

Louisa Duke
October 15, 2007

Moving in!!

Hello friends and family,

Greetings! The work here has been busy lately, so I have a lot to update you on.

House news: We moved in last Thursday!! We had kept on saying that we thought we'd be moved in soon, but it just wasn't happening, so we came to help. Last weekend my cousin Ashley and I came over to the house to work until things got done. Meagan was getting over a bad case of strep throat, but as soon as she was well she joined the construction/painting crew as well. One of the first days that Ashley and I worked, we decided to surprise Meagan, and we painted her room yellow. It felt like we were on trading spaces in Africa! We then proceeded to painting Ashley's room, my room, the kitchen, the bathroom, and the living room trim!! We organized for the carpenter, Joe, to be over here working on kitchen cabinets and bed frames. It was a crazy week, but we made it, and we are so happy to be sleeping in our own beds now! We still have some organizing and touch up work to do, but things are almost finished around here. Thanks to all of you for your support and encouragement through this house-building adventure. I never thought this would be part of my time here in Zambia, but I can honestly say that I'm thankful it has been. I feel blessed that God has used me in this way, and I'm thankful for all that He will do with this house in the future. It makes me so excited to think of all the people whose lives will be changed while staying in this house. If any of you want to see pictures of the house, go to my new picture website <http://picasaweb.google.com/louduke/House> I will update this as we continue to get the touch up work done.

Meagan, Ashley, and I have agreed to teach a single, ladies Bible class at the College here this semester. The first night I was there I passed a paper around to see what the girls would be interested in discussing this semester, and I got the paper back with these topics, women's roles in the church, dating, and forgiveness. I think this will be an interesting semester! Please pray for us as we try to encourage the ladies in this class. We are still teaching the children's Sunday school class here, which is always an adventure. We have about 40 students ranging in age from 2 to 12! We've recently been teaching the song for the books of the New Testament. It's cute to hear their little voices singing, first and second Peta! (no rrrs) Meag and I always laugh when we sing it like they do. We decided to throw these sweet kids a party a few weeks ago. We had cake, popcorn, and all sorts of goodies. We played pin the tail on the donkey, had relay races, and ate a lot! The kids were thrilled, and now they are asking for more "sweeties" all the time! I'm afraid we've started something!!

Most of you have probably heard about the Harding group that has been here since early September. I've really enjoyed having them here. Several of the students have gone with me on HIV outreaches and under 5, clinic outreaches. I've gotten to teach some how to draw blood and give shots, which has been fun. I love getting to watch them learn about Africa and be affected by the poverty and hurting that they see. I'm constantly reminded of how faithful God is when I'm around these students. Several years ago I was in their place, and God started something in me which He has faithfully carried out through my time in Zambia. Praise God for His plans and direction in our lives! I pray that I will be the encouragement and example that these students need as God teaches them about His people here in Africa.

Work at the clinic has been steady and busy lately, thanks to all the leftover medicines from North reach and the Abilene medical mission this past summer. We are also now receiving our monthly drug kit from the government, which is helping a lot. We've started having staff meetings, with the direction of Laura Oldenburg, about what steps we should be taking to open up as a hospital. Please pray that we will be able to take these steps and that God will provide the support and guidance that we need.

There have been times in my work here when I've felt like I'm just going through the motions, and I wonder what impact I'm making on anyone. The problems and struggles just seem so big, and my efforts seem so small in comparison. I have to remind myself that I'm sharing Jesus to these people through every act of providing medicine, clothing, and encouragement. It's been easy for me to get overwhelmed in all the suffering with my work with HIV. I find myself trying to find solutions to all the immediate problems my patients face, and I forget to have joy in the ultimate, eternal solution that God gives. I usually take Rogers Namuswa, a gifted counselor, with me on the HIV outreaches. About a month ago, we had a couple at Njabalombe who were separated at the time, and the husband was furious that the wife had come to be in our program. The husband was so angry that we thought there was going to be a fight. We had to get the village headman to come to calm everyone down. Rogers sat down with them and talked them through their struggles, and the husband decided to be tested for HIV the next time we came. He was found to be positive as well, so he was started in our program. This past week, Rogers continued to counsel the husband, and when we left Rogers told me that the man had decided to be baptized! Rogers also told me of two others who had decided to be baptized.

Friday Rogers and I drove out to Njabalombe again to pick up these patients and take them for baptism. We drove past Njabalombe for about an hour on small trails until we reached a little pond. As we were walking towards the pond, one of the women who was getting baptized pulled out a Bible that I had given her husband at Namwianga clinic last year before he died of HIV. She just looked at me and smiled. Honestly, I didn't really remember the one time I had seen her husband as a patient, but it meant something to her. One of the HIV positive men in our program is a faithful Christian, and he did the baptizing that day. It was amazing to see! I wish you all could've been there to see these suffering human bodies be filled with the perfect Holy Spirit. God is good, and I praise Him for the changes He is making in the lives of these patients.

I pray that God is blessing each of you. Thank you all for the ways you have impacted my life. I'm so blessed.

Louisa