



Thanksgiving in the Bush with FAME - 2010 by Jesse McKenna

Over the last two months at FAME, I have learned and experienced much more than I could have expected. There is one day, though, that stands out from the rest and it involves a little girl and her family. Renata is an eight-year-old FAME patient, who is currently in congestive heart failure due to rheumatic heart disease. During one of her follow-up visits, her weight, which had dropped since her last visit, became a major concern, so we all pulled together to determine how best to put some weight back on this frail little girl. Armed with a shopping list and some pocket money, Jacob (FAME's translator), and I headed into Karatu town to purchase some food items for Renata and her family. After getting all the items on our list, Jacob and I visited the family in their house, and we explained exactly how we wanted Renata to eat in order to gain weight. We bought very simple items: eggs, peanut butter, honey, bread, bananas, biscuits, and chocolate. Had anyone been there to observe the thanks we received, they would have thought we had bought them a new house. Everyone in the family individually thanked Jacob and I, and then they prayed for several minutes. I asked Jacob afterward what the prayers were, and he told me that they were thanking the director of the hospital and the people who were helping Renata to have a better life. This day is one of those days that makes me realize I am doing exactly what I want and need to do. Renata and her family inspire me to continue the work I am doing with those that need it most.

Grace and gratitude. Africa is the great teacher. Jesse McKenna, one of our volunteers, beautifully captures that grace and gratitude in the story above. Just seven short years ago, we moved to Tanzania with a suitcase in each hand and a dream in our hearts. We did not yet know how to turn that dream into a reality, but we did know it could not be done alone. We have each and every one of you to thank for joining us on this journey. Your generous donations, your time and expertise, your prayers and words of encouragement are what make our work in Tanzania possible. With our hearts full of gratitude, we wish you and yours a very HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Love & Blessings,
Frank & Susan
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