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## Jason, Emily & Savannah Atkins

### Going Green by Jason

While we're home, we're busy planning one of our biggest projects yet! The youth center is going green with a giant array of solar panels! Several years ago, before our time in Bissau, a lady named Laurel visited the youth center with a short-term team from Dayspring greeting cards. She painted a beautiful mural at the youth center and a lot of the signs that we still use today. She fell in love with the people of Bissau, and I'm told always wished she could come back. She passed away recently and left money in her estate to the youth center. As the leadership of YFC Guinea-Bissau, we've spent a lot of time thinking about the best way to use the money, and one idea has risen to the top as head and shoulders better than any other idea.

The youth center has been running now for several years supported only by the money that comes in from operations in Bissau – tuition from classes, income from the guest house, renting the facility on weekends for weddings, etc. The local leadership has worked hard to keep the financial ship on the right course, and we've made a little some months and lost a little others, but never managed to really get ahead. The youth center is in good shape, but there are many other ministries that YFC Guinea-Bissau wants to be involved in, but can't because there isn't extra money available to do so.

As we looked at the best way for this money to have a lasting impact, we started eyeing one of our biggest expenses: generator diesel. About 20% of the operating budget for the youth center goes to buy fuel for the generator that runs the school – about \$1,600 a month. (The national power grid in Guinea-Bissau is infamously unreliable and doesn't reach us anyway). We get a lot of use out of that power, running the school, guest house, worker's houses, shop, etc. - so the money is well spent, but it is a big amount relative to what we have to work with each month.

In Bissau, the weather is gorgeous and sunny almost everyday of the year. Solar power is used in Bissau in various places, but mostly in tiny little installations to do things like charging cell phone batteries and such. Because of the vast potential of the sun to generate power, our national director asked me to do a quick analysis to figure out how much it would take to switch the center over mostly to solar. After I made a spreadsheet that would make even my spreadsheet-loving wife proud, I figured out that it is within reach with the money that was left to us.

**By my calculations, we'll be able to build a solar system that will replace the generator for most of the daylight hours, saving about \$1,100 of that \$1,600 we spend on fuel each month. This will allow us to set aside the money we used to spend on fuel, some for continued maintenance of the solar system, and the rest to pay back the money that was left to us.** If all goes roughly according to plan, we will have been able to completely re-save this nest egg in about eight years, and with enough money left over to replace worn out batteries and solar panels so the system can work forever. Once that nest egg is repaid, we will have an extra \$730 per month that we used to spend on fuel, to do all kinds of construction and other ministry projects. (To put that in perspective, in the current financial situation, most months our budget ends up or down about \$200 -300, so that extra money will be a huge boost for the center's finances.) A happy side benefit will be that the school will be quieter during the day as well, since we won't have to listen to the generator.

The center is incredibly thankful to have been remembered in such a meaningful way. We're really excited about this project, and I'm having a ton of fun figuring out all of the details of the system and getting the parts ordered. We'll be sending a shipping container with the solar system and some new shop equipment, along with some other ministry and personal stuff, in January.

In Bissau, where energy is so expensive, it turns out that going green is really good for putting some green back in the budget as well!

*continued...*



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## *Our Darling Daughter has Arrived!!!* by Emily

The last month of being pregnant I thought she would never be born, but on Tuesday, October 12 at 10:30 in the morning Savannah Liora Atkins graced us with her presence and pretty much stole our hearts right away. We have been having a great time getting to know her and figuring out how to take care of her.

We spent a long time choosing her name. We have always loved the way that children's names in the Bible signified what God was doing in their families or sometimes in the nation of Israel as a whole. We wanted our baby's name to reflect what God is doing in our family. Guinea-Bissau (and most of Africa south of the Sahara) is a savanna and Liora (lee-or-ah) is a Hebrew word that means "light". Since God has called our family to share His light in Africa we chose her name to reflect that calling.

We might be biased but we are pretty sure she's the cutest baby in the history of babies and we're so excited to see the ways that God will work in and through her in the future. While I was pregnant I came across this verse and it pretty much sums up our heart's desire for Savannah.



*"I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him.  
So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD."*

*—1 Samuel 1:27-28*

*Jason + Emily*

*Savannah Liora Atkins*  
*Born October 12, 2010 7lbs 10oz 22in*  
*Thank you for praying for our precious baby girl!*

