

DARE TO DREAM



Two months of YWAM LA in Kenya

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YWAM LA:

As many of you know, in 2009 I moved to Los Angeles to do a DTS, Discipleship Training School. I then did another training program and eventually became staff. After I left YWAM LA to move to Kenya, we continued to have a great relationship. This resulted in a partnership between Dare To Dream and YWAM LA. The base (as we call it) has been a huge help to me personally and for the project, and I still consider myself a part of the base even though I live on the other side of the world.

YWAM LA is now sending a group of students every year to my location to assist me and other organizations with projects that I know. I host them and co-lead the team for two months and introduce them to the mission field and help with community development.

www.ywamla.org



7 people in a Tuctuc (3 of them from the team), on a bumpy road to give shoes to children

Nairobi:

Our first stop was Nairobi. I was introduced to Pastor Luke last year through YWAM LA. We met a few times and decided that the team should help him and his ministry in Soweto Kayole. His ministry is called Sheepcare and it consists of a church, school and community development project.

The first time we met was in Mbita. Pastor Luke wanted to see the aquaponics system that we built for Mary Mora. He was so impressed that we decided to build one with him in Nairobi.

Sheepcare is located in the middle of the Nairobi slums. When I was in LA last year I told the base director that we would need someone to assist us in building this system, because my knowledge only goes so far on building this system. So Noah came out with the team to help us build it.

We then spend one week to build the aquaponics system and it is now fully operating. Pst Luke told me that they are now harvesting vegetables. This system is setting a huge example for the community, and people are realizing that anything is possible. Many people have already come to visit and see the system, all of them are in awe, saying; 'You mean, there are fish in that tank?' 'Fish, in the slums?'

Let's wait and see how this will transform that community.



This is my friend Amos from Sheepcare, showing some of the vegetables that are being harvested from the system.

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Nyakatach:

Pst Luke's home is not in Nairobi, but in an area called Nyakatach, as we would call it, "the middle of nowhere". Pst Luke had told me about his home and that they recently started a church there and that it also will operate as a school and community development center.

We decided to take the team out there and have them assist the church in whatever way possible. Then, with help from some of you, we assisted the church in building a fence that goes around the church compound. You might ask, why a fence and not something that will actually help them? Well, at first we were thinking about setting up a water catchment system with a big water tank. But then after talking with the pastors about the community and looking at where priorities are, we found out that if we would build a water catchment and water tank, the chances of it being stolen are pretty high, so we decided the best thing to do was to build a fence. Now with a fence they can also start farming there without the animals coming in and eating the harvest.



Church in the background with the new fence.

Mbita:

Finally! I can now show the team my town. After spending a week in Nairobi and one week in Nyakatach, we headed to Mbita where we would stay for 1 month.

In Mbita we did many different things, but one of our main goals was to work with Hellen, you might remember her. She is one of our 'Dreamers'. The last YWAM team

was also working together with Hellen, and were a part of funding the loan.

In December I received an email, that hippo's entered Hellen's farm and destroyed all vegetables that were ready to be harvested the next day. You see, Hellen is a hard working woman who is dedicated and does anything for her children. So when I heard of this I wanted to encourage her.

Because we visit our 'Dreamers' on a regular basis, we knew that Hellen wanted a water tank and irrigation system. So after talking with the YWAM team, we decided to get Hellen one. Funded by YWAM LA and some people from Holland we were able to put a nice product on the ground.



Attaching the new pipes for irrigation together with some local plumbers.

Kisumu:

Our last ministry location...

1.5 months later, so many things have happened: new experiences, meeting new people, having our hearts broken, working hard and now we are getting tired. Now we have two weeks left and let's just say, I picked the hardest for last.

About 1.5 years ago I met a couple from America; Chris and Sarah Nickolson. They are running a school in the Nyalenda slum of Kisumu. They are amazing people with

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an amazing ministry. Our purpose of coming to Kisumu was twofold; to help them in whatever they needed and to paint a room in a hospital.

