

Beyond the Fence Newsletter - January 2019

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FAMILY NEWS

There are times when I feel so far away from my family. I miss being involved in weekly meals together or hikes with the dogs or other shared activities. So, I felt so blessed to spend Christmas in Pennsylvania with family. My parents came from New Jersey, Emily and Gable flew in from Calgary, and Josh hosted us. The only one missing was our daughter Kaylin. We had a wonderful week together celebrating the holiday season.



Because Kaylin couldn't join us, Robin flew to Nova Scotia for a week in January to spend precious time with her. These are the memories we hold dear and will remember when we feel so far away.



Peterson is finishing his grade 12 year with his online school program. There are some challenges to living in Haiti as he pursues his plans for next year. One of those

challenges is taking standardized tests. He has been preparing for the ACT and it is usually offered in Port au Prince... but not this year. So, in February he flies to Florida where former GP Haiti missionaries, Ray and Mary Selden will host him and make sure he makes it to the test on time. We are so grateful for their friendship and would appreciate prayers for Peterson as he navigates the final months of high school.

Gaëlle continues to embrace all that life has for her. Truly making lemonade out of lemons. She is looking forward to the spring when the activity picks up a bit. She is also working hard in school and volunteering with children's programs whenever she has the chance.

JANUARY TEAMS



Our first team of 2019 arrived on La Gonave on January 2. Dick Doan was the director of WISH for 13 years and he and Cindy led a team from their home church in Kirkville, NY along with a contingent from Ohio. What a blessing they were as they jumped right in. Our kitchen cabinets arrived the end of December, so this team put them together, ripped out the old ones, and installed the new cabinets complete with a concrete counter top. Another part of their team finished the solar house that will be crucial for proper maintenance of the batteries for the solar system. And finally, there were some nurses who volunteered with the Wesleyan medical ministries and pitched in anywhere we asked. We are thankful for the continued investment of Dick and Cindy Doan in the ministries of WISH.



January also brings the return of Dr. Greg Doroski and his group from Mattituck Presbyterian. This group is also no stranger to La Gonave. They have deep relationships on the island and work hard to bless the community in partnership with many different groups. We are thankful to be one of their partners as they work in the WISH dental clinic. Their group was split in two as one half worked in the dental clinic and the other half worked in the Wesleyan Hospital providing an eye clinic.

As usual, the WISH front porch was a great place for both teams to not only eat, but to also fellowship and discuss the best ways to engage with the community. Our family has

learned much about living in Haiti and still has much to learn. It was encouraging for us to share with some experienced visitors and also some new guests some of our hard lessons and hear their insights. It was also fun to see our visitors fall in love with the country of Haiti and many of the Haitian people they were able to interact with.



LIBRARY

I have written much about the WISH Library or as it has come to be known, the WISH Resource Center, as we hope it is very much a resource center for the community. There are various groups who use the main downstairs room for a large meeting space and women who gather weekly to use the sewing machines given to WISH. We also have youth who are anxious to increase their computer knowledge by working on laptops so generously donated. There are students who come to enjoy the quiet space and use the books for their studies. We are also pleased with the increasing children's programs that are starting to become known and loved.

As always, one of the challenges, is using this resource to support the community and not to take away from services already offered in the community. My goal this spring is to

catalog all of the inventory in an electronic form. That way, we can strategically add to the resources in a way that truly serves the community of users. We also plan to add to existing children's programs as each week we turn away older children from our story time. This is an exciting ministry of WISH and we are so thankful for your continued prayer and financial support.



WATER SOLUTIONS

For any of you who have visited Anse-a-Galets or have been following WISH for any time, you know that the water situation is always challenging. As the WISH staff work hard to maintain the waterline and access to the public fountains, we are constantly struggling with the vulnerable portions of the system. There is misuse of the system as large trucks go to the water source and create issues for the everyday person trying to access water for their daily needs. There is vandalism and also breakage due to natural causes. Please pray with us as we move forward in partnership with the town and other organizations as water is life.



HOUSING UPGRADES

Last February the roof was completely replaced on the house our family lives in. This January the kitchen was replaced. There are still some minor jobs to do to completely finish the renovation, but the change has been wonderful. The house is cooler, brighter, cleaner, and a much more welcoming space for our family to retreat. We are thankful to all who gave financially and all who gave their time to upgrade our house.

Now it is time to start on the small house at WISH. The climate of Haiti really ages buildings here so regular maintenance is important and sometimes that means major upgrades. We are adding onto the small house to make it more functional and then the roof will be replaced and insulated. New kitchen cabinets have been purchased and will need to be installed. The interior of the house is in rough shape and needs many upgrades. There is a lot of work to be done but again, we are thankful for the support of so many to see these buildings maintained.



We are in our 4th year of service with WISH and Global Partners in Haiti. As we look ahead to the end of our term, we are praying for our future plans. We know what it takes to thrive and not just survive in our cross-cultural life. And quite honestly much of our first term has just been survival as a family and individually. We are seeking God's will to know what we need to change, because there have been some unhealthy practices.

For example, it is easy to work here all the time. January through April are non-stop for us. While that can be exhilarating, it can also severely hinder our family life as we don't take the time for meaningful connection. There are expectations we place on ourselves and we allow others to place on us. That often leaves our family expectations at the bottom of the pile.

So, we're seeking God's will to know how He wants us to move forward. We want to experience his joy. And that will probably mean some changes. But we are trusting and believing, no matter what.

PRAISE

- Thankful for a wonderful time with family in the US and Canada.
- Thankful for the faithfulness of the WISH staff as they continue to work to improve their community.
- Thankful for the excitement of the kids as they engage with books at the library.
- Thankful for the encouragement of the WISH January teams.
- Thankful for the presence of Dave Devries and Kurt Iversen who are here for 3 months blessing us with their talents and knowledge.

PRAYER

- Pray for the country of Haiti as there are troubling gas shortages that affect everybody. Pray for a peaceful solution.
- Pray for Robin as he leads WISH that he will be guided by grace and wisdom as he prioritizes projects.
- Pray for Peterson as he continues to work on his plans for post high school. Pray for him on February 9 as he takes the ACT.

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Filling out the faith promise form or signing up to be a prayer partner helps us to know who is on our team and how to connect. Thank you.

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