

Spring 2014

Hello friends and family,

I pray this note finds you well and at last enjoying some spring weather. I managed to come home after the worst of winter and well before the worst of summer. In fact, I'm also missing the worst of the heat in Burkina. April and May are brutally hot in Burkina with temperatures hovering around 110 degrees and frequent power cuts!

New Classrooms for Wedkingo

What's new with Burkina Faso Outreach (BFO)? The first big news is two new classrooms have been added to the single-classroom starter building in the village of Wedkingo! Wedkingo is a small village outside of Yako with roughly 1000 people (my best guess). The majority are illiterate, living in extreme poverty, and practicing Animism, a belief system which attributes a soul to animals, plants and inanimate objects. I'm still amazed at how they've welcomed the "Christian white lady" and her teachers with open arms; and joyfully allow us to share the gospel as we educate their children.



We welcomed two new preschool groups this past year in preparation for the new classrooms, so we already have our "kindergarten" students ready to go. As always within the first few weeks, I witnessed the incredible change that takes place right before my very eyes as these kids who come to us lethargic and fearful, so quickly transform into children who are engaged, playful and eager to learn. It takes a couple days before these 6-8 year olds will kick or toss a ball. In no time, they are running to school with smiles and laughter. After a couple weeks they finally begin to master putting a toddler puzzle together; and eventually, they begin to show signs of creativity with art and building blocks. Amazing how children will respond if you love them, encourage them, and give them materials to work with.



Sharing Secrets!

The Department of Education has begun to recognize the difference in our schools. Pleased and baffled, one Inspector asked the Director of our Gobila School to share "BFO's secrets" with the other Directors. We are thrilled to share our "secrets" and will continue to create opportunities to work together with other Christian schools and public schools. I'm encouraged to see our BFO teachers understanding why we teach the way we do and adept enough to share these practices professionally with others. Referencing the old expression, "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime", I'm happy to say our BFO teachers have learned how to catch fish and they're loving it!



So What's Next? The MINISTRY CENTER!

We are working on building plans for the ministry center which we hope to begin building sometime after I return in June 2014. We want the building to be multi-purpose so it can be used as a training classroom for teachers; a youth center for teen nights, camp, movie nights; a place for bible study, English classes; an educational resource center with math, art, science and reading centers to provide enhanced education to students in the community while at the same time serving as a model for teachers-in-training;just imagine the possibilities. Eventually, we'd like to have a couple of guest houses where you can stay when you come to visit!

EFree Blessing

In November, the congregation at First Free Church in Ballwin, made the commitment to "spend less and give more" and "take back Black Friday" for their Advent Conspiracy. Burkina Faso Outreach was one of two organizations selected to reap the benefits of their generous giving. Over **\$51,000** was raised to purchase supplies and furnishings to equip the ministry center! What a blessing! We will be shipping a container full of these supplies. I'm normally not much of a shopper, but this donation has made shopping a joy! Thank you First Free.

What does she do all day?

I'm writing this note a couple weeks before I head State-side once again. I'm sitting in my courtyard under a shelter



where I like to read my bible and pray each morning. I've been here over 10 years now, but I still laugh when I stop and listen – the donkeys braying, the chickens cock-a-doodle dooing, the Muslims chanting their morning prayers, and the rhythmic thud of the pestle hitting the mortar as the women pound the millet which they'll use to prepare the "to" for their mid-day and evening meals. Soon I'll hear a couple babies crying and young children playing. If I step outside my courtyard, I'll see the trash lining the streets, children squatting with sleepy eyes as they take care of morning business, huddles of children sitting around a small fire to

take away the morning chill before they don their school sacs and head off to school, and a couple motos passing by as those who have jobs head to work.

After prayer and coffee, each day varies – sometimes I head to Wedkingo, sometimes Gobila, or often there is other work to be done. The BFO teachers no longer need me by their side, so today I'll take an evaluation form to Gobila and observe Mr. Eric's classroom to provide him with some feedback. When I come home, the neighbor kids will come running to greet Mama Lynn and get their hugs from "nassarra", (the white lady). Hopefully, I'll have a few spare minutes to get the bubbles out or maybe sit and draw with them. Sometimes we just go for a short walk. They don't speak French yet; but we somehow manage to communicate. Knowing I have a list of to-dos for the day, I'll have to tell them "Maam noonga fo (I love you), but I have to get my work done now".

I'll meet with Som, the tailor to see how the Aspire bags and aprons are coming along. He's trying some new styles which I'll bring home for those who are interested in hosting an Aspire home party. (Let me know if you're interested!)

I'll meet with Eloi, the public school Director who provides training for our teachers and interns. He'll conduct training and random visits to the schools while I'm gone.

I'll meet with Jean (my right-hand man) to make sure the 180 200-lb bags of corn have been ordered for Saturday's food distribution in addition to a local spice, Soumbala, bouillon cubes, and the much needed soap. Our younger orphans (about 100) and their mamas will come from every direction with their donkey carts. The BFO staff and I will have lots of activities prepared – an animated bible story, games, and art activities. I need to remember to make the play dough and get the paints ready! The older children will come in the evening so they can stay and watch a movie in my living room.



Later today, we'll pick up the corn we dropped at the mill yesterday, and deliver it to the prison. One morning, I read Matthew 25:36 and realized our Sector 4 property neighbors the prison, so surely, the Lord intends for us to be neighborly! The prison is still new (completed about a year ago); so I introduced myself to the Director and asked how we could help. I learned the Muslims are visiting regularly on Fridays, but no one is visiting on Sundays. The Director welcomes visitors of all faiths. They can also use help with food. The State provides them with a budget to provide one meal a day. Families of inmates are expected to provide the other meals; but family visitors are rare. This is a new relationship, so I'll let you know how it develops over time.

One of our sponsored girls, Celine, was admitted to the hospital yesterday with Malaria (#1 cause of death). We'll stop by to see how she is doing and bring a meal to her and her mother. Meals are not provided at the hospital. I'm thankful Celine is in our Child Sponsorship Program so the family knew to come ask for help.

Randomly, widows will come, asking for help with food; students will come, asking for help with school fees; and any number of random requests. Yesterday, Fabrice's mom came to explain a thief stole their donkey. The donkey is their livelihood as they use it to pull the cart to make bricks and bring them to town to sell. I added, "Buy a donkey" to my to-do list – that's a first! Salaam came by to ask if we'd seen 10-year old Aziz.

Salaam, a leprous neighbor, lost the lower half of his legs and his fingers to the disease. Young Aziz left the courtyard yesterday evening with his buddies and never came home. We prayed and I added, "Stop by Salaam's to find out if they found Aziz" to my list. By the way, I did stop by. Aziz eventually showed up; but apparently he has been doing this regularly – disappearing for days at a time. He's 10!

Well, as you can see, I have a busy day ahead of me, so I best get to it; but know without a doubt that each of you is a part of making all of this happen. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and may the Lord richly bless you in return!

Lynn Peters