

March 5, 2007



Hamjambo, from the hot and sticky land of Lake Victoria!

School is in full swing, we have reached our mid-term break, and I have come to realize that I am now "Teacher Megan." I am teaching, math, English, and Literature in fourth grade. My class is full of character and I come home each day with another story to either laugh or cry about. In true Kenyan style my role has taken many different twists and turns. In addition to my fourth grade

class, I work daily with a first grade girl named Mourine, she is new to our school this year thus she is behind the other students and struggles academically. It has been a pure joy to watch her creep out of her shell. When we began our work together, it was like pulling teeth to get her to smile or answer a question. Now we begin each session with a conversation about the day, and end each day with a high-five. Her teachers have approached me about her improvement in class! What a blessing that not only am I seeing the fruit of the work but others are as well! With the progress the teachers have seen in Mourine I now work with a group of five first graders daily, focusing specifically on reading and writing. Also after school each day I work with a handful of kids in my class who struggle. Duncan, Roggers and Syprose are the three I work with daily and they have been a true joy for me. The three of them have always been last in the class and my prayer for them is that they understand God's truth and not their own and that they believe in themselves. I have been able to see sparks of hope flash in them recently and it has been the most exciting thing.

A short story to bring a smile to your face.

Roggers is a unique boy with quite the story. He has lost both of his parents in tragic ways and is currently living with one of his brothers who are less than supportive and encouraging. Roggers has always struggled in school and has developed the attitude of "why try if I am always last in the class". We have been working together daily on math since the first week of school, which has been a bit of a challenge. We now work on all subjects together, not just math. On Wednesdays we do not work together because we have chapel and I take the girls from the upper grades running. So this past Wednesday I sat down with Roggers and made a list of all the work he needed to do that night and told him that if everything gets done I will reward him. I want him to learn to do work at home, and to have some self confidence. The next morning I was in my classroom getting things ready for the day before the students arrived and there was a meek knock at the door and Roggers peaked his head in, "Teacha Megan, can I show you something" He came in and took out all of his homework, "Look Teacha it is all done, all of it! And I am number one to turn it in today!" I think this is the closest feeling I have ever had to being a proud parent! I was oozing with joy and pride! Inside I was screaming, "That's my boy!" I praised him for his hard work and for the first time Roggers felt good about the work that he did, what a new and wonderfully refreshing feeling for him! He didn't say anything to me about the reward I had promised him if he had gotten all of his work done until later in the day he asked, "Teacha Megan I stay with you after school right?" After we worked together and everyone else had gone home he shyly asked, "Teacha Megan, did you remember what you said you would bring for me?" Of course I did, I pulled out an apple and handed it to him. He was so excited he didn't

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know what to do with it, he just held it up in the air and stared at it. He had never eaten an apple before because you can't find them here in Mbita, they are only in the big cities. The next day I asked him if he ever ate the apple, and he responded, "eh, yes Teacha Megan it was good and so sweet, I ate it until I was so full!"

How many students would do all their homework for an apple?

It is children like Roggers that get me to jump out of bed each morning to see what God has in store for the day. Along with the teaching and tutoring every Tuesday and Thursday morning I go on home visits with Lillian, our head orphan and widow overseer. Going into the homes is a wonderful eye opening experiences as to what my students home lives are like. It is easy to forget where they come from and how they live when they are at school, all dressed in the same uniform, so clean and neat. I am amazed at how they can look so pulled together when I see their homes, I am certain I would be a complete mess! I have also become the "trainer" for some of our top girl athletes. We have some outstanding athletes they just lack a bit of work ethic. So I am running and training with them a few days a week to build their physical and mental strength. It has been a treat to get to know the older girls and form relationships with them, and the work outs are wonderful. I don't remember the last time I have sprinted so much!



Each day is another adventure here be it students bringing baby birds, frogs, or some other small creature for me to keep in my desk, trekking across Kenya to visit a students home, offers for marriage, and the funny liquid substance on your hands after a child runs up to greet the mazoongoo on the street. Every bit of it fills me with more joy and peace than I have ever imagined. Thank you all so much for your prayers and support, without each of you and your prayers these adventures would not be possible.

Through all the laughter and joy there is still so much darkness here, many of these children will lose a parent, face the battle of cultural tradition versus faith, and battle deathly illnesses. Please pray that God's light will reign over this place. My prayer is that truth is both spoken and active in this community. Please also pray for my little first grader Mourine, she just recently tested positive.

It is always such a treat to hear from you all and great to hear about life on your side of the pond, so don't be a stranger!

Ahera! Megan