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Praise/Prayer Requests

For Ruth Pierson. 1
She has completed her chemo and plans to travel to Sierra Leone in the late fall.

Praise the Lord! We 2
traveled to the US and Tom has returned to Sierra Leone safely. Karen and Mat will return soon

Guidance as we ad- 3
vise and assist the youth leaders and the agriculture project.

The Sierra Leone 4
Wesleyan Church and its new General Superintendent, Pastor Usman Fornah

For Mimi and Chris 5
and Marc who we left behind.

Matt as he leaves his 6
friends in the US.

- To become a financial or prayer partner in our ministry [Click Here.](#)
- Asher family fund WM04-0332 or Start Up fund WM06-1272.(solar)
- We thank all the people willing to continue to pray for us
- We currently have 98% of our support budget pledged.

Ashers In Africa

Volume I Issue II

August 2009

We have been to the U.S. and Dr. Tom is now back in Sierra Leone, and Dr. Karen and Matt will soon follow.

I last wrote you in April and so much has occurred since then. We were able to host 4 CHO (community health officer) students at the hospital. They did their last 3 months of training with us. It was a good experience and the last I heard 3 of the students will be staying on with us at the hospital. CHO students are similar to a physician assistant in the U.S. They are also allowed to be trained by the hospital personnel in surgery. This will help provide much needed call coverage for Dr. Tom and JBKT who currently do the surgery. They will also be able to assist with rounds and clinic. Our nurses being only three in number will surely appreciate the help. They have noted that the hospital is unusually busy this summer. Dr. Tom says that the number of admitted patients seems to continually increase. Although they do have a steady number of new babies, this is not the really busy season for deliveries so he is able to sleep most nights. Although his surgical skills are rapidly improving, he enjoys a full night of rest, especially since the temperatures are only in the 70's at night.

Before we left for the U.S. we had an epidemic of necrotizing staphylococcus skin infections in very young children. We had 9 cases and were very happy to have 7 of them live and be discharged to home happy and healed. This is really a

miracle since as many as 50% of children with this diagnosis die in the U.S. in spite of excellent care. I don't believe it was chance that made the container arrive shortly before these patients presented. In it we found omnicef an antibiotic that was very effective, and dressing change supplies that we usually don't have access to. We also just "happened" to have a wonderful nurse, Hope Graham from Canada, who had extensive experience with dressing changes and her student Robyn who spent countless hours doing dressing changes and teaching the staff dressing changes. The OR staff (or theater personnel as we call them in SL) and the physicians did extensive debridement surgeries, closures and even skin grafts to promote healing. The parents of the children, the hospital staff and you our supporters prayed for these children. And Dorene and her staff from Through These Hands packed and sorted all these medical supplies that aided in the healing. And even though it took a few months we had 7 of the nine children, all girls, all under the age of 3, be discharged fully healed! We are so thankful for this.

I don't believe in coincidence, and I know it was divine intervention when the district superintendent called and ask if I would be willing to feed three engineers from Engineers without Borders, who were coming to Kamakwie to evaluate the Vo



Tech school for possible solar power. We had sent over in the container the first phase of a 5 phase plan to solarize the hospital. The diesel fuel to run the generator for 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the evening is one of the biggest line items in the hospital budget. We hope to replace the energy with solar to free up some money to pay our replacement national physician. We had not really unpacked the solar equipment from the container as the medical equipment took precedence but we knew some was thieved in Freetown after the container arrived. The German engineers asked to see our equipment and then offered to install it and teach a local man about the installation! Although Tom and I had studied as much as we could about solar, I don't think we would have had the know how to substitute the missing pieces. On the next page we have a picture of our solar "command center"! You will notice that the fuses which were stolen have been replaced by car fuses in a plastic basket! So now we have cold water and ICE! And we are assisting a neighbor who is raising three children while her husband is

away working on his Master's in education. She is a preschool teacher and now she brings a basket of small plastic bags which she has filled with kool-aid or milk and puts them in the freezer for the night and then sells them the next day at the school. So these engineers who just "happened" to come to Kamakwie, taught a man about solar, helped an American family tolerate the extreme heat of spring in Kamakwie, taught us what we need for the next 4 phases of solar, and helped a family make ends meet!

Microeconomics is a term that is used in missions frequently. I don't think I really understood it until recently. A lady who delivered her baby at the hospital found out that she was HIV positive when her baby developed pneumonia after her husband died. We became friends and when I asked her how she was going to support herself, the baby, and her daughter named Asher, she told me her only option was prostitution. When I explained that she would pass the disease that way, she began to cry. After some time she told me she had once taken training in fabric dyeing and when I asked her why she didn't do that she said she didn't have the money to buy the equipment needed for starting the business. We had been given some money from a lovely couple in Toledo to "help however was needed." We purchased the equipment and a bolt of fabric. I wasn't sure if I would ever see her again, but 3 months later she came with all the dyed fabric. It was beautiful. Our agreement was that she would give me back some of the fabric so I could have it made into table cloths and napkins and sell them here in the U.S. and the rest she would sell to support her family and buy more supplies. (we did sell all the tablecloths, replaced the money so we can help someone else and have more to take back to her!) She told me that before she brought the fabric to me she took it to the town priest to see and he commissioned her to make all new altar cloths for the church. She said the profits from that will support her family for 3-4 months! This is microeconomics! Small loans that enable someone to become independent.

Being in Africa has really made Matthew 25: 14-30 come alive for me. Pastor Rick Deisler says that "there are no, no talent people and what you do with what you got matters to the Master." He has shown us that we thought we had one gift or talent, practicing medicine, but he has shown us so many more things that he has equipped us for. We went to be doctors and now we are chemistry and biology teachers, computer teachers, solar technicians, microfinance assistants, innkeepers for work teams, youth advisors, surgeons, and so much more. It is a blessing to live to be a blessing!



Solar Command Central!



Just waiting for harvest time!



The agriculture project headquarters



Yes we use those warm blankets that you send!

So how is Matthew doing?

Matthew and I will be going back to Sierra Leone next week. We stayed to help get Marc moved back into college, to lease and possibly sell the farm and to attend a wedding.

While we were home Matt talked to people about the agriculture program that I told you about last month. The first crop has come in and they purchased new seeds for more crops and started paying for scholar-

ships. They had so many children apply for scholarships that we asked for US sponsors until the program is fully functional. The managing board of youth has a 5 year business plan to make the program fully self supporting by the 5th year. I am so pleased to tell you that all the children have been pledged for support. If you took one of the support sheets, please send your checks in to Global Partners as tuition will be due soon!



Matt and the Agriculture Project board and next years ground nuts!

Every day we pray for you, our prayer and financial supporters. We are very aware that none of this would be possible without you and we are so very thankful. God bless you! Tom, Karen, and Matt Asher