
TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

Chris LaBeau, Lucy Winter, Norm Nickle, and Nancy Winters

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Finally, we are here!

After three disappointing years of Covid delays and four rather grueling days of travel (an overnight on the plane, in Dubai, in Dar es Salam, in Mbeya), we finally made it to Manow. What a beautiful and quiet little town! It was a real relief to get here and start to make the lives we will have for the next three months. Our first job was to unpack all the house and school supplies. Since we hadn't been here for three years, we had no idea what condition much of the stored supplies would be in, such as the sheets and the many children's books. We were pleasantly surprised to find the sheets were a bit musty and the books a bit dusty, but all were very usable. What a relief!

The first morning, Chris, Norm and I joined Nancy on the front porch to watch the sun come up over the nearby mountain range while drinking a cup of Tanzanian tea. It was a stunning show! This would be a fairly common practice over the next week, although once we started teaching, we didn't have the time. But I'm sure weekend mornings will start on the front porch admiring the view!

The first week of school has been a whirlwind. I'm quite sure I've had a semi-permanent "deer in the headlights" look on my face! The kids have a bit of the same deer look that I do, but they all look so eager. A big struggle for me has been learning all their names. As could be imagined, they are quite different from American names. They have names such as Peacemaker, Gift, Glad, and Goodluck. There is also a Rehema, which was a comfort to me because that was a very common name in the Duolingo Swahili language lessons I was doing prior to leaving the US. I've got that one! They know very little English...very little, so the progress so far has been slow, but it's only the first week, so we're hopeful they will catch on soon.

A favorite activity this week for me, and from their reaction for the kids, was to go outside of the

classroom and do the Hokey Pokey. Wow! Such chaos, but such fun! *Lucy*



Homecoming

After waiting three years since the last TTF volunteers taught in Manow, no one knew what to expect once we arrived. Would the supplies left before COVID still exist and be useable? Could the teaching program be recreated into the vital program it had been before the pandemic? And most importantly, would the legacy of twenty years of hard work, community connections, trust-building and loving relationships still be available...be deeply acknowledged and felt? From what I see, as a first-time volunteer, I am happy to report that the answer is a resounding "yes." We have been warmly, warmly welcomed by the Manow community, more so than I ever could have imagined. We are consistently greeted by calls of "Mama Nancy, Mama Nancy!" Nancy is honored by large numbers of people who have been touched by TTF over the years. Clearly TTF has had a wonderful impact on this community. There seems no lapse in memory or in the interest of the community in re-engaging with the Foundation.

Everything here in our cottage basically survived the last three years with little damage, and our home was surprisingly up and running in relatively quick order. We've gotten used to new foods and cooking with new ingredients. The school supplies have been organized, tasks assigned and our first day of school went very successfully. Nancy, Norm, Lucy and I seem to make a good team, each with our own skills, quirks and creativity to help the students learn. I already have experienced so much that it's hard to believe we've only been on the road for two weeks. I can't even begin to imagine what the next two months might hold. Thank you for making it possible for me to be a part of this incredible experience.

Chris

The First Week

We arrived in Manow Tanzania after five very long and very disorienting days of travel. Airplanes, large and small, Land Rovers, hotels. After the bumpy dusty roads, we arrived to a wonderfully home cooked meal. Slowly, we adjusted to the slow and relaxed style of living and very hard work of the people while frantically cleaning, unpacking, and preparing to teach. Jet lag, altitude and some travel sickness dogged our efforts but slowly things came together.

Our first church service was a wonderful experience filled with beautiful, joyous music, everyone in their best, most beautiful, and colorful clothes, and relaxed - wandering in and out. We were eventually introduced and Nancy gave a heartfelt speech expressing her love of the community and students and her joy to be back after such a long time away.

Martin Mwakaje's presence, knowledge, English and good advice are indispensable for our daily living, dealing with problems both large and small and general good advice.

