

Newsletter #20 – June 2, 2015

Well it won't be too long now and I'll be heading back to the States for a six week visit! As I reflect on the year and a half that I have been here I have trouble putting into words everything I feel. In some ways it seems like time has flown by. In other ways it feels as though I've lived in Africa for a lifetime. The losses, the gains, the memories, the experiences, the people I've met, the circumstances I've found myself in, and the ways I've seen God work cannot be summed up in the couple of pages I have here. There are some things that cannot be written, things I want to show you, demonstrate for you, share with you face to face. I hope I can see many of you during the short time I'm back this summer.

Let me tell you how the middle school musical performance went! It started raining right before the performance. We're talking about a true African rainstorm here! There were several leaks in the roof and people had to change seats because water was pouring out of light fixtures. There are some big windows on the sides of the stage that go from the ceiling to the stage floor so I went and tucked the curtains in on one side so they wouldn't blow around during the show. The window on the other side had a big platform in front of it that we used later in the show, so I figured it would be ok to hold the curtain back. We started the show, and NO ONE COULD HEAR US because of the rain. I was literally shouting, so a few minutes in I grab the microphones on the side of the stage that were there for solos during some of the songs and turn them on to hand them to people as they were talking. Apparently I am pretty good at helping the kids "get into character." The actors were accustomed to using their hands as they spoke so having them "wave the mic around" while they delivered lines proved to render the mics a bit useless. About 10 minutes into the show the giant wooden platform leaning against the window tipped over and crashed to the stage. I promptly heaved the platform up and put it in a more secure position - never breaking character of course! About 30 seconds later the power went out - in the middle of someone's line. I told the cast to stay where they were and the generator automatically kicked on in a few seconds so I told the cast to back up a few lines and keep going. Finally, in the middle of a scene, I committed the cardinal sin...I stopped the show...I turned to the audience and asked them if they would be ok if we paused for a minute to see if the rains let up. Of course everyone was fine with that. So, I told the rest of the cast to go back stage. The director of the school walked on stage and came around to where I was standing and asked me if it would be ok if we just started the show over since the audience hadn't heard any of what had gone on. I said that was fine if the audience was ok with it, and they were. Carolyn went out on stage and said a prayer with the audience, asking that the rain would stop and I KID YOU NOT, about 5 seconds after she started praying it STOPPED RAINING! I mean, literally just stopped. It didn't even die down. IT – JUST – STOPPED. So we started the show over, it went off without a hitch, and the audience loved it!

I was allowed to submit a proposal for a budget next year to continue developing the brand new middle school drama department! We are a mission school and we don't have money "for extras." Would you pray with me that my proposal goes through so I can have the money to buy materials needed to give a proper education and understanding of theatre to these students? With so many schools around the world dropping arts programs for lack of funding, I am honored to be doing the Lord's work at a school where the arts are valued, where school officials still see the importance of not only offering outlets, but, also of allowing students to receive quality training in interests other than strict academic subjects. We have high school and middle school drama departments, as well as elective classes such as theatre technology, foods/home economics, computer, choir, and music theory. (Not to mention after school activities and clubs such as soccer, worship team, drama evangelism, and yearbook design.) I have been approached by a handful of students who are interested in taking voice lessons from me next year so we can add that to the list of extracurricular activities our students can be involved in. With a student body of less than 100 (most of whom are children of missionaries or Cameroonians who work in the local Christian ministry) God has surely blessed us by giving us talented staff members and teachers who are willing to share their love for nonacademic activities as well.

I cannot express to you how incredibly honored I am to be able to share my love for theatre and arts with 13 and 14 year olds. Middle school is a tough age group. They are just beginning to find out who they are and at the same time don't want to risk looking "stupid" in front of their peers. But, the dramatic arts offer them a way to express themselves in a controlled environment, where they learn to trust me as an authority figure, and more importantly...to trust themselves and their peers. I like to believe that I don't just teach them how to act on stage, but I strive to teach them how to get through life. We study not just *how* to move, walk, and talk on stage, but *why*. We learn how past experiences don't define who we are

today, but rather that our *reaction* to those experiences changes us. I like to offer each student the opportunity for self-reflection and the chance to see *why* they walk, talk, think, and behave the way they do. And, if they find something they don't like, they learn ways to change or fix it. All of this is done in a "fun" environment and through it all my sincere hope is that my students learn about themselves by "stepping out of themselves" where they can learn to see things from another perspective. It's a skill most of us could benefit from.

