

## January Update

This year has begun with much sadness. In one month we have had three deaths. The first was the precious four-year-old son of one of our missionary families who drowned. It was a very sad and difficult time for the whole mission family. The death was just days before our yearly mission conference. It was great to see our mission family join together to help the family with support, food, and prayers. There are many missionaries trained in counseling in crisis situations who were a great help and then there was a counselor from the U.S. who came to counsel the family, children, and other missionaries who needed support. We continue to pray family as they heal from the loss of their son.

The second death was the mother of John, one of the boys at Transition House. She passed away from HIV the first week in Jan. during the mission conference. Several of us that work with Transition House left to go to the funeral. We praise God that she was a Christian. We pray for John, as he was very sad at her death. John is now an orphan as his father passed away several years ago. The third death occurred last week as John's sister Ladi passed away just one month after her mother also from HIV. Ladi had been in the hospital for a week and we had all visited her. Ladi accepted Christ at the time of her mother's death. Even though Ladi was very sick and in pain, we would go into the hospital and hear her singing praise songs to God. We rejoice that Ladi and her mother are now released from their suffering and are in the presence of the Lord. The reality of death in this culture is something I am not sure I will ever fully adjust to, but I continually pray for God to give me strength as my ministry involves working among the sick and dying.

2006 SIM mission conference: Jan 5-9 we had our yearly mission conference. It is a great time to get to know new missionaries as well as see the missionaries that are in other parts of Nigeria that we have not seen for some time. Usually this is the cooler time of the year for Nigeria, but this year we were left wondering where the cold weather was hiding. We spent time discussing issues within our mission as well as in our ministry teams. There were of course times for relaxation and fun activities for families and their children. We were very blessed to have two teams from the U.S. come and do the children and youth programs during the conference. We had a big bonfire the last night and we made somores. Some ladies made homemade marshmallows. They were square rather than round and tasted different than the store bought ones, but they were still good. We all had a good time. *(picture below)*

Transition House: There is never a dull moment when you are working with 70 boys! Ha. It is always busy, but I enjoy the boys so much. My family group of 16 boys went to the Wildlife Park for their outing this month. We played games on the playground and went to see all the animals. The boys enjoyed the time. I am in the process of putting new books in the library and some of the boys are helping me dust off all the books and put them back in order on the shelf. It is a lot of work as there are many books and since it is dry season the dust is much. *(picture below)*

The ministry is putting together a policy on appropriate behavior between men and women. It is difficult for us from the Western world to adjust to the cultural behaviors of Nigeria especially behavior between men and women. We want to raise

these boys as Nigerians and not Westerners. In this culture there is no physical touch between the opposite sex in public. You are able to hug or hold hands with the same sex. When greeting the opposite sex you shake hands or bow if the person is older or deserve respect. There is no hugging or touching. This applies to anyone over ten years of age. The children under ten you are able to hold hands or hug.

Evangel Hospital: The children love the playroom. Many times they are waiting for me to open the playroom when I arrive in the morning. It is so good to see their smiling faces as they are coloring or playing with the cars and puzzles. Many of the mothers are helping to watch out for the toys. When it is time to close they will go a get all the toys from the rooms and put them away. They are a real blessing. I gave out several Gospel of John booklets to the mothers on the unit. I hope it will speak to them as they read it.

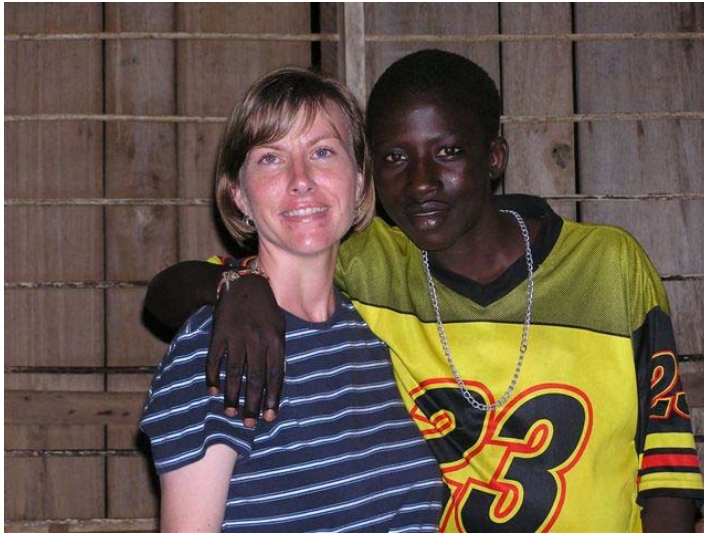
The two Nigerian therapists I work with are pregnant so the other missionary and I have tried to help to make the caseload lighter for them. I work with many children with developmental problems, fractures, meningitis, and burns. Some days are busy and some days are slow. I am in the process of getting the women in the sewing ministry to make arm slings and others equipment that we can have available for the patients. This will help them and us both.

Lately you can hear loud cheers all over the city as right now the African World Cup of Nations is playing. It is all the African countries competing in football (soccer). When Nigeria makes a goal, you can hear the loud cheers. Nigeria has won in its division and will continue to play. The last game was very close and went to penalty kicks, but in the end Nigeria won. We will continue to watch the games and I hope we will hear more loud cheers.

Prayer Request:

- Pray for John and his family as they are recovering from the loss of their mother and sister
- Pray for the Ward family as they are healing from the loss of their son
- Pray for the ministry as we implement the policy on appropriate behavior between men and women
- Pray for the success of getting the women to make equipment for the therapy department
- Pray for my M friend Miriam as she will have surgery on her leg next month. Also pray for a lady named Jamai who will have surgery for a wound on her leg this week.

God bless,  
Gay Lynn McCrady



John and I



Roasting marshmallows at the SIM conference



TH boys at the Wildlife Park