TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

Lucy Winter, Lori Sweeney, Jeff Sweeney November 27, 2025



Just as we are getting used to life in Manow, our adventure is coming to an end. We have mastered a few simple greetings. We have figured out the market and how to buy groceries. We know all the students and our neighboring children and their names, including Mark, whom I called "Melk" for the first 6 weeks!

The students have their daily routine down and are learning quite a bit more than in the beginning. Things have not always been easy, but the results are more than worth the efforts put forth. While I am starting to think about my return home and how it will be nice to sleep in my own bed, it is with slight melancholy that I realize I will probably never see these people again.



I am not overstating things when I say how friendly and helpful they have been. Not only the adults, but the children as well, who, for example, come running to carry the supplies for the classroom. I will carry fond memories and stories back home, like the struggling boy who looked at me wide-eyed when I asked for a healthy living rule, and he blinked twice and said meekly, "Manure is poop and pee?" (Healthy living got mixed up with sustainable farming, I guess.)

As I close, I would like to thank the people who make this program possible. And on top of that, the people of Tanzania, particularly those in Manow. -Jeff Sweeney

These are the "dogged days" here in Tanzania. I am reminded we have just 2 weeks left here to finish stuffing 35 young minds with as much English as possible. I got in the habit of flagging our 162-page curriculum with a colored paperclip for the day's teaching (today we are on page 144). Big questions abound, like will we run out of cookstove gas, chewable Vitamin C, coffee, or, gulp, floss? Not to mention stamina. Or dry underwear. The school days somehow drag and whiz by at the same time. Between 12:30 and 2:30 in the afternoon, we pray for breezes, softer seating, *any* look of comprehension, and every inspiration for activities that keep the students awake. Bananagrams, category bingo, hangman, puzzles (yes!), and bean bag question toss have literally been lifesavers. (I'm happy to share these ideas for use with sleepy spouses, uncomprehending parents, or holiday gatherings! Text me.)



The rainy season is upon us, bringing cooler weather and wet socks.

We've learned much. More than the kids, I suspect.

Creative cooking with a LOT of potatoes, Roma tomatoes, and recycled cooking oil. A whole new monetary system where 70,000 sounds like a lot but is actually $28.77. (I had a dress made for exactly $13.1,5, including the beautiful fabric and a seamstress tip I had to talk her into accepting.) How to eat mangoes morning, noon, and night. How to talk slower (okay, maybe not). How to give a full English vocabulary lesson on the back of a boda boda (motorcycle). How to sharpen cheap pencils from China. How to fix/make do/flush with anything made cheaply in China and sold in a Third World country to people who have little and have learned to make do. How to take cold showers 2-3 times a week. Numerous ways to indicate/demand /pantomime "do not put pencils, pens, or other objects in your mouth or up your nose."

Mostly, though, we've been inspired. By the



Lori, Lucy, Tumpe (2015), and her mother, Alune

Tanzanian people, who are so gracious and eager to learn English. They stop by our house or hail us on the trail (we are the only white people for miles, but still). They put up with us mispronouncing their names and vegetables in Swahili. And the students are actually learning reflexive pronouns, which I had never heard of. And what they can do about climate change. And how to splint a broken bone. And why manure is better than artificial fertilizer (but so help me on the spelling). And to never, *ever* start sentences with "And"….

One of the brighter students caught our eye early on, comically stroking his chin while pondering a question, all the while with a glint in his eye. Smart but impish, not unlike another boy with whom we are familiar, our 25-year-old engineer son Quinn. After many kisses, hugs, and promises of new tools, Frugal Jeff agreed to sponsor Tumsifu at our partner school, Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary, for three years, through Tanzania Teaching Foundation. The cost is one-third of our home insurance, which we hope we will still have when we return to the U.S. in late December. Maybe we are backing a winner for Tanzania, or maybe we just get to share in the life of another outstanding human being 9, 403 miles away.

It will be Tumsifu, and all his fellow Tanzanians, we will remember, always. But will *he* remember to keep his pencil out of his mouth? -Lori Sweeney



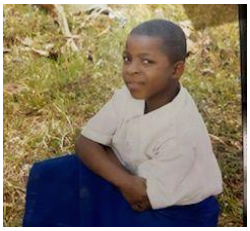
Tumsifu, 2025

We are quickly winding our way down to the end of the 10-week course. Back in September, it seemed like the time went by so slowly, but all of a sudden, we are almost done! Time is such a fickle thing: sometimes seeming to fly by and other times not so much. As we teach in our last full week of the curriculum, I find myself feeling rather melancholy as we approach the end, because unlike the last time I was here, I don't think I will ever come back to Manow. Last time I knew I would come back and see my friends again. What I didn't fully realize was how special it would be to see all my former

students again! This became particularly clear this past weekend when I became aware that there are 7 students in our current class who are the siblings of students in my last class in 2022! I'm particularly surprised that I didn't see the facial resemblances to the older siblings. I feel a little foolish that I was so clueless!

So, there's Mercy, the very sharp younger sister of Peacemaker, who is the student my husband Bill and I have sponsored for three years, with one more year to go. She's very bright and more outspoken than her brother. She was already a favorite of mine even before I learned who her brother is. There's another of our students named Ashery, whose younger sister is Nancy, and Catalina with her older sister Anifa, and several others. The most emotional revelation was finding out that Sifa in our class had a brother named Baraka in my 2022 class, but sadly, I learned that he had passed away earlier this year. While I was devastated by this news, I was so happy that I could see Baraka's face in his little sister Sifa. They both were and are very charming, but also very different.





Baraka, 2022, and Sifa, 2025

We have had such interesting and sometimes frustrating experiences during our time here. From ants invading our house and the stove breaking just a week before we want to bake cookies and brownies for our "thank you, Manow" open house next week, to the countless wonderful interactions with all the people here, young and old. We are always welcomed by this community, and in turn, we welcome visits from all sorts of community members and students, current and former.

I will definitely miss this community and all the people, especially the students, but they will forever reside in my heart. -Lucy Winter

Send us an email!

Have questions? Want to know more about TTF from the volunteer perspective? We would love to hear from you. We may not be able to respond as quickly as in the US, but we will get back to you. Also, in addition to celebrating Thanksgiving in Tanzania, Jeff (17 Nov) and Lori (25 Nov) are celebrating their birthday! Send them a birthday shout-out! hello@tanzaniateachingfoundation.org



If the newsletters inspired you to think about teaching in the program, please let Stacy know. Her email is director@tanzaniateachingfoundation.org

Until next time…

Have a blessed holiday season!