One thing that we as a school are lacking is an art teacher. We have many students here who love to express themselves by creating works of art with their hands. They jump at every opportunity they have! Are you an artist or an art teacher? Do you know someone who is? If so, perhaps you'd consider joining us here on the mission field. You are needed. Get in touch with me if you have questions or would like information.

Do you remember the family I was telling you about in my last letter? The parents who have a daughter, Esther, with a rare genetic condition called microcephaly. She is about eighteen months old. The condition causes the head to be abnormally small, as well as lower IQ and other neurological problems. (Esther is also blind.) I met with them a few days ago and was able to give them some advice on how to help her. I gave them tips for teaching her to sit up on her own, as well as ways to help develop her brain function to the maximum potential. Her family has already had one child with this condition. That child passed away. They are spending all of their resources to take Esther to specialists where she can receive as much help as possible. I have a picture with her included below. Please keep Esther and her family in your prayers.

I will be speaking at my home church (Harvest Fellowship) in Washington, NC during the Sunday morning services on June 28th. I would be honored to speak at your church, bible study, club or organization as well. Use the contact information below to get in touch with me if you are interested. I have a limited amount of time at home, and I want to spend as much time sharing my ministry as I can!

Prayer Requests:

- I will be leaving for North Carolina on June 12, please pray my travels are smooth and that my luggage arrives with me.
- Continue to pray for good health, as many tropical illnesses such as malaria are prevalent here. I do not want to get sick before or during my travels to America!
- Pray that I will receive a good amount of budget money for the newly formed middle school drama department here at Rain Forest International School.
- Pray that God will send us an art teacher! And, that He will continue to supply us with amazing teachers who are willing to share their time and talents outside of the classroom as well.
- Please continue to pray for Esther and her family as they learn proper ways to help her.

I **love** hearing from you! I want to know what is going on in your life as well. Please feel free to contact me by email at Holly_Emmerich@WycliffeAssociates.org. Or, if you would like to send me postal mail please let me know and I can send you the address (I **love** getting cards and letters from you!)

Those of you who live "close enough" might consider attending a benefit concert my parents are organizing for me at the Rocky Hock Playhouse in Edenton, NC this summer. ***I'll be joining the Rocky Hock cast*** in a massive concert. THE PRICE IS RIGHT TOO!! Here is the information:

Benefit Concert for Holly Emmerich in Support of Her Missions Work in Cameroon, Africa

Tickets - \$10.00
(plus tax and gratuity)

Ticket Price **includes** our delicious buffet:
NC Pit-Cooked BBQ, Fried & Baked Chicken, Fried Fish, 3 Vegetables, Bread, & Beverages

Concert begins immediately following the buffet. Meal start times are indicated below.

Tuesday, June 23 at 11:30am

Tuesday, June 30 at 11:30am

Bring friends...OR YOUR ENTIRE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS. Call [\(252\) 482-4621](tel:2524824621) for info/reservations.

http://rockyhockplayhouse.com/2015_show_schedule.htm

To donate to my ministry please click on the link and follow the simple instructions. <https://give.wycliffeassociates.org/p-1018-holly-emmerich.aspx>

Blessings,

Holly Emmerich

Learning Support Specialist, Teacher, Director of Discipline
Rain Forest International School

John 9: 1- 3 *As Jesus was walking along he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?" "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him..."*

Wycliffe Associates
EVERY VERSE. EVERY TONGUE. EVERY HEART.



2 photos of Esther



Above are some pictures of the middle school musical, the one on the left is from a rehearsal, and the one on the right is from the performance.