

Happenings in the Life of Iris

May 2008



My Life as of Late



Greetings! Here is an update on what has been going on in my life recently and what the near future will hold for me. I am currently an undergraduate student at the University of Florida in Gainesville. I am working on two degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering and a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics. I plan to graduate in May 2009.

Gainesville is a great place to live and I have really enjoyed my time here and am excited for at least one more year here. I have had many great experiences in Gainesville. God has taught me a lot and brought new passions and interests into my life over the past couple of years. He has shown me His heart for the poor and has developed in me a passion for serving the poor, specifically the homeless. Within the past two years I have also become very interested in Africa, specifically East Africa and Swahili. I have had the opportunity to study Swahili for two semesters at UF and have also taken an African linguistics class, in which I studied Sukuma, a language spoken in Tanzania.

Summer in Africa



This summer I will be in Tanzania for almost three months. I will be doing research on sustainable building construction for eight weeks in Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo. This research is through UF's Rinker School of Building Construction. There are five other students from UF on my research team. I will specifically be looking at the existing knowledge networks for the development of low income housing. I will investigate how technologies are developed, used and disseminated among various stakeholders in the construction of low income housing. I will take part in assessing the knowledge and support of sustainable construction practices. I will investigate how knowledge of sustainable practices can be better disseminated to the stakeholders involved in the construction of urban, low income housing in Tanzania.

After finishing up my research in Tanzania, I will be spending almost a month volunteering at Hananasif Orphanage Center. Hananasif is an organic, Christian, development-oriented ministry serving orphans and street children in and around Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Hananasif has two locations. One location is within the city of Dar es Salaam where 21 younger children are cared for. The other locations is in the rural Mkuranga District outside the city. There is a secondary school at this location where 70 orphan children live and are able to attend school for free. The center outside the city is located on 300 acres of land. There is an agricultural program that is apart of the school curriculum. The students take part in growing fruits and vegetables. The center is really striving to become sustainable and this farming provides food for the children and in the future will provide income for the orphanage. I will spend my time at the rural location and I will help out in the secondary school and will also work on the farm.



Some of the beautiful children at Hananasif.

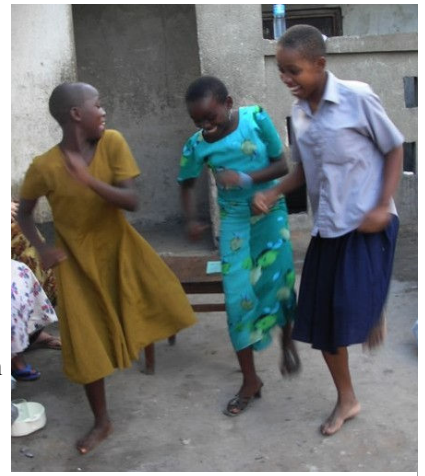
More on Africa...

If you are interested in helping support the Hananasif Orphanage Center, they are in need of an irrigation system for the farming they are doing. If you would like to donate money to help fund the installation of an irrigation system you can make checks out to "I Become" and send them to the following address:

Hananasif Orphanage Center
301 N. Alvarado St #212
Los Angeles, CA 90026

Please write "Hananasif – Iris Zielske" on the memo line and donations are tax deductible. Let me know if you have any questions. If you would like to find out more about Hananasif you can visit the following website: www.hananasif.org.

I am really excited about this opportunity to spend the summer in Africa. The research I will be doing is something that really interests me and I believe it is very valuable. I am also really excited about being able to spend some time at the Hananasif orphanage. I have heard many wonderful things about what God is doing at Hananasif and I am excited to partner with them. I look forward to experiencing and living in a new place and experiencing life in another culture. I am also really excited to use and improve my Swahili, which I have been studying for the past year and is spoken in Tanzania.



Jakleen, Hidaya, and Msekwa dancing in the courtyard at Hananasif.

The Jubilee House in the Fall



The Jubilee house located at:
218 NW 2nd Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601

After returning to Gainesville in August, I will be moving into the Jubilee House. The Jubilee House is a house of hospitality here in Gainesville and is a part of the Catholic Worker Movement. As a part of the in-house community I will be responsible for offering hospitality to guests, as well as be involved in regular activities of the house including things such as: Breakfast Brigade, Dorothy's Café, Bible studies, morning prayer, and roundtable discussions. Breakfast Brigade happens twice a week and is a time when healthy, homemade breakfast is prepared and served at local labor pools. Dorothy's Café is a large meal served at the house three times a month to anyone in need of a meal. Café is a time to share a meal with our friends that may be homeless or impoverished. An important part of what we do at the

house is to treat everyone who comes through our doors with dignity. Many of our friends and guests who are homeless often do not receive dignity or respect elsewhere.

I have been involved at the house for about a year and a half now and I am really excited to move in and be a part of the in-house community. The people living at the Jubilee House are committed to living in intentional community, seeking a life of prayer, studying scripture, and engaging in discipleship. We strive to stand in solidarity with those who are impoverished, to live simply and engage in an alternative economy rooted in biblical principles, and to resist injustice. Another community member said, "We try to give and do what we can -- to liberate space for the kingdom of God to break in so that all those who have not known mercy, justice, compassion, love and joy can find it here with us, at the table with brothers and sisters, in good food and friendly company."

I have learned a lot from being apart of this community over the past year and a half; I look forward to living in the house and being shaped and refined by the experiences I will have and the relationships I will build and strengthen. If you would like to learn more about the Jubilee House or the Catholic Worker Movement you can visit the following websites: <http://gvillecw.wordpress.com/> and <http://www.catholicworker.org/>.



Two girls, who have lived at the house in the past, with me at Dorothy's Café.

Works of Mercy (Mat 25:31-46)

Feed the hungry
Give drink to the thirsty
Clothe the naked
Offer hospitality to the stranger
Care for the sick
Visit the imprisoned

Jesus said, "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Matthew 25:40



Fresh baked bread which is a staple at Dorothy's Café and Breakfast Brigade. It's delicious!

In Conclusion...

I hope that this letter finds you well. I ask that you would pray for me this summer as I am in Africa and next fall as I live at the Jubilee House. I will be in Tanzania from May 16 until August 8. I will have email access for the first 8 weeks I am in Tanzania, feel free to email me at: irismz@gmail.com. I would love to hear how you are doing and what is going on in your life.

Sincerely,

Iris Zielske