The first consisted mainly of helping out with some things for the school, such as handing out shoes, tutoring, playing with the kids and killing chickens for the kitchen. You know, the normal stuff. Then our second purpose was painting. When I met with Chris for the first time we talked about this hospital that he goes to and hangs out with the children. The stories that he told about this place brought back memories from Haiti and our visit to a local hospital there, and spending some time in the children's room. I was reminded of how I was able to sit next to this 1.5-year-old girl for the last 30 minutes of her life. And still love on her and her mom. I was reminded of how hard it was, but again also the importance of loving people, especially people in these situations.

I immediately knew that I was supposed to bring this team to the hospital where Chris goes. He mentioned that he has wanted to paint this room at the pediatric oncology ward. For those who aren't familiar with hospital terms, it is the section where children are who have cancer, in this case; briqueys lymphoma. The children have a tumor in their throat or stomach.

The "play room" walls were painted maybe 10 years ago, and the paint was falling off the wall. The cartoons were scary looking and even if you knew what they were supposed to be, you still weren't sure. We had some people on the team who knew how to draw and mix colors and all. For me, I can hold a paintbrush and dip it in paint, that's it. We went to work and the finished result was amazing! I believe that the entire hospital staff came by to see the new artwork on the wall. It was incredible to see the transformation that it brought to the ward.



Before painting



After we started painting

One afternoon Chris took my co-leader; Leesette and me to Obama. No, not the president of the United States. Obama was the children's clinic at the hospital, and it was named after the Obamas because they helped fund it. Here is where the ICU and the malnutrition rooms were located. It was crazy hard to see the children there and I had trouble trying not to break down. One of the children we were standing next to was not doing well at all. The doctor was explaining to the mom that the sounds her child was making, were the sounds of her child dying.... I mean, what do you do in a moment like that? What do you say? Now just writing about it brings tears in my eyes and makes my stomach turn.

The team loved the ministry in Kisumu, but it was hard! We had many good conversations because of the things that we saw. Not just in Kisumu, but all throughout the 2 months.

We came to the realization that in the moments where it is hard and you have many questions, we should never stop loving people and especially these children. You see, I could easily say, I don't understand. And therefore stop doing what I do, because it doesn't make sense. But when we decide that we can push our questions and uncertainties aside, we are able to love one another. My questions don't change situations, maybe after 10 years, but not in the moment. The way we love does change the situation.

All this to say, we are not the same after these two months. And I want to thank the people who are making a change through us by your financial investment or prayers. There have been so many things that have happened that I haven't told you about yet. I want you to know that your obedience and commitment is making a change in this world!

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This is Mariline, she is one of the children at the cancer ward.

Dare to Dream:

During these two months with YWAM LA a lot of the DTD things have been put on a low fire. We didn't have a business training, so we didn't have to do follow up visits with new people. On the days that the YWAM team was free was when I focused on DTD things. During these two months we have been able to give out three new loans! One for Martin, the beekeeper. One for Mariana, who sells vegetables and fruits. And the other for Don Albert, the motorcycle taxi. We have continued to follow up with them.

Because I was more busy with the team, it was a good opportunity for me to have my Kenyan colleague do some things in my absence. At the moment we have 6 loans up and running and making a difference in the communities of those who have received them. We also have our 4th Business Training coming up, where we will be training two different groups. One is a group of widows. SEEK has

started working with a group of widows from our community and has been teaching them skills. With these skills this group will now open up a shop in town where they will sell items they have made. They have also been taught how to read and write (which most of them couldn't before). And now it is time to teach them how to run a business.

The other group is our normal group of various business owners from the community who are longing for training. After these two groups we will have trained about 85 businesses. This training has already been funded by the sales of the picture books that I was selling when I was home. Thank you to all who bought a picture book!

While writing this (June 15, 2014) I'm on my way to Uganda to meet up with a friend of mine from LA. He is going to be teaching on Social Media for businesses and he had asked me to speak on Micro Finance. I will spend a few days in Uganda and then back to Mbita to organize the final few things for the business training.

Finally, many of you know that this year will be my last year being in Mbita fulltime. The project will still continue, but it will be handed over to the organization SEEK who has adopted the program as their own.

Together with SEEK, we will look for someone who will take over my job. This is not just a job for anyone and therefore we are being careful in selecting the right person. Also, I'm now looking for an organization who is interested in adopting the Dare To Dream project, just like SEEK has done. If you know of an organization who is interested in this you can email me at: projectdaretodream@me.com

Bob de Groot /// Dare To Dream

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