

Newsletter #23 – November 10, 2015

It has been a very busy and eventful time here in Cameroon at Rain Forest International School. I continue to enjoy my position as Learning Support Specialist, as well as teaching Middle School music and Middle School performance art. I'm as busy as ever with all the students I keep up with, as well as working with the teachers to help them develop new and creative ways to teach. I have been collaborating closely with the school counselor since she and I work with many of the same students. Aside from my positions as Learning Support Specialist and teacher, I am also giving private voice lessons after school to two students. The school counselor and I are co-leading some professional development seminars for the other teachers here and I am working with the elementary school for children of missionaries to help identify those with learning disabilities. At the beginning of the year I was named as Middle School "team leader" which means I am responsible for working with teachers on things like classroom management and curriculum as well as delegating various other responsibilities. I am also in charge of academic testing for any students we have concerns with. The other day I was approached by a student who would like me to be the faculty advisor for an a cappella singing club he would like to start at the school.

In my Middle School performing arts class we are currently putting together a short skit which we will present in December. We are hard at work, especially since we only meet twice a week for one hour at a time. I have become very good at setting up an efficient rehearsal! I have students coming to me asking to help them learn their lines and develop their characters, and I find it refreshing to come up with creative ways to help them out, both in and out of class. The biggest challenge I face is getting my students to be less self-conscious and less inhibited on stage. Remember, I am working with 13 and 14 year olds! I love coming up with creative ways for them to gain some confidence and be able to do things they normally wouldn't do. Half the battle is in creating an atmosphere in which they feel safe. In order to do that, I decided that I would never ask them to do something without expecting the same of myself. So, the other day I came up with an idea for a lesson. I split the class into two teams based on our skit – those who are in the cast, and those who are part of the crew (working behind the scenes). We then had a competition! As part of the competition no one was allowed to simply walk anywhere in the auditorium (that's where my classes are held). Everyone, including me, had to hop or skip. If I caught any of them walking their team lost a point. However, if they caught *me* walking their team gained a point. I had a lesson planned as usual, so aside from the hopping or skipping instead of walking everything else went on as usual. It was great to see them getting into it, not caring what they looked like, and having so much fun! Ultimately the crew won! Our school day includes a fifteen minute break time every day so I rewarded the winning team with some homemade cookies during break the next day. The best part for me was when they asked if they could share their cookies with the losing team. And, I know they weren't being pressured into it because there were no students on the losing team around when they asked!

As Learning Support Specialist I constantly have many students "on my radar." And, not just those with learning disabilities; we have students with a wide range of learning differences, from Asperger's syndrome to developmental delays. Since we currently have no one here to teach English as a second language (ESL) I am also in the process of figuring out how I can help *those* students. ESL is its own category, separate from special education, and qualified ESL teachers receive training specific to that field. I am currently looking into receiving some training in that field so I can better serve those students.

As I mentioned I am giving private voice lessons, free of charge, to two students here at RFIS. One of them is in grade 11. She is from Korea and her parents are missionaries working with the Korean church here in Cameroon. The other is a young lady, also in grade 11, whose family comes from America. Her parents are missionaries here as well. Both of these young women are part of the worship team at our school, and their desire is to serve the Lord through leading worship. They are taking their calling seriously, and I am honored to give them private instruction.

The school counselor and I have teamed together on many things, and our latest adventure is to put together some professional development seminars for teachers here at Rain Forest International School. We have done enormous amounts of research on different learning styles, and how to teach to each one. There is a large amount of research out there regarding visual-spatial learners and auditory-sequential learners, and since all of us fall into one of those two categories, it is essential that those who teach know as much about each type as possible. Especially for me, since a majority of learning disabilities affect those who are visual-spatial learners. Visual-spatial learners (VSLs) think in pictures rather than in words. They learn

better visually than auditorially. They do not learn from repetition and drill. Rather, they are non-sequential, which means they do not learn in the step-by-step manner in which most teachers teach. They arrive at correct solutions without taking steps, so "show your work" may be impossible for them. There is so much more I could tell you, but I don't want to bore you with details. It is easy to find more information on the topic by doing your own internet research, which I would encourage!

We have a trained psychologist who may be coming in December to run some special programs for our students. The program she uses is called the Davis Method, and has helped thousands of people of all ages with varying difficulties. She would like to come here for a month or two to work with some of our students, and I firmly believe they would all benefit! She is in the process of finding out if she has the financial support she needs to come.

Prayer requests:

- Please continue to pray for my health and safety, we are in constant battle with illnesses like malaria, dengue fever, and other parasites.
- Pray for me as I continue to use music and drama as a medium to help bring the students to a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the trained psychologist's financial needs will be met and that she will be able to get here!
- Please continue to pray for the puppet ministry I am involved in with my Cameroonian friend, Silas. As is tradition in Cameroonian culture, I typically call him "Uncle Si"

I love hearing from all of you, and I pray for each of you regularly. If there is a specific need you would like me to pray for please do not hesitate to email me! I am beyond blessed that each of you chooses to support me financially and/or prayerfully. If you have not yet committed to support me financially would you consider it now? Even a small monthly donation would help. I would be honored to be supported by you, your Sunday school class, your church, or your club or organization. If you would like to begin supporting me financially please see the information at the end of this newsletter, and when you sign up to donate please don't forget to include your email address or postal address so you can receive regular updates on how your financial contribution is helping advance the Kingdom of God!

Contact information:

Cards and letters can be mailed to:

Holly Emmerich
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Yaoundé, Cameroon

For anything larger than a card or letter please email me and I will give you the information for mailing larger items. My email address is Holly_Emmerich@WycliffeAssociates.org

If you would like a list of items I am in need of here in Cameroon, Africa, please contact me at the above email address. There are many things which I cannot get here, and I always appreciate receiving packages from my other home! God Bless you all and I truly appreciate all the wonderful prayers and financial support I received while home in Edenton, NC earlier this summer. If you would like to contribute you can go to www.wycliffeassociates.org and enter my name in the search box and follow directions to donate to help support my missionary work here in Cameroon. If you would rather, you can also mail checks or the donation form directly to my parents at:

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Please enjoy this picture of me with one of the children who came to see one of the puppet shows we put on with Uncle Si! Sorry for the poor quality, but I was lucky to get a picture at all with all the moving around he was doing! By the way, that's pink toilet paper hanging from the ceiling, sometimes they use that to decorate for celebrations here.



Blessings,

Holly Emmerich

Learning Support Specialist, Teacher, Director of Discipline
Rain Forest International School

John 9: 1- 3 As Jesus was walking along he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?" "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him..."

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