

JULY 2012

Dear friends and family,

I'm back in Burkina after a whirlwind three months in the States. It was a great visit as I got to spend time with every one of my family members, it was productive, it was fun; but it disappeared far too quickly! Well, there's always next year. In fact, by the time I get this newsletter out, it will almost be time to come home again!

**Benefit Burkina**, our silent auction event in April was an incredible success. I think we're still catching up on thanking everyone because we were blessed by so many. Special thanks to: Mary Anderson (my sister) who



took on the task of organizing volunteers to accomplish many tasks, everyone who volunteered even a moment of their time, Paul and Wendy Hamilton (owners of Vin de Set) who provided absolutely everything for the evening except the auction items which were generously provided by many of you and even by people who had never heard of this ministry, and of course thank you to all who participated in the evening! When all was said and done, Benefit Burkina raised \$30,000 for the work in Burkina Faso! That far surpassed my expectations. We are truly blessed.



**Digging For Clean Water:** How will we spend \$30,000? First on the agenda is to dig 2 new wells (\$10,000 each) and install water pumps in Wedkingo (just next to our school property) and on our Yako property where we will hold our food distributions and anticipate building a training center. I had hoped to start digging during the summer months; but we have been blessed with a wonderful rainy season which means the trucks can't get through, so we're waiting for fall 2012. Keep in mind, digging doesn't guarantee



water, so we'll be asking for your prayers and trusting the Lord to see it through.



**Schools and Teachers:** We'll also be building an additional classroom in Wedkingo this year, but plans for that project aren't yet finalized, so more later. Regarding teachers, this past year we cut back on interns, so I could focus more attention on training our core group of teachers, and I'm thrilled with the results. I believe if we have a strong foundation with our current team of 8 teachers, we will be more effective in training new teachers and ensuring a good quality Christian education. I left the team with goals to achieve during my



time in the States and, I can comfortably say, they're ready to begin training others. I'm mostly impressed with the leadership skills in Bazie; the creativity in Eric; the calm, organized manner in which Emmanuel runs his classroom and gets results; and the fun, loving way Yembraogo teaches his students. I think you would be impressed! Especially if you keep in mind these teachers don't even have high school diplomas or official teaching experience. It must be God because if it were just me, I'd still be shaking my head saying it's not possible!

**The BFO Tailor**, Som, is still hard at work and getting more creative every day. Here are a couple photos of some of his latest creations which will be available at our Aspire home parties in the spring 2013.

If you think you might be interested in hosting a home party, please let me know and we'll tell you more about it.





**Feed My Starving Children and Hand of Hope:** Burkina Faso and the entire Sahel Region is in the midst of its worst famine in my 9 years here in Burkina as a result of last year's drought. At the same time, Mali, our neighboring country just 80 miles from Yako, has fallen apart and thousands of refugees have crossed the border into our little Burkina. At a moment when we couldn't even imagine how we were going to feed our own people, we were faced with thousands of Malian refugees who fled for their safety, leaving everything behind.

However, I'll say it again, we are blessed. In February of this year, we received our first 40 ft container full of Manna Rice Packs donated by Feed My Starving Children (FMSC), and JMM/Hand of Hope provided for the expense of sending the

container. This container provided 180,000 meals! Millet and corn are hard to come by,



and prices have more than doubled; but thanks to this wonderful gift, our people are getting a very nutritious and delicious meal of fortified rice every day. We've not only been able to serve our school children, sponsored children and widows, but also many families in our church, a couple of orphanages, two local social services agencies, as well as provide the lunch program for a school of 750 students, which was birthed after the flood of 2009 which left thousands homeless.

On top of that, we have another container arriving in August, and a team of four from FMSC will be coming to Burkina to see the fruits of their gift in September.



**Mali and U.S. Marines:** I mentioned Mali – what a mess they are in right now. Although they are our neighbor, the Al Qaeda activity is as much a concern for America (and the rest of the world) as it is for us in West Africa. If you'd like to hear a concise report of what's going on, I found this clip helpful:

<http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2012/07/24/watch-erinburnett-explain-how-mali-became-a-safe-haven-for-islamic-radicals/>; or search CNN Press Room's "Erin Burnett Explains How Mali Became a Safe Haven for Islamic Radicals".



We were thrilled to learn American military is now in Burkina, including the U.S. Marines. I like to mention that because my father, as well as several other BFO supporters, is a Marine! For the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the Americans in-country were invited to the U.S. Embassy where we were treated to burgers grilled by the Marines themselves and an emotional drill routine followed by the National Anthem. Being so far from home and living where I do, I found myself overwhelmed with an appreciation for our armed forces. I just feel safer knowing they're here! Thank you to all who have served, are serving, or will serve in the future.

**August in Johannesburg:** I'm just returning from South Africa where I participated in a week-long conference on Christian Education organized by ACSI (Association on Christian Schools International).

Representatives from countries throughout the African continent were invited to attend. Once I got over the fact that it was cold and even snowed (in Africa?!), it was fascinating to meet with other trainers and educators from places like Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Tanzania, and more. What a fascinating cultural experience! In total, we were 140 from 32 different countries. We shared ideas for training teachers; made plans for improving education in West Africa; and listened to motivating and enlightening speakers from Australia, Ivory Coast, and Uganda. My favorite was Moussa Koné. Moussa shares his testimony of having been

raised in a Muslim family but choosing to convert to Christianity after memorizing the Koran in preparation to become the family's next Imam. Although he has suffered extreme persecution because of his conversion, his message is clear – we must love our Muslim brothers and sisters just as Christ loves them! (If you'd like to read more and see photos, go to the blog section of our website: <http://www.bfoafrica.org/news/>.)



I'll leave you on that note and close with the message we share with our kids every day, "Jesus loves you and so do I"! Thank you for the blessing that you are to me and all of these precious children in Burkina. God Bless You, Lynn and the BFO Team