



November 2019 NEWSLETTER

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CROSSING THE LAKE TO LEARN FROM ANOTHER

We're grateful to share a story with you from some friends of Kenya Matters after their recent visit to the children and staff at CRCA. Sarah and Kevin Wilson spent last spring in Kenya with their sons, Joel and Kyle. The following is a story from Sarah that she wanted to share with the whole Kenya Matters family.

After a weekend visit to the children's home CRCA, our 7 year old, Joel, wrote the following excerpt from his journal entry. For context, the children live at CRCA, but still have some contact with a guardian who is a member of their extended family.

"In the evening, the first day, we went to the home of two of the children's guardian's...next, we visited the second home. When we got there, we saw the neighbor kids playing with a tire and a stick. He hit the tire with the stick and made it spin. When we got in it [the home],,, looked like it was run down but to them it was a normal house. It had no lighting and no running water. It had one room. It had a couch two chairs and a bed. It had a packed down dirt floor and huge water jugs that made a little table. Next we met the baby and her mom. Then my mom prayed for them. Then we went out and saw the mom cooking on a pan with ashes in it. Then we left."

That afternoon, Joel experienced with all his senses someone else's daily reality. As we sat squished together in the dark room, it encouraged us all to humanize people and situations that we may have previously made assumptions about or didn't think about at all.



I was reminded of the time in Luke 8:26-38 when Jesus took his disciples across the lake from Galilee to the gentile region of the Gerasenes in order to heal a demon-possessed man. Yes, he restored the man, but he brought the disciples with him to transform their hearts as well. In order to show them that His love, compassion,

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MAC & MEATBALLS

Our annual Mac & Meatball fundraiser is coming up and you're invited.



WHEN | Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020 at 5:00 PM

WHERE | Spring Valley Church, Allendale, MI

This fun, informal, cook-off event is meant for everyone and makes a world of difference for our neighbors in Karai, Kenya. Come, enjoy some food, and vote on the best entries. If you're an aspiring chef, join in the fun by cooking a crock pot of either mac & cheese or meatballs. Prizes are awarded to the entries voted the best by the discerning taste buds of all attendees.

Beside delicious food, we'll also have a silent auction! You can walk away with a fishing trip or a vehicle of flowers in the springtime, and with the knowledge that you just donated to a purpose that matters. Come enjoy time together with fellow Michiganders and hear about exciting things happening for our Kenyan family!

Want to join in the meaningful fun? We're on the lookout for table hosts, chefs, and in-kind donors for the silent auction.

If you're interested, email kathybuist@gmail.com

All funds raised help provide for daily expenses of food, clothes, medical needs, school uniforms, and utilities for the children in Karai.

GARAGE SALE FOR KENYAN NEIGHBORS

This summer, three young entrepreneurs in Zeeland wanted to have a garage sale fundraiser. In August they made it happen and not only did they have all the fun they imagined, they also raised money for Kenya Matters!

Jordyn, Camdyn, and Brealyn (pictured left to right) raised \$200 for Kenya Matters so that the children in Kenya would have a place to belong and be cared for. The siblings also attended our Mac & Meatballs event last March, so this wasn't their first time giving generously. Thank you for setting an example for all of us!



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and power reach beyond their own Jewish culture and way of life, He brought them out of their context and the familiar. They went to a place and people they had no occasion to interact with and to a man who struggled with issues they personally never faced. Jesus entered the hard places, and He brought his disciples with him to prepare them for a life of ministry. Just as He gave his disciples on their excursion across the lake, we were given a real face and a true-life story from someone whose reality is very different from our own.

We spent the whole afternoon at CRCA playing games with the kids. Armed with a few field games and indoor activities, we laughed and played together. Each game we led needed in-the-moment modifications, but even this was a great lesson for our family in flexibility. The aim was connection with others, not letting a plan or set of rules be the driving force. That evening we heard some of their stories that rang clear with the common theme of, "Life was very, very hard, but Mama Dorcas (the founder of the home) found me, saw my need, and rescued me by giving me a place here, where we are family." With these core elements of the gospel being applied and lived out in these children's lives, it is not surprising that their love for God is tangible and a sense of belonging is strong.

As a family we planned the evening devotional, each leading a part, on the impact of our words from the book of James. We tried to bridge our two worlds and mother tongues by using volunteers to take part in our object lessons involving toothpaste and another using salty water. Laughter goes a long way in building bridges.



