it sits vacant most of the time since TTF volunteers leave the previous December. The spiders did kind of take over the space this year. We are seeing really big ones; some up to three inches in diameter! Jordan was quite shocked by their size and abundance. They come down from the attic past the ceiling molding and scurry along our walls. We try to imagine what else might live in the attic –conjuring up scenes from “Raiders of the Lost Ark.” At night we hear bats flying into the attic and landing on the underside of the metal roof, so at least whatever lives up there is not too scary for them. We sent a picture of one the bigger spider to Lucy (one of last year’s volunteer) for identification and some natural history – like, do they bit people. Jordan wants to peek into the attic after our last night here. He’s concerned that if he does it any sooner he might have trouble sleeping.

We were without both water and electricity for the first couple of days here. Being without electricity is a minor annoyance, but having no water is a big deal. Turns out the community water supply system was off line because of road construction. So Martin Mwakegi rounded up some of our TTF scholarship students and sent them off with our buckets. Soon, we had water, delivered with warm greetings and bright smiles from our previous students. We are not sure how far they had to go. When the water was finally reconnected, we found the kitchen faucet had rusted shut. Mwaikemde, the local plumber did a quick replacement. Also, carpenter ants had pretty much demolished the door jams of the backdoor. We asked Noah, the community carpenter, to replace door jams for both front and back doors. It was fun to watch him take rough lumber, and with a plane, chisel and saw shape and notch the pieces to shape and for a tight fit (*kubanana*, as Noah boasted) - what skill!

So, with the help of the community we have comfortably settled in. *Marty*

Transformation

Since arriving in Manow I’ve never felt lesser as a man. Seeing these people live their day to day lives with everything stacked against them and yet persevering is astonishing. All of the problems in the States seem minuscule compared to the struggle to survive here. I have a newfound respect for life and how much we truly take for granted.

It’s been one week teaching at Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary, and it’s been a once in a lifetime opportunity. It’s been a monumental shift in terms of the daily life that I’m used to. Having power and water intermittently has built character I wasn’t sure I had. Certainly out of my comfort zone but in the best way possible and the kids make every moment worth it.

The kids are a delight to teach and rewarding doesn’t come close to the feeling I have when supplying the students with English tools that will pay dividends for them later in life. *Jordan*

Vignettes at Sunrise

One of the delights of living in Manow is sitting on our east-facing front porch each morning to watch magnificent sunrises. We look toward the Livingstone Mountains (as in “Stanley Livingstone, I presume”), as the rays of the sun explode in mauves and violets, then brilliant yellows to nectarines in advance of the actual sunrise. The blazing pastels linger for a quarter of an hour. Once the sun actually peaks over the ridge its fiery profile rises in less than 2 minutes. Timing is everything. Being only seven degrees south of the equator, sunrise is an ephemeral event, but worth the early rise time.

It is a quiet time filled with the promise of the new day. People pass silently on their way to school, work, or their fields as I sit on the porch observing for a few moments with my comforting cup of tea. A diversity of birds fills the air with calls of welcome to the new day. Even the free-roaming

chickens and their strutting rooster tag-alongs seem to join the fullness of the celebration.

A woman dressed in colorful *kangas* (similar to sarongs) of green, orange, and yellows balanced two large rocks expertly on her head as she gracefully glided down the hill 50 feet away. She may have been carrying the rocks to the road construction site. Or maybe she was carrying them to a site where she would whack them by hand into 1-inch pieces of gravel – a job more women are undertaking these days.

Yesterday, a boy nearing the end of his primary school years passed in his royal blue shorts, white shirt and royal sweater and a book bag over his shoulder. He greeted me almost inaudibly with his best English as he passed.

The quiet of the morning provides centering before the intensity of the next 7.5 hour of teaching.

Nancy

Send email!!

We would love to hear from you. We may not be able to respond as quickly as in the US, but we really like hearing from you.

Jordan jordanjohnson51800@gmail.com

Martin martywerner@comcast.net

Nancy wintersnl49@gmail.com