

Trish Cox's monthly newsletter from Nairobi, Kenya

Jambo. My time is fast coming to an end. In fact as I write this I am sitting at the SIM compound, having left the orphanage 2 days ago. Thankfully in recent days the sun has come out, making it seem a lot more like Africa for my last few days here.

The past month was a fairly good one at the orphanage. The temperatures continued to drop but through various donations, the children were all given fleeces, beanies and extra blankets which made a huge difference. This was not the only donation of the month. Another donation allowed us to go on a trip with all the children to Ngong Hills, about 20 minutes away. Despite us being the worst chaperones ever, God kept us safe and we all had a really good day climbing the hills and having a picnic. The sun even came out for part of the day!



1. Uninvited guests during our picnic lunch. 2. Karen and I with some of the children on top of Ngong Hills.

The blessings and generosity continued as Purchit, a friend of Karen's, visited for a week. She is a doctor and was able to give all the children a general check up and provide some medicine. Another donation provided all the children with toothbrushes and toothpaste. This is something we take for granted but something some of them don't have. It has been really encouraging to see how God provides for these children through people from many parts of the world!

School continued as normal this month with exams in my last week at the orphanage. I really have enjoyed teaching these children, especially the younger ones who are so enthusiastic and welcoming.

Karen, Sarah and I have continued inviting children over for tea and mandazi, although we didn't get through as many as we would have liked for various reasons. We invited all the smaller children and had a party one Saturday which was a lot of fun.

They entertained us with many interesting stories throughout the afternoon.



1. Our party with the smaller children. 2. Having dinner with some of the boys.

In the middle of the month there was a huge fight (not physical) between some of the children. It was quite sad to see how much hate surfaced during it and we concluded that a lot of it was spiritual attack. I was able to talk with one of the girls for quite a while and encouraged her through it which was a good experience for me. I'm glad to say that after lots of prayer things seem to have settled down and returned to normal.

The cold temperatures left Karen, Sarah and I with colds at various times this past month. While Karen and I recovered, Sarah didn't. After a visit to the doctor she discovered that she has typhoid plus something else so she has been out of action for the past few weeks.

Of course a summary of the past month would not be complete without mention of my farewell. It was obviously very hard to say goodbye to all the children and my life there. The staff had a farewell party for me and although it made me feel uncomfortable, I was touched by the sentiment. On my last night we had a bonfire as my farewell with the children. It was a really emotional night both for me and the children and I couldn't say much in the end simply because I was crying. While the girls cried as well, the boys said that they could not cry as they were African men and African men don't cry. I am praying that God will provide a male role model for these boys to show them that it's okay to display their feelings. Many of the kids wrote me letters which I read after I had left, leaving me in tears again. They are really are amazing children and words can't describe them, you have to meet them for yourselves. God has given me peace about leaving as I know that they are in his hands

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John 12.26*

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and he will continue to love, protect and provide for them.

As I sit at the SIM compound and reflect on the past year, I know that I am a different person to who I was at the start. Describing how I am different is hard though and I haven't quite figured it out yet. There are many things that God has taught me throughout the year and I thought I would share just a few of them.

1. God uses everything. I think back to my time in Thika and how I wondered what I was doing there yet God was preparing me for my ministry at the orphanage by teaching me about the language, culture etc., all things I needed to know. At the orphanage he also used many basic skills I have learned: my first aid skills promoted me to the children's nurse, my basic sewing skills made me the tailor, mending countless uniforms, and baking skills came in handy for all the birthdays. There is nothing too small for God to use.

2. Small acts can have a huge impact. Something that has come up over and over again in the children's letters is how grateful they were to have their birthdays celebrated. I remember on one of my first days at the orphanage I discovered that it was a child's birthday so I got them a cake the next day. This is something I would consider normal, I didn't even have to think about it. After that we had a birthday calendar and celebrated everyone's birthday. Later I discovered that this was the first time in a long time, if not ever, that they had celebrated their birthdays. It's hard to believe that something so simple could have such an impact. By celebrating their birthday, they are able to know that they are special and cared for as an individual.

3. Love is powerful. I don't think that I have ever experienced the intensity of love that I've felt for these children. It's really hard to describe. I have had so much joy from them and also lots of pain and heartache, all because of love. While I hope that I have shown the children some of God's love for them, they have shown me more of his love for me. Love is an amazing gift. It can cause pain but it can give so much hope and joy as well and I will treasure this new depth of love God has revealed to me.

This past year has been amazing. I can honestly say it has been the best year of my life. I have been so incredibly blessed and learnt so much. I'm really sad that it has come to an end but I know that God is in control. So what does the future

hold for me? Well I really don't know. I have found a flat to live in when I get back to NZ, an answer to prayer. Otherwise my vague plan is to get a job and keep seeking God to see what he has in store for me next. I hope to return to African some time in the future!



1. Me with some of the kids at my farewell. 2. Sitting around the bonfire.

I'M THANKING GOD FOR:

- All the donations of the past month, and all the people behind the donations.
- The children! Allowing me to spend 8 months with them.
- Giving me the strength to get through the farewells
- Having my future (and the future of the children) in his hands, and providing me with a place to live back in NZ.

THINGS TO PRAY FOR:

- Sarah's health – that she would recover from her illnesses quickly and be able to return to the orphanage.
- Sarah and Karen as they remain with the children – that they would be vessels through which God could continue to pour out his love for the children. Also for Annalee, another SIMer arriving in August, staying for 6 months.
- The children – that they could continue to know God's love and healing power and that they would have hope for their futures.
- Me – that I would be able to adjust back to NZ culture and the culture shock that will go along with that. Also that I God would give me patience as I wait to see what has in store for me next.

Thank you for all your support, for all you have done to make this last year possible. I pray that God will bless each of you abundantly!

Lots of love
Trish

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