

The Vennell-a Scoop

Since last time...



Much has happened since the last time we wrote. Not the least of which is that our children have completed another year of school and are growing older, (wiser ?), and taller.

In high school, Lauren experienced her first AP (Advanced Placement) classes and has added many more to her upcoming senior schedule next year. She also just turned 18. She was 2 yrs old when we arrived in the Congo for the first time. WOW! Lydia has also finished her sophomore year with a bang but has struggled in many ways with her health. I will write more about that below.

Carson has finished 4th grade and one of his greatest accomplishments of the year was being the 3rd fastest mile runner in his school with a 6:48 mile. He was the fastest boy in 4th grade. Courtney completed 7th grade and was "shocked" to find that some of her teachers gave her a semester exam that covered the whole semester. Courtney enjoyed being in Builder's Club which is an organization that does community service projects. Natalie has completed her last year of middle school and has joined the National Junior Honor Society. She actually had to write an article for an English class and enter a writing contest. Her article was actually chosen by a prominent teen website and made the "Article of the Day" in the Travel and Culture category.

I have a new position as the Operations Support Manager for our field programs. It is rewarding to help harmonize our aviation processes around the globe. Our goal is to strengthen the support to field programs as we strive to better equip our mission staff to meet the needs of the missionaries, churches, and humanitarian organizations that we serve in a world that continues to change rapidly.

Thank you so much!

Jim and Jonya

What could you possibly say to middle schoolers about MAF?

I just got back from 2 days of speaking at a middle school camp about the work of MAF around the globe. Since our goal is to help accelerate the Gospel message into isolated areas I told them about the Connect Box. This "box" (miniature router/communications device) is used by believers in places where information and communication about the Gospel can land you in jail or even in death. It is an "off-line" solution that allows someone to transmit information to another person's smart phone. The one with the information just happens to ride the same bus as the one needing the information and it is passed digitally without being detected by those who are trying to catch Jesus followers. It was great for the middle schoolers to see creative ways they could serve in missions by using information technology as a means to get the Gospel message into the remote parts of the world.



Below is an article which I encourage you to read, knowing that so many of you have had a hand in shaping what Natalie thinks and feels because of your support for our family over the years. Our willingness to answer the Lord's call to serve with MAF and your willingness to send us has grown each of us to better understand how the Body of Christ actually works and how cultures around the world are shaped. We are so thankful for the senders who have prayed for us, loved on us, and financially supported us in the work of getting the Gospel out into the isolated peoples of this world.



The Richness of Poverty

By: Natalie Vennell (14 yrs old)

Living in many different countries is not an opportunity most people get to experience, but for me it is just a part of my life. I have lived in four countries in the course of just fourteen years and for me it is always exciting to live in a new place.

Some of my most amazing experiences happened overseas in Africa. Living in and experiencing many different cultures gives you such a unique view on the world. When you visit areas of countries that are poor and are filled with poverty, they truly show you how blessed you are to have a home to go to every night or food on the table every day. In many poor areas around the world you can't always have your basic needs met.

I have been to several orphanages and have seen the affect poverty has on people. The orphans I met were some of the most joyous people. One of my most recent memories is when I went to an orphanage in Kenya and I learned how hopeful and happy all the orphans were even though they were stuck in poverty. When I was there all of the children were so excited to have someone to hang out with and someone to bring them what we consider normal things in life such as toys or even candy.

The children were happy just to play a game of soccer or play with my hair. The orphans who lived there ranged from the ages of two to seventeen. They also showed us some of their traditions and games. In return we taught them some of my family's games and traditions.

My family has learned that the best way to form relationships with people is to learn about their life and help them in any way possible even if that just means playing with them. My entire family spent the day with them and we had the privilege of them sharing their lunch with us....

Please read the rest of the article at <https://tinyurl.com/y7jkuve6> or directly at:

http://www.teenink.com/nonfiction/travel_culture/article/953576/The-Richness-of-Poverty/

Prayer Requests:

- Lydia (16) has been diagnosed with juvenile arthritis and has missed many classes due to pain and discomfort. Please pray that we will find a treatment that will help her and that the Lord will give her the strength to work through this difficult time in her life.
- I also ask for prayer as I travel to some of our field programs as we implement new technologies that will make us more effective.
- We are moving into a real fixer-upper. Our hope is that it will eventually allow us to be able to serve/keep/feed more people. We are very excited about it.

Support to:

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