

October, 2018

*(Caution, graphic pic below)*

Family,

Where do I even begin? The past few months have been unlike anything we have ever experienced before.



We had a wonderful time in the US for our furlough and were able to visit with many partners and family. A week of focused beach time with our kids and grandkids was clearly a highlight for us. It was also a huge blessing to spend time with parents and siblings.

When we left for the US on July 7, we had no idea that by the time we returned on Sept. 14 MpM would have received 16 new infants. We are thankful Mark and Maureen Maisonville and their son Kris have joined our team, but this stretch of time was supposed to be a time of slowly learning how things worked.

They certainly learned, but it was similar to taking a drink out of a fire hydrant!

Thankfully some of those 16 babies were returned to family, but the revolving door kept our total population to around 30 babies at any given time.

As if the sheer number of babies during our time in the US was not enough, there were some that were extremely sick and had to spend time in the hospital. Maureen and other staff ended up being with one or more infants in the hospital for six of the nine weeks we were gone.

Babies like Joshua took a lot of extra care and prayer. Joshua has TB, was severely malnourished, and very anemic. At eight months of age he weighed just over 10 lbs. He spent weeks in the hospital and ended up having four blood transfusions.

Joshua is doing better, but still has some major hurdles. There is family that has come forward wanting to take him back, and we are praying he quickly regains his health before that happens.



Several of our latest arrivals have required extensive medical care and ongoing attention. Our staff has done a great job as they work under some rather intense conditions at times.

Any time we have one in the hospital, like Stephen here, who was severely malnourished and needed oxygen for many days, one of our staff has to stay with him/her. This adds an extra level of work for the remaining staff who have to pick up the slack when one caregiver is at the hospital.



Two more babies showed up within a couple of days of our arrival back to Kenya, so things have not slowed down much.

And two weeks ago we got a call about a baby that was abandoned and taken to a local government hospital. This in itself is not an uncommon story, and like many before we immediately went to the hospital to meet the newest little that would come our way. What greeted us was one of the harshest stories we have had. When we first met her, Faith was a week old and in very rough shape. Before she was dropped into a pit latrine someone had slit her throat in an effort to kill her. We don't know how long she was in the latrine, but when we first saw Faith she had lots of bites from maggots all over her body and she still reeked of the filth.

We always try as hard as we can to get babies out of government hospitals as quickly as possible due to the fact that the care is often sub-standard as they don't have the resources to provide what is needed. In Faith's case we had to purchase some antiseptic and clean water so they could care for her. It took us two weeks to finally get them to agree to release her so we could take her to Kijabe Mission Hospital where we knew she would get much better care.

When she arrived the wound around her neck was oozing and was obviously severely infected. She was quickly taken into surgery so they could “clean out” the wound and remove dead tissue to attempt to get the infection under control. The surgeon said it was very clear that the intent was to sever the major veins in her neck, and he was amazed that there was no permanent damage to her veins, or windpipe. He said God was clearly with this little one!



As this letter is being written Faith (and Jen) are still in the hospital. She continues to battle the risk of infection, and faces the possibility of ongoing skin graft surgeries.

While it is tough for all of us to have Jen nearly four hours away caring for this little one, we are finding so many things to celebrate. Like the way God kept her alive long enough to be found. Faith has quite the appetite so that is a big plus as she struggles to get her strength built up. And Ma Bell's undistracted love, care, and prayers are undoubtedly helping too!

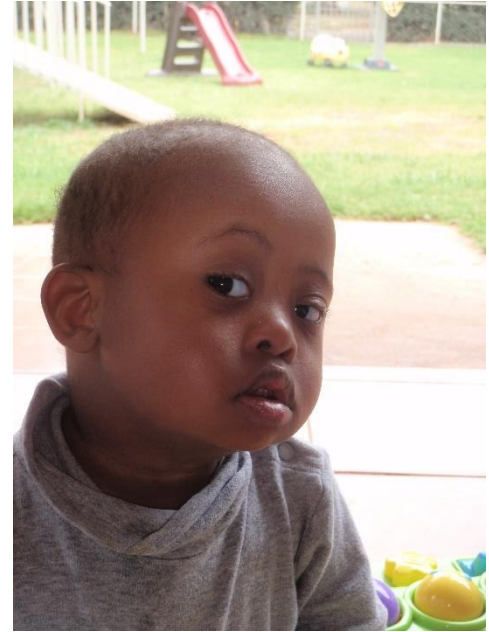
Adoptions have hit a bit of a “snag” lately as some false stories of improper adoptions hit the Kenya news a few months ago. And while the allegations were found to be more propaganda than truth, certain officials in the government continue to make legal adoption difficult. Because of this, the adoption agencies are required to do much more background work to ensure that no one in the potential biological family wants the abandoned child. So while we had hoped to have several adoptions this month, we are delayed in sending some of our angels to their forever families.



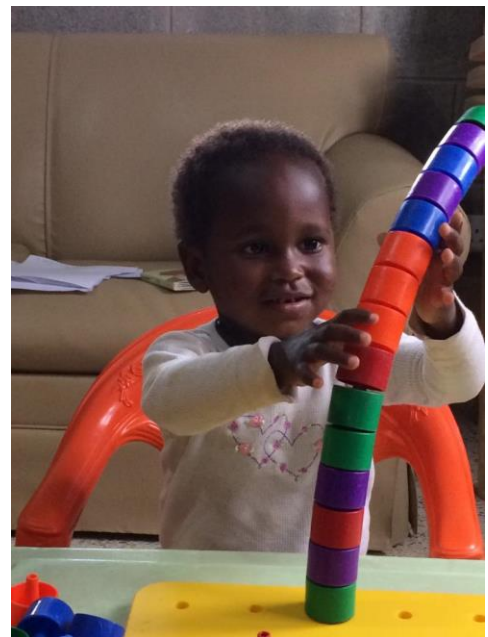
We continue to pray diligently that international adoptions would open back up as we now have eight special needs babies that are unlikely to be adopted in Kenya.



All of them, like Toby (Downs Syndrome), Shaddy (severe allergies), and Mary Rose (HIV +) are so ready for their own family. Each one has so much to offer a family who has a big heart that can handle all the love they bring.



We have many prayer needs right now, as previously mentioned; please join us praying also that the government will change its mind and open international adoption. Until that happens, as we move ahead with so many special needs children we need God's wisdom and discernment to know how we proceed with them.



With all the recent and current medical needs we are encountering some rather large medical bills and need many more partners to join us.

And we want to make sure we lift up all the praises to God. He has been so faithful giving us and our staff all we need to care for these precious gifts!

It is truly an honor to be able to serve these children in such a time as this.

In His Grip,

Dave and Jen Bell