

GREETINGS FROM THE COLD AND SNOWY USA!

By the time you receive this letter, we'll be back in sunny Mwanza, but as we write this letter, we are in the US for a much-needed visit with family and friends. Despite the fact that we spent 5 weeks trapped in a Snowpocalypse, we did see many friends, family members, and supporters of the work we do. We also had the chance to do a few church talks and even graced the front page of The Vicksburg Post, Chris's hometown paper! Now, let's catch you up on what's happening in Mwanza...



OUR WOLF PACK HAS GROWN BY THREE!

This January, we welcomed 3 new missionaries to the TZ region. With the addition of Michael, Ashley, and Kristle, our local MKLM community is now up to 10 people!



Katie chats with Lulu Mabatini participants.

LULU MABATINI LAUNCHES

After months of planning, Katie's Lulu Mabatini group officially began in early December. The group is meeting 2x/week on the grounds of our local Catholic church. It is open to any girl in the neighborhood between the ages of 15-20 years, though the youngest is 12 and the oldest is 28. We are flexible because many people in TZ don't know their true age and also, the girls are so eager to join, we hate to discourage them! Katie and her 3 Tanzanian facilitators regularly meet weekly to prepare the lessons for each session. Katie is trying to build their skills in facilitation and has been enjoying watching them take ownership of the

group and build supportive relationships with the participants. One of the facilitators, named Sikudhani, is a former participant in a Lulu group and is a confident 20 year-old single mother of two. She brings a youth perspective to the facilitation team and can better relate to the teen participants and the struggles they face. Sikudhani is an exciting example of the potential of young Tanzanian women and their creativity and desire to improve their lives.

Girls and women in Tanzania are the most disadvantaged group. They are often seen as a commodity, a tool for the household, and not as an individual person with unique gifts, talents and viewpoints. The Lulu group tries to combat this by helping the girls to see their unique potential and to understand that they are of value in their family and within society. "Lulu" means pearl in Swahili. The name reminds us that we are unique treasures in the eyes of God and that we should be treated (and treat others) with respect and dignity.

BALEWA GROUP'S FABRIC PROJECT A SUCCESS

At the beginning of December, the women from the Balewa women's group participated in the Mwanza Craft Fair, a two-day event showcasing local arts and crafts. The women were selling their fabrics, called "vikoi." They have had good sales, but beyond just the money, the project has provided opportunities for the women to feel empowered to take more control of their own lives.

This summer, these women attended a few seminars to learn to make fabrics to sell, primarily for the local markets in Mwanza. With the craft event looming on the horizon, they embarked on their first real attempt at making the fabrics as an income-generating project. Their first batch was a good first attempt, but Chris stressed to them that paying more attention to the details and craftsmanship could really set them apart in local markets. They clearly took the advice to heart, because the latest batches are **beautiful**. Chris also created logos and labels for the fabrics to illustrate a few simple ideas about marketing to the women.

We commend these women for really committing to their new project. This is a perfect example of the type of work that Maryknoll Lay Missioners can do. Rather than do things **FOR** people, ideally we do things **WITH** people, which ultimately leads to better relationships and longer, more sustainable results. Not only did the women present the initial idea for the fabrics, but now that they are up-and-running, the women have identified areas of need in their production process and have started hiring others to assist them in making the fabrics.



AN END-OF-YEAR PARTY AT THE LAKE

In mid-December, the children of the Chanua group had an end-of-school-year celebration on the shore of Lake Victoria. As mentioned in previous newsletters, the Chanua group is a support group for around 60 orphans and vulnerable children. Two busloads of kids headed up to a peaceful spot on the lake located about 40 minutes north of Mwanza for an afternoon of food, Frisbees, and games. The morning was rainy and cold, so Chris was

nervous that the event would be a flop, but luckily the wet weather stopped shortly after they arrived. And that was a good thing, too, because the rain could have really put a damper on the kids' chances to go jump in the lake and get soaking wet. (Sometimes Chris forgets how kids think!) They had a blast splashing around in the waves and playing soccer in the sand. In addition to the end-of-year party, Chris and his fellow coworkers also distributed school supplies, shoes, and uniforms for the next school year, which began in early January.

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US IN MISSION!

Please remember that MKLM funds our travel, medical, and living expenses, and other costs associated with keeping me in mission. We ask that you consider donating to MKLM so that we, and missionaries like us, can continue to serve those in need worldwide.

You can now directly support our mission work with MKLM. Funds donated will either be applied directly to support our ministries or used to support the general fund of MKLM. Financial Support can be sent to MKLM, P.O. Box 307, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0307 or online at <http://tinyurl.com/ChrisandKatieReid>. Donations can be made to either to the **MKLM General Fund** or to our ministry projects. Denote "*Chris and Katie Reid- Mission Account*" in the memo line or intention box to specifically support our projects. All contributions are tax deductible.

As usual, we want to thank you all for your prayers, support, and contributions. We're just one small part of the whole that helps us answer the call to help the least of those among us. We couldn't do it without you! God bless!

Chris and Katie Reid

Handwritten signatures of Chris and Katie Reid, with a plus sign between them.

ASANTE SANA! THANK YOU!