

The Vineyard's South Sudan Mission Trip

Monday's Update

South Sudan Missions
Update

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Clint Schwartz playing a game with the kids.



Dawn Morehouse with a sweet little girl.



Kathy Smarrella and Sarah Nimmo having fun with the group.



Denise Pope and Sarah Nimmo hanging out with the kids.

Monday, October 1, 2012

It's almost 10pm, the end of another wonderful, yet exhausting day in South Sudan. We started the morning early as we had planned to meet the potential Medical Officer for the Dreamland Children's Medical Clinic, Amule, at 8am sharp to take him to the medical clinic to help us for the morning outreach. The driver arrived early (that doesn't happen often here) and Doug, Rodger, Dawn, Amule and myself took off to the Dreamland. We opened the clinic and quickly began treating children from the Dreamland school, the line never got shorter the rest of the day. Amule was a great help and we hope to hire him in the upcoming weeks.

I rode back with the driver to begin our first shopping adventure of the day. The ladies, (Kathy, Rose, Denise & Sarah) and Hugh went to the market to buy food for the evening's feast. They eventually returned with 3 goats, 2 chickens, eggs, sugar, salt, rice, cabbages, tomatoes and a can of soda for each child. We then sent Hugh, along with the cooks, to the dreamland to deliver the "food" so that it could be prepared by that evening. When you are really starting from "scratch", it takes a little longer to make a meal in South Sudan!

When the driver returned to the base, we all loaded up to head to the market to finalize our shopping for the Dreamland. We purchased several personal items for the girls of the dreamland as they are growing up to be young ladies now, along with some washing basins for laundry day and 4 new mattresses to replace some old ones. The boys had asked for some games, so we purchased a board game and several decks of cards. One boy had asked for a mp3 player to listen to "gospel" music, so Rose & I decided to give them a couple of our mp3 players preloaded with Christian music. The problem is that they don't have electricity at the dreamland, so when the rechargeable batteries die, the mp3 players won't work. Fortunately, solar panels are getting rather cheap and we were able to buy a solar panel with hook-ups to charge the mp3 players. Sarah donated her personal speakers so that they could play the music for all to hear.

Back at the dreamland, Hugh and Doug helped with the butchering of the animals, and Doug actually helped skin the goat! That was quite an accomplishment for someone who can faint over the sight of blood! Rodger continued to see patients and Dawn helped entertain the children while they waited to be seen. One interesting thing that was noted is that the children in the neighboring community were found to be worse off than the children within the Dreamland. Praise God for Pastor Stanley as he is doing a much better job of caring for these children than many of the parents of the children in the local community!

The shopping group stopped by the base camp to pickup the remaining gifts for the children and we headed to the Dreamland. We arrived just as the children were getting out of school so we unloaded everything into the dining hall to be given away later. The girls of the dreamland had informed us that they needed black shoes and white socks to be within "dress code" at their school. The boys already had black shoes from Christmas, so we decided to have a shoe salesman come to the dreamland to fit all the girls with shoes. They were so excited! As the girls were getting their shoes, we also gave each of them a headband that was crocheted for them by Jennifer Thomas from The Vineyard. They all looked so happy and so pretty! Thank-you Jennifer!

While the girls were getting fitted for their shoes, I took the boys their gifts. It was really neat for me to see that boys are the same no

matter where you are in the world...they love electronics, music and games! It was so much fun to see the joy in their eyes as they began to "play" with their toys.

It was now time to play football (soccer) against the boys. They had challenged us earlier in the week, so now was our chance to play. We all joined in, though Dawn stayed on the sidelines to take pictures as she wasn't feeling extremely well. Rodger played goalie, and the rest of us tried our best to fill the various positions. We recruited a few of the boys to play on our team, and began the game. The boys took it easy on us, though many of us had them dribble right around us and even pass the ball through our legs to other players. All the other children, teachers and adults were on the sidelines cheering us on. The girls were real troopers as they played really hard, even in skirts! The boys scored a couple of goals against us, but we finally scored a goal of our own. We decided that was about all we could take, as I personally didn't think I could run up and down the field one more time, so we called it quits. They were a little disappointed that the game was already over, but I thought it might be good to quit while no one was hurt! What fun that game was!

Next, we went back to the dining hall to watch a program put on by the children. They sang for us, told us a riddle, laughed and thanked us again and again. We felt so appreciated by the children and by the leaders of the dreamland. One of the highlights of the evening was when our team gathered around the 18 new children to pray blessings over them. It was sad to see the "blank looks" in their eyes as they all just arrived within the last couple of months, but so encouraging to know that within the next couple of months that look will be replaced with the same smiles that the other children now have. God is doing some good things in the Dreamland!

After the program, we handed each child a Bethel String Bag (Thanks Bethel College!) that contained a solar rechargeable flashlight, a toothbrush, 2 small notebooks of paper, several colored pencils and some candy. In a community without electricity, it gets really, really dark at night so they were all very joyful to receive the flashlights and all of their gifts. Thank-you Vineyard Church for your generosity to finance these gifts and the evening meal.

Speaking of the meal, the children then lined up to receive their awesome meal of goat, chicken, vegetables and rice along with a can of soda! They were smiling from ear to ear as they savored every bite. As I walked around the area, several of the boys invited me over with a customary "You are welcome". They were so grateful for the meat as they only get a little meat 2 times a week and the goat and chicken were a wonderful blessing for them. They were also excited to hear that they would have eggs in the morning. It is so much fun to bless these children with good gifts!

By this time, it was getting late, so we had to prepare to leave. We took a group photo, passed out dozens of hugs and climbed into our truck to depart. In the morning we will depart for Uganda and hopefully arrive to our homes and families in the USA by Wednesday evening.

The last departure from the children is always such a surreal time for me. I'm usually exhausted, and this night was no different. I am happy and sad all at the same time. I'm happy that we had such a marvelous team and were able to bless the children and bring health to their bodies and joy to their hearts, but I'm sad to know that it will be some time before I will see their smiling faces again. After having traveled to see these children 5 times over the past 4 years, I've really grown to love them. The children are doing so much better now than when I was here in 2008, and their creativity and love of God has grown so much. The children's home is really making a difference in each of their lives. I think Rodger said it right one night when we were having a team debrief, he said "the dreamland is where children can begin to dream again". And that is what is happening with each of these precious 118 lives. Thank-you Pastor Stanley for your leadership, and thank-you Vineyard for your prayers and financial support to make this dream a reality.

Clint Schwartz

