

21 February 2009

## Uganda Update #5

It's wonderful to wake up to the sounds of birds chirping and various calls of tropical birds. I woke up feeling really blessed to be alive. I lay there recounting the testimonies I had heard over the last few days of the children in Mary's school (Airfield View Primary School, AVPS) and thought of how blessed I was. I thought I had gone through some hardships in my life, but hearing what some of these children have gone through does not even compare to mine. Mine is nothing. I prayed this morning for Mary and the children. She is doing an awesome work here and is in desperate need for help.

Mary Lou and I went to Entebbe arriving there at about noon. We went there to meet with Adam Kawooya who will no longer be the administrator for Seeds of Hope International (SOHI). We had a wonderful chat with him and his wife Sandra who is expecting a child. Adam has been a tremendous blessing to the ministry and has put in many heartfelt hours and love for the children.

After we left Adam's house, we went to the open market in Entebbe and bought some tennis shoes for Esther Athieno. While we were there, we had lunch at a local restaurant. We then went by taxi back home to Kajjansi.

I was very tired and exhausted today, and had been feeling a bit queasy with the stomach with a bit of the runs, so I took a nap. We had plans for a sleepover with the girls in their dorm room at AVPS starting at 7:00 pm. We started preparing for the event at 5:30 pm. Mary Lou made popcorn and I, ...well, ...I spent most of my time sitting on the toilet. Tummy trouble! Finally my tummy settled and I ran out to buy airtime for my cell phone so that I could call a couple of the sponsors that evening for them to talk with their sponsored child.

We arrived to the school at about 6:45 pm and I sat there loading the airtime into the phone. What you do is enter a recharge code into the phone and press pound to confirm it. The lady I bought the airtime from did not have the large value airtime cards e.g. 10,000/=, so I bought ten 1,000/= airtime cards. I had to enter each one into the phone, which takes a bit of time. When I finished entering the airtime I had 5 minutes to call Nebraska for Amnoni Didia's sponsor. Just at that time the school's dinner bell rang and all the children ran and lined up for their dinner. I did not know they had dinner at that time, and I needed to call at exactly 7:00 pm which would be 9:00 am USA time in Nebraska.

I called anyway; Amnoni just put his dinner down and talked with his sponsor. I am not sure he understood what was being said or asked of him as I could see the puzzled expression on his face. Next I called Esther Athieno's sponsors and she got to talk with them. I let her wonder off by herself to give her privacy. I could hear her say Eh? Eh? and giggle a lot. She was so happy to talk with her sponsors. She later kept telling me that they were laughing a lot and talking very fast. She felt so blessed!

The sleepover party had started without us (Esther and I) so she entered into a bingo game late. It was already dark outside when she was on the phone, and I did not want her to be out there by herself. During the bingo game, the power went out. It was one of those power rationing nights. The girls continued the bingo game by candle light and a "torch" (flash light). They were playing blackout bingo. After that we sang songs and talked about different things in our lives. I talked to the girls about sex, virginity and virtue, True love waits. The oldest girl there is about 15 or 16. Some of the girls have already been sexually abused. I really felt led to let them know that if they had been molested that it was not their fault. So many young girls feel that it is their fault because that is how they raise them here. That if they are molested, it was because they deserved it, or brought it upon themselves.

A young girl by the name of Jackie (about age 13) closed us in prayer. It was a powerful prayer. Jackie's story is that she was a Muslim. When she gave her life to Jesus, her mother kicked her out of the house and forbade her to ever come back. Jackie is from the Gulu area up north. So now Jackie lives at AVPS. AVPS I think is quickly turning from a school to an orphanage.

Mary brought Mary Lou and I back home, just as the power came back on. Today was a day to be thankful for what we have, for who we are and mostly for who He is. Life is just not the same without Jesus in it. I have seen this today in the faces of these young girls and in the demonstration of their lives. They live by faith and hope in Jesus. They cling to him because Jesus is all that most of them have.

Juliet



Road side shoe store



Road side clothing store



Open market at Entebbe. The pineapples are sweet!



Open market at Entebbe



Me on a bodaboda



Amnoni Didia talking with his sponsor



Esther Athieno talking with her sponsors



Playing bingo by candle light in the girls dorm.



This is how they mow the lawn.



A boy gathering grass to feed their goat.