

Dear friends and family,

I want to begin this newsletter off by saying a huge thank you to each and every one of you who have supported me in my going to Malawi. I could not have done it without your continuous love and support. I am so grateful to have such amazing people surround me.

I know many of you are interested to hear more about my trip to Malawi this past May, so let me get right into that.

Along with my four other team members, I arrived on African soil on May the 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. All three of the flights went very well. I was much more relaxed this trip as I already knew what to expect thanks to last August. Once we were in Malawi Julie and Dan picked us up at the airport and it was go go go right from then. Just like last year, every morning we would pack up and drive into Lihomero. I was so excited to get to see many of the faces I met summer 2016 and was thrilled to see that they too remembered me. However, this year there were hundreds of kids around at all times since school was still in session. So many kids to play with and so many stories to hear.



This year's trip ended up being focused quite a bit on clean water. We participated in water filter training classes where we would build the water filters and then partner up with a Malawian to teach them how it works and how to take care of the filter. In addition, we helped in the making of the apron for a deep water bore hole. The girls and I all walked with the village women, found a good area of sand, filled our buckets to the top, and walked back to the bore hole holding the buckets of

sand on our heads. It's definitely not as easy as it looks! Furthermore, we joined in on the installment of a rope pump in another area of the village (also not as easy to do as it looks).

Another project that we participated in was the making of a girl's lavatory at the village school. We dug and dug in the hot sun that day. The whole idea behind the girls' lavatory is that it provides them with a safe place to go when it is a girl's time of the month. Usually girls won't even bother attending school during this time because they will often get made fun of, as well as they have no place to go in order to manage their periods, and all that comes with it. I am excited to see the finished girl's lavatory and the increase of these young ladies' attendance at school.



Of course, in and around all of the projects we would run into twists and turns. These twists and turns end up being what you never forget about Malawi and its people. Let me demonstrate what I mean by this:

One day when we were around the village school we saw some kids that Julie has known for many years now, and that I had met the summer before. They seemed to look much thinner than they did last year so we decided we were going to visit the family's home. When we got there we were in the middle of our hellos and introductions when Julie noticed something on one of the little boy's leg. He had a massive burn on his leg that he got from accidentally spilling a pot of boiling water on himself. His name is Tiko. Tiko could not be taken to the hospital since where they live is very secluded, therefore it would

take many hours to get him there by foot. Regardless, the family probably would not have even been able to afford proper hospital care. Tiko was in a lot of pain, but they used what natural remedies they could to try to help the wound heal. This really stuck out to me because it reminded me of a very similar story. Some of you will actually know it. When my dad was an infant, boiling hot water got spilled on his body. He would have died but since he was in a country that offers basic medical care he ended up being fine other than a few scars. It's as simple as being close enough to a hospital. It baffles my mind. Anyways, we prayed for Tiko, and a couple days before I was coming home we saw him at school. I took a look at his leg. GONE! It was as if the wound was never there. God is good!

Earlier I mentioned that Tiko and other members of his family were looking thinner than usual, and that was the original reason why we went for a visit. We learned that the family's bunnies had been stolen, chickens killed by a predator, and that they made no income this year as their tobacco leaves were deemed poor. They only had maize to eat. This is unfortunately the sad reality for many Malawians. We visited this family a couple times while there, and at the last visit they insisted that we take a few cobs of maize even though they already have nothing. Malawians are simply amazing people.



On my last day in Malawi we got to visit a refugee camp. A friend named Moises came to greet us at the camp entrance. Moises is a refugee from the Republic of Congo and stays in the Malawian refugee camp. He welcomed us in and gave us a tour of the camp while

explaining his story. There are honestly no words to describe the kind of place this refugee camp was. If I had to use one word it would be 'slum'. This camp is probably one of the worst places in the world to live, rivaling the village. People from all over Africa have taken refuge here, and some were even born into it. They all live in mud huts with no electricity and have to seriously ration their food since they are only given one bag of flour made from maize every month. The images I saw and stories I heard will forever be engrained into my memory. It was very hard to leave this place.

Overall, I had an amazing, hard, and fulfilling mission's trip this past May. I only fell more in love with Malawi's people and culture. God has really put Malawi on my heart and I hope that I will be able to return as soon as I can. There is so much more to be done for Malawians and the sad world they live in, but together we can help in so many ways. By supporting me you have all supported the hundreds and thousands of Malawians that Love A Village is serving. So once again I would like to say THANK YOU!

Love always, Emma.

