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# TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

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Nancy Winters and Martin Werner

October 2015

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## *You Are Missed*

This is a note to Ginny, Emily, Dot, Hannah, Katelyn, Elizabeth, Arlene, Jane, Sean, Jani, and Ernie – all former volunteers who have taught the Pre-Form 1 English course. From our discussions with many people of Manow, you can be sure that they remember you fondly and “miss you!” Obviously, you have all had your impacts and made close connections.

Emily and I taught this course in 2010, following Ginny and Nancy in 2009. In 2010, I felt we were relying on friends and contacts Nancy and Ginny had made – they paved the way. There was a strong rope tying our communities together, built by Ginny and Nancy and Manow counterparts. And, we hung onto that rope tightly – especially initially. Now, in contrast, there is an incredibly strong net between our communities built by many people - all of you and your friends here. You are a part of this community, and I think you will always have a place in Tanzania to come!

When we left in 2010, Martin Mwakaje hugged us and said “you will be missed.” I was surprised and moved. We had been quite demanding and a bit of a burden with our needs and requests for his help and that of others. Wouldn’t they be relieved when we left and things got back to normal? Now I clearly see that just as the folks in Manow enrich us on a personal level, you have also enriched them on a personal level – and not only the students.

*Marty*

## *The Class*

Our 40 students represent a completely different dynamic this year. First, based on test scores, we accepted 25 girls and 15 boys into the program. We have generally had a much closer ratio. Of the 82 applicants, 50 were girls and 32 were boys. Surprisingly, the girls generally scored higher on

the entrance exam this year. We could not justify taking equal numbers of girls and boys because it would have excluded too many high scoring girls. All of the students seem to be totally engaged and are extremely cute. They range from 11 to 17 years old (most are 13 or 14) and they are from 10 different primary schools. It doesn’t take long for the kids to get to know students from other schools!

Based on the initial quizzes, the students seem to be clumped more in the middle with fewer students completely lost students compared with previous years. We have also had greater success in some of the early lessons, which I attribute to improved primary teachers. The students have progressed to writing five-word sentences and today we had some really funny ones:

*Gabriel and Musa step on his feet.*

*She hops on one foot to go to the toilet.*

*The ostriches run on the table.*

Of course, we still get the proverbial: The girls go to the market every day. The students go to school every day. She skips in class every day. I think you can see the pattern of sentence lengthening. Over the first two weeks, we have introduced about 500 vocabulary words and the students have written at least 70 sentences. That means we have each corrected about 1,200 sentences and it’s only early in week two.

*Marty and Nancy*

## *Choir Practice*

I have joined one of the four choirs that sing on Sundays, and it has proven to be quite the learning experience. One of the reasons that church services last two to three hours is because of the music, which is great. Every time one of the choirs sings each of the other choirs sings too - a competition of sorts. Last year I mentioned that I might want to join one of the smaller choirs, but caveated it that I

had not sung since high school. They took me up on my offer.

The choir that chose me is only about eight members but they have wonderful voices and fill the space with their music. The choir practices on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 5 pm outside on the grass in front of the church. Generally five to seven people show up more or less at 5 o'clock. All of the members are within a short walk so it is fairly convenient for them to come to practice. We practice each song one time and only one time. So I am trying to learn a new tune (without sheet music), words in Swahili, and the rhythmic motions all at once from just three practices a week. It has been a challenge, yet the members have accepted me one of the family. For my second Sunday in the choir, Marty said I moved "much better and sang as if I knew the words." Amazing!

Today in practice there were only five women, the men must have been busy. Yet despite the limited number, our voices rang out in three part harmony across the village. What a treasure!  
*Nancy*

### ***Kudra, 2010 and Now***

Kudra was one of Emily's and my students in 2010. He was tall for his age (maybe 5'7") and very engaging on a personal level. While other kids played or talked among themselves during tea time, he often came over and sat beside me on the steps to chat. Every conversation was different; he was interested and passionate about many things. 2010 was an election year and Kudra supported a candidate for president unpopular with the other students. There were animated discussions about this and Kudra was the first to escalate the rhetoric and the last to back down.

He was a leader; unpopular at times. One day a group of boys had congregated and were quite excited. Kudra and I rushed over and they were harassing a large lizard. Before I could speak, Kudra pushed through the group and said, "Don't hurt it, it is one of God's creatures." Another day he behaved badly in class and we came down pretty hard on him. At the end of

the day he came to us and demanded an extra assignment for the weekend, as punishment. We said that was not necessary and that what happened in class was over. He insisted, so we told him to draw us a picture (we knew he loved to draw). Over the weekend he bought a small notebook and gave us a fully illustrated story on Monday. He looked proud when we asked if we could share it with the class. I was pleased that Kudra planned to study to be an engineer.

Here we are in 2015, and Kudra stopped over to visit Nancy and me. He is now in Form 5 and is a handsome 6'2". He is still passionate about many things, but his approach has moderated. He's very well spoken in English. Again, we talked about many things including: agriculture differences between the US and Tanzania, politics in both countries, and mining practices in Tanzania. (He is very bothered that wealth leaves the country to first world mining companies, but mining's environmental degradation stays here.)

Nancy and I have traveled through several parts of Tanzania this year and have heard much about the candidates and this year's presidential election. Kudra helped us understand regional differences and how various interests in those regions explain their support for one candidate or another. He also insisted there would be no riots after the election in late October (we hope he's right!).

Kudra has abandoned his plans to be an engineer because he feels foreign trained engineers are given preference by the Tanzanian government. He is studying to be doctor now. When leaving he said he'd draw a picture for us; he thought I'd be surprised by how his art has improved. I am somewhat sadder that his earlier dream to be an engineer has changed, but I'm betting he'll be a good doctor.  
*Marty*

### ***Send email!!***

We would love to hear from you about how things are going for you. It keeps us in touch with life in the US. Please limit the size of the email as the system is still very slow here and crashes easily. Our email addresses are:

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