
TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

Katelyn LeBlanc, Dot Quaintance, Hannah Quaintance

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Mid-Term Musings

I have so many really wonderful experiences to share here at the point midway in this adventure, including of course teaching the 39 kids in our class that have become really special. They are sometimes funny, sometimes serious, often quizzical and definitely now friends. They are much more relaxed around the “*wazungus*” who are trying to teach them English. They now laugh at jokes *with* us, not *at* us!

One of the highlights, outside of school, in the last couple of weeks was the 3-day weekend to Matema Beach at Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi). A beautiful setting; blue water, white surf and steep green mountains coming right down to the lake. We had the added benefit of a full moon rising over those mountains!

My special treat came when Martin Mwakaje (our friend and guide from Manow) walked us further down the beach to the village of Lyulilo at the foot of the mountains where pottery is made. We met a lovely lady named Terezia (Mama Jacob) who invited us back the next day to show us how she made her pots. When we returned the following afternoon she demonstrated the technique from start to finish except for glazing and firing. The clay comes from up on the mountain and is not washed, she just works it in her hands until she has all stones and lumps out. Although her pots are perfectly round (or to my eye, perfect), she does not use a wheel. She uses two rounded stones on top of each other as she works the clay round and round. She made two pots with lids while we watched. She allowed me to photograph the entire process. All this sitting on the ground outside her home with her children, nieces, nephews and neighbors all around us. Her two lively sons were on my lap and her lap and Martin’s lap and it was a lot of fun. Terezia was so gracious and pleased to share her craft with us and I left feeling very honored to have been invited into such a close community setting.

As I sit on the front porch of our home here in Manow, I realize how much I love having mountains around. Along with the Appalachians in western Maryland, the Organs in Las Cruces, New Mexico and the Rockies in Denver, I can now add the spectacular Livingstone Mountains of Tanzania to places I have called home. I will miss my front porch view when I leave Manow. Every morning at sunrise I am reminded of Psalm 121; “*I will lift up my eyes to the hills from where comes my help*” It is good to live surrounded by mountains.... (*Dot*)

Community Relationships

It feels like we’ve settled into our rhythm in Manow. Matema was a really nice break and when we returned to Manow the sun had started shining again. Mama Mwasamwaja is teaching me to weave “*mkeka*” (a mat) with dyed reeds. I’m catching on but I’m still not exactly sure how long it has to be before I begin to put it together into a mat. Mama Mwasamwaja’s a very animated teacher; and I really enjoy sitting on her back porch. The air smells sweet and there are always children and grandchildren running around (plus she gives me sweet, warm tea with real milk at the end of our lesson!).

I’ve really enjoyed finding our place in the community. When we walk around the surrounding villages or down to Lwangwa we see our students playing football or working at their homes. I’m getting really close to our students and beginning to anticipate how sad I will be to leave them all. They’ve relaxed enough that their personalities are all coming out. I had to step outside the classroom the other day because I was laughing so hard. I think they enjoy practicing their English, but sometimes they sound so ridiculous. My favorite activity is always drawing. Last Friday they each had to draw a picture of a farm then write a story about their picture. I loved seeing what they wrote. One girl wrote about a man who had no wife so he had to learn to cook for

himself on his farm. It's so exciting to be this far into the class when they are starting to understand us and really get into the lessons.

Other exciting adventures were a short but beautiful hike with Mwaikema ("The Professor") and a long hot trek to Itete for some cheese. Mwaikema, a geography teacher at MLJS, told us that Manow is in the 4% of Africa that is above 1500 meters. He's such an interesting man and his whole family is very well educated. The hike helped me figure out where I am geographically in relation to major places that I see on our maps.

The walk to Itete was fun and dusty. Carina Dinkle, the doctor in Itete, bought us some cheese in Mbeya which is a really exciting addition to our diet. We offered some to Ngwitika (our house helper); but she took one bite and just shook her head. Crazy "wazungu" food I guess. (Hannah)

Lake Nyasa (Malawi)

It's the end of October and time here is flying by. The weather is gorgeous so we decided to take a *safari* to Lake Nyasa on our three day weekend (thanks to the national holiday celebrating President Nyere). We brought two local teachers, Mwakaje and Mwaisemba to assist us with accommodations and translations. They're our good friends, besides, and have helped us out a lot around town so we wanted to treat them to a nice weekend.

We arrived at Matema Beach and checked into the Lutheran Centre around noon on Friday after a bumpy two hour car ride. The manager informed us that the Bank of Tanzania booked the whole lodge for Saturday night and we could only stay Friday; but he gave us a few suggestions for the rest of the weekend.

After we settled into our beach front bungalows I headed straight for the water. There were tiny waves crashing on the sandy shore. The water was a little warm from baking under the sun all day, but it was refreshing nonetheless. Later that evening Mwakaje found us *chips mayai* (a blend of eggs and French fries). As we ate, we were entertained with popular Swahili music videos. Due to some communicational errors we had to eat a second dinner at Lutheran Centre including meat sauce spaghetti topped with steamed cabbage. Our stomachs expanded, but we weren't about to pay for food and not eat it!

The next day we moved out of the Luther Centre and walked less than a mile down the beach to stay at a Roman Catholic house usually reserved for priests and sisters. We settled into our rooms and, again, I headed straight for the water.

Mwakaje arranged a dugout canoe ride for us and everyone except Mwaisemba hopped into the rocking boat. Our guide rowed and rowed, showed us colorful fish, and bought a really fresh catch for us right on the water. Nancy told us we HAD to eat fish while we were there so we fulfilled her demand, and I'm sure glad we did. We ate our fresh catch deep fried and served with beans, bananas, rice, and mchicha. I have never eaten an entire fish before (brains and eyes included), but this was absolutely the best Tanzanian meal I've had to date.

After lunch, I was back to swimming! I swam as much as I could, for as long as I could. In the late evening Mwakaje, Hannah, and I decided to go for a night swim. Hannah and I tried to teach Mwakaje how to swim, but he's a rather large man and doesn't like the water so the task proved to be quite difficult. We ended up sitting on the shore watching the full moon rise over the mountain tops. Not such a bad alternative.

Sunday was another mellow day filled with swimming and eating. Sadly, we had to leave. Our ride picked us up around four in the afternoon and drove our exhausted group back to Manow. (Katelyn)

Get Involved!!

Here are some ways you can get more involved with this project:

- Learn about the program from our website: <http://tanzaniateachingfoundation.org/>
- Volunteer to be one of the teachers, or
- Sponsor a student.
- Send emails to the volunteers. Katelyn, Hannah, and Dot would love to hear from you – even short snippets.

Katelyn's email: lebkat16@gmail.com

Dot's email: dotquaint@netscape.net

Hannah's: quahan03@evergreen.edu

God's Blessings and Peace,
Dot, Katelyn, & Hannah