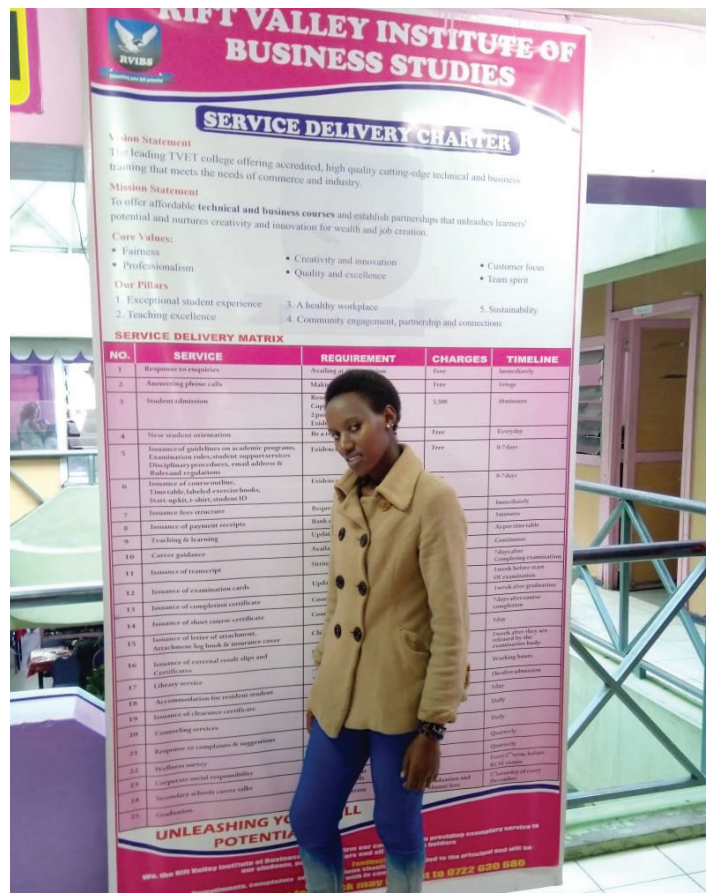
It is possible and good to "cross the lake" by going to the other side of town and sometimes even by walking across the street. However, this quarter, we have asked our children to cross the lake, literally an ocean, in coming to Kenya. Exposing them to new sights, sounds, smells, and ways of living life, has both challenged assumptions they held and has begun to fill in the blank slate they held in their minds about Kenya. Even within this foreign context, we have sought ways to board a boat and cross into parts of Kenyan life that are very different from our own and to put a real face to a complex problem.

When we cross the lake, our hearts and our minds are changed. It not only changes the lens through which we view people, it changes the way we pray. I've noticed over our months here, our boys have increasingly thanked God for having parents and a home and have asked God to comfort those who do not. Recently, one of the boys prayed, "Dear God, please help everyone in the world to have at least one meal today." As the realities they experience broaden, their hearts do as well.

A few times during our days at the CRCA, I caught out of the corner of my eye, two boys arm in arm with beaming smiles on their faces. One of them was my son, the other a new friend from the home. The CRCA children face great obstacles, but for a moment we could stand shoulder to shoulder, knowing there is a God who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. (Ephesians 3:20) Although it was short, we thank God for this lake crossing. Like it was for the disciples, I pray it is part of our preparation as well for a lifetime of ministry and compassion.

UPDATE FROM THE CRCA DIRECTOR

Mary Wambui (also known as Mary C) hails from a small village called Maraigushu, about 25 kilometers from the CRCA safe house. Her mother, who was single, died of HIV. At that time, there was much fear and misunderstanding around the disease and as a result those diagnosed with HIV were stigmatized and were considered a disgrace to the family. As a result, nobody wanted to be associated with Mary after her mother's diagnosis and passing.



Because of this, Mary moved from one relative or neighbor to another, but nobody would accommodate her. She was desperate, without food or shelter, when an elderly distant relative came to her aid. This relative struggled to get even food for herself, but still took the time to ensure Mary was taken care of by bringing her to the CRCA safe house

During her time at CRCA Mary has been a pleasant young girl and has grown into a beautiful young lady. She is currently pursuing a degree in Catering at a college after successfully completing her O level education (the equivalent of high school in Kenya). Kenya Matters has held with open arms the "outcasts" in our villages and restored respect and honor in their lives. Mary is another life we celebrate. Thank you Kenya Matters.