



Hello my friends!

I am glad that my mom was able to send out an update last week and let you all know that we have arrived safely in Malawi.

It is so good to be back and to see my friends and Malawian family. I cannot believe we have already been here for a week and a half, but I have settled into the routine and 'Malawian Time' (about an hour to three hours behind our actual planned time) and are loving it!

We are living with our friends Daniel and Jean and their beautiful 2 year old

daughter Jojo (Joanna) before we move into our own house next week.

Our first week was quiet, we arrived late last Wednesday night and spent a few days running errands, planning, and catching up with friends. On Monday we started in the Village, Luhomero. It was so great to be back, see our friends, and see how Love a Village's projects have developed since I was last here.



We have had the opportunity to connect with a girl in Luhomero. She is a year older than me, the youngest in her family, an incredible soccer player (the only girl who has been invited to play on a boys team), and the sole provider for her family. She is also an incredibly talented seamstress and helps run the sewing program that Love a Village runs with the school in Luhomero. I have had the opportunity to do some sewing with her, learn how to use a treadle machine, and teach her some new projects that she can sell to support her family.



I respect her more than I can really say. We may be from opposite sides of the globe, but we are very similar and have quickly become good friends.

I am writing this as we head back into the village for another day of sewing. I am constantly in awe of this place, these people, and how incredibly beautiful the countryside is. I am so blessed that God has given me this opportunity to be where my heart is so full.

Thank you so much to everyone who has been joining us in prayer. God has been doing incredible things. I would love to tell you all about it, but it would be pages and pages long! We have seen him work in amazing ways, answer prayers, heal, and provide for us in surprising ways. Please continue to cover our team and this place in prayer

Please pray for our car. If you have heard at all about Julie's (Our team leader and the founder/director of Love a Village) time in Malawi, you will know that the moment her feet hit Malawian soil cars begin to break down. And this trip is no different. The car we had planned on using is stuck with an engine beyond repair about 4 hours from our house. We have a plan, but in order for it to work a lot of things need to fall into place, please just cover this whole situation in prayer. God has provided a vehicle for this past week and has protected this car from any issues, and we are so grateful, but as of today we are without a car. Please just pray that this issue will be resolved (in a timely manner) and that each part that needs to fall into place will.



Thank you again for all of your love and support for me and my friends here in Malawi. I am loving it, taking in every moment, and doing my best to learn everything that I can. I am excited to tell you all more about it!

Twonge Chomene!

Bethany

(please excuse any spelling or errors..)





Hello everyone!

I am sorry that I have been so bad at sending out updates. Malawi life may be slow, but our schedule has been full and busy!

I cannot believe that I am halfway through my time here in Malawi. The time has flown by and it will be extremely hard to leave. The last two weeks have been full of water filter training and lot of little projects. Julie (our team leader and the director of Love a Village) is returning to Canada this weekend, so there has been quite a bit to do before she leaves to prepare for the teams that are coming back with her in July and August. Over the past few weeks we have given out about 40 filters and trained the beneficiaries on how to properly use and care for their filter.

For our next few weeks we will be going through the villages of Luhomero and gathering census information to help Love a Village develop numbers for their 5 year plan. We are looking at 5 key areas of development: Water and Sanitation, shelter, hygiene, food security, and education. The three of us are so excited to get to spend time at people's homes, hear their stories, and pray with them.



I find it very hard to sum up all that has happened over the last few weeks. I believe the best way to do this is to just share with you a few short stories.

This first story is from our recent trip to Zambia. I have dreamed of going on a real safari for a long time and have been working hard this past year to save the money for this adventure. Last weekend we spend two days at South Luangwa National Park in Zambia. We took four drives through the park and had countless amazing close-up (as close as 5-10 meters) encounters with DLC (Dear-like creatures: gazelle, puku, impala, bush buck, ect), zebra, warthogs, hyenas, hippos, crocodiles, monkeys, giraffes, mongoose, water buck, buffalo, amazing birds, lions (and their cubs), leopard, and beautiful elephants. It was absolutely breathtaking.



of the open-air dining room and I was able to make it back inside to watch them. We watched them for about 20 minutes as the three adults and baby walked calmly around munching on trees. Near the end of their visit I was sitting watching them when the mother and baby came right towards me and stood about 5 meters away just staring at me. I was in awe. It was the most amazing way to end off our adventure and a really cool answer to my (slightly silly) prayer!

As we finished up our safari I had prayed for two things, a close up experience with a giraffe for my friend Mo (her absolute favourite animal), and a close-up experience with an elephant – my favourite! Just as the sun was setting on our last drive we stopped for a break in a field with a group of giraffe. Our guide allowed us to walk through the field until we were about 50 meters away from them. As the sun was setting the scene was breathtaking and Mo was thrilled. As we got back to the lodge I figured my chances of a close up experience with an elephant were minimal. The next morning we got up for breakfast before we headed home. While we were waiting for everyone to come I decided to walk down to the river to see the hippos. I got about half way down the path when I heard a crunch, I turned to my right and there were 4 elephants about 20 meters away from me. I was freaking out inside, but remained calm and still. They headed around the other side



Another story comes from the last few days. Often, as we drive out of the village we stop along the way to give stickers to the kids along the road. It is something so small and simple, but it brings so much joy to the little ones. As we drove out earlier this week we stopped for a girl who was standing in the road and waving at us. She was on the opposite side of the car but peeked in and looked around. She saw me, pointed excitedly, and ran around to my side of the car. She reached in and grabbed my hands. I asked how she was and what her name was. Then our wonderful driver Mac started translating for me. She explained excitedly that she wanted to be my friend. I, of course, accepted the offer and responded with "Mbwezi Mwemi!" (my good friend). She explained that she had remembered me from my last visit and was so excited to see me again. She held my hand tight as I told her we would be back in a few days and that I would love to meet her again. It was such a simple interaction, but it really touched my heart. Last time I was here there were five people in the car, and this time five people, and she chose me. I remember her smile, but don't



remember having any real meaningful interaction with her when I was last here. However, something had stayed with her. She remembered *me*, and I was honoured.