The entrance exam, then starting teaching has been so much fun, as well as rewarding. Nancy, of course, has taken the lead but we have quickly taken sections to teach. We've covered the verbs to have, and to be, days of the week, and months of the year, numbers and fractions, body parts, opposites and colors - all in one week. The children are full of life warmth and innocence. They are generally quite smart, well-motivated, and well-behaved, responding to drawing and new game songs.

Watching them do the "Hokey Pokey" was hilarious!

We are looking forward to the rest of the course and although missing home, we are gratified for this wonderful opportunity to experience the land and the people of this corner of Tanzania so intimately.

Norm



Joy and Gratitude Abound

The deep joy and gratitude I felt at returning to Manow has replenished my spirit. For all of you who have supported our program and our desire to return, I am so very grateful – in fact, beyond words. I am also grateful to the Manow community for their incredibly warm welcome. Many of our former students have come to say hello and give me updates. Some of those who used to be so shy have become exuberant young people. For all the former teachers I will give you brief updates knowing that it will feed your spirits too.

- Elieza, (PF1 class of 2009) whom many of you have heard, is teaching computer repair at a vocational college near here. His entrepreneurial spirit has surfaced as he started a video production studio mostly for the local choirs. And he is getting engaged, as soon as he can get the bride price together!!!!
- Noel (PF1 class of 2009) has completed university and is awaiting a position as a lab technician. His brother Yoel (class of 2010) is also awaiting employment after finishing his degree as a civil engineer. Their twin sisters, Elizabeth and Anna, (PF1 class of 2016) are in Form 6 already! Weren't they just young girls yesterday?
- Godlove, (PF1 class of 2010) Ngwitika's son, is home for a few weeks from the university in

Dodoma where he is studying to be a teacher. He is no longer shy and his English skills have come in handy as he has translated to his mom.

- Emmanuel (PF1 class of 2014) will continue his second year of university studies in Dodoma in Computer Technology in another couple of weeks. He also noted that Christian (from his PF1 class) would be coming to the university in Dodoma as a first student this fall.
- Tumpe (PF1 class of 2015) will begin studies in Economics and Finance at the University of Dar es Salaam. She is an articulate thoughtful and kind young woman was a leader at Manow in Dar in a few weeks to study, I am so full of pride and joy in the path she is taking.
- Katherin (PF1 class of 2015) will be entering the University of Dar es Salaam as a first year student in Finance and Accounting in 2 weeks.
- Jackson, (PF1 class of 2015) a scholarship student and formerly reluctant English speaker -- at least with me, was bouncing when I saw him. He is off to his second year in college in medical laboratory research.

I am bursting with pride that they have paired the English tool we gave them with their own drive and ingenuity to make their paths to the future. I could never have foreseen these outcomes. God blesses us in so many ways. *Bwana asifiwe!* Nancy

Music Is Everything

We were all dead tired when we arrived in Manow. Then as I went to bed, I heard amazing music drifting across the field from the church. I was not expecting that late on our first Saturday night. Our trip suddenly had a "soundtrack," and it was beautiful, peaceful, comforting and all-enveloping. Since then, the music here has become more and more important.

Norm and I joined the choir, and although we don't know exactly all of the words we are singing in Swahili, that's not the point. The point is joining our voices to the best of our abilities with the beautiful harmonies of our hosts. They have welcomed us and included us in such a wonderful and unique experience. I am extraordinarily grateful and feel so blessed. For me, being a part of the Manow community through music touches a deep,

deep place that I will always carry in my heart.
Chris

The Ants Go Marching

One of the first songs we teach the students is "The Ants Go Marching." We tie it to our unit on numbers. The kids love the song. But never in a million years would we have thought that the ants would be marching through our humble abode here. We have been surprised at how fast they can fill a sink with their tiny bodies. These are not the biting ants and are really not a life threatening problem -- except for our aversion to insects. We are seeing the humor in the situation.
Nancy

Send email!!

We would love to hear from you about how things are going for you, and how you like the newsletters this year. We may not be able to respond as quickly as in the US, but we really like hearing from you.

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Chris: chris_labeau@yahoo.com

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If the newsletters inspired you to think about teaching in the program, please let Nancy know. Her email is wintersnl49@gmail.com