My final story comes from another visit to the village. I love this country with all my heart, but everyday there are things that made me take a step back, make my heart ache, and



make me question so much about this world. This week it was something so simple. In the village you see kids working every day - helping around the house, caring for younger siblings, working in the fields, and collecting water. As we drive out of the village we pass countless little ones working and carrying water along the road. Yesterday was no different; we passed a young girl and her older brother

(probably about 8 and 13) carrying water. We didn't think much of it, but I asked Mac to stop so I could give them stickers. I opened my door and saw the little one with the small jerry can on her head. Her forehead was drenched in sweat, her little body was shaking, and her face was pained. My heart ached for her and for her brother who knew his sister was struggling, but was exhausted from carrying it previously. I thought about the effort, the struggle that these two children went through to get just that little jerry can of water back to their home. This was their everyday life, this was their 'normal' and it hurt my heart.



Sometimes these issues are so overwhelming. I know that this little girl is one child in a community of 4000 thousand, in one of the poorest regions of the poorest nations in the world. This is only one story of the millions worldwide who do not have access to clean water. Sometimes I look at those numbers and am completely overwhelmed. But I find peace in the fact that this little one is known and loved by God. That He looks at her with love far deeper than what I, Love a Village, or anyone else could ever be able to provide. And I find peace in the truth that Love a Village is helping families in her community and that hopefully someday soon she will have a clean water source close to her home. We may not be changing the world, but I know without question that if we can change the world for one person, that is a victory!



There are so many stories that I could tell. So many experiences that have touched my heart, made me laugh uncontrollably, and left me speechless. But I will leave you with these stories for now.

Thank you so much for your continued pray and encouraging notes. I am so blessed to have so many people standing with me on this adventure!



Just a couple of things we can continue to pray for.

- Peace and protection for Julie as she flies back to Canada on Monday.
- Guidance, strength, and wisdom for the three of us as we begin our census work on Monday.
- Healing for our three little friends who are fighting Malaria. Please just pray that God gives them strength and heals their little bodies.
- Please just continue to pray for no more issues with our vehicles. The green truck is still in the process of being repaired and at this point it is unclear whether it is repairable. We are so thankful that God has provided a vehicle for now until the end of July.

Thank you so much for all of your love and support. I cannot wait to share even more stories with you over the next few weeks and as I return home in mid-June.

Thank you!

(Newsletter 3)

Hello Everybody!

I cannot believe I have reached my final few days here in Malawi! The time has flown by but I have loved every moment and have been so blessed by the experiences I have had.

Last week we began gathering survey information on the 42 villages contained in the community of Luhomero. This project will be continued by Taylor-Ann and Moriah for the rest of the summer. This information will help Love a Village effectively develop numbers for their five year plan that will focus on water, shelter, food security, hygiene, and education. It has been such a blessing to spend time at people's homes, hear their stories, and their hopes for the community of Luhomero.

The conversations are often hard with topics of family members passing away and illness being present in nearly every home we visited. We have met families who literally have nothing and those who have suffered loss far beyond what I can image. These conversations may be hard, but these situations do not define these people. These families are resilient, loving, and joyful. They are caring and so, so generous. I am constantly humbled by their welcoming spirit and their desire to share what little they have with us. I am amazed by the ways that they care for those around them and invite the orphaned into their families. And I have been so blessed to be able to sing, laugh, and dance with these people; their joy is simply contagious!

Our last few days have been spent at a beautiful farm up on a mountain being trained in "Farming God's Way" by Foundations in Farming. We are here with a group of our friends from Luhomero who will be bringing this type of conservation farming to their villages. It has been a fun few days of learning, planting maize, making compost, and whole lot of chicken manure! We are excited to see this method brought to Luhomero and we believe this could be a huge step in helping the families of Luhomero have food security.

Tomorrow evening we will head back to Ekwendeni for my last few days which will be full of good friends! I know it will be hard to leave, but I am excited for what God has in store for me as I come home. Please just continue to join me in prayer.

- Please pray for peace over me as I say goodbye and come home. Please pray for peace over me as I fly and protection over the plane.
- Please pray for Taylor-Ann and Moriah as they stay here in Malawi and continue to visit homes in Luhomero. Please pray for peace, protection, and strength over them.
- Please pray for wisdom and peace as I come home and prepare to head up to Ontario Pioneer Camp for the summer.

Thank you all so much for your constant love, prayer, and support for me throughout this adventure. It has been such a blessing to me. I cannot wait to share more about my beautiful Malawi with you all when I get home.

God Bless,

Bethany.