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Jason, Emily & Savannah Atkins

Back in Bissau *by Emily*

Settling back into life in Bissau has been fun. Everyone is in love with Savannah and everyone who meets her comments on how much she looks like Jason. In between taking care of and showing off our darling daughter, I've been unpacking our house. You never realize how much stuff you have until you have to take it all out of boxes! We are so blessed!

Every time we come back I'm struck by the beauty of this country. In our front yard there's a coconut tree, a guava tree, and a mango tree - all full of budding fruit. There's a banana tree behind our house that was planted last May. Now it's almost as tall as the two story guest house and it's working on a big bunch of bananas. It's not just the view that I love, it's the people. So many people have stopped by over the past few days to meet Savannah and to welcome us back. The Guinean people are so open and loving and I feel so privileged to be here.

In typical Guinean fashion, the day after we arrived there was a power surge that burned up almost all of the power bricks of the 38 laptops in our computer lab. So, Jason spent his first day on the job ordering new ones from the States and searching for replacements here that will be good enough to limp the classes along for a few weeks until the new ones can get here. Everyone at the Youth Center keeps telling Jason what a relief it is to have him back. ☺

I'm looking forward to the day when our boxes are unpacked and everything is washed and put away, Savannah's little room is finished, our kitchen is stocked, and life can settle into a normal pattern. I don't think it's too many weeks away ☺

Getting Around *by Emily*

Now that we're back, one of the main decisions we have to make is about transportation. Our little scooter that was stolen right before we left Bissau was perfect for two, but wouldn't have been a good idea for three. ☺ Our projects are getting more spread out so we've been evaluating what our best option is for transportation. Yesterday when Jason tried to come back from Mansoa he spent two and one-half hours to make the 36 mile trip (on a good road) because the jam packed minivan he was riding in broke down and after he waited for another to come along, it stopped to help yet another broken down van on the way. It makes us wonder if getting by on public transport is the best way to make use of our time. ☺

Vehicle options here in Guinea-Bissau are limited. Vehicles that have been here for awhile have had work done on them using incorrectly sized wrenches, poor quality replacement parts, and are generally not reliable, despite being incredibly expensive for what they are because of high import fees. Missionary friends of ours who have left the field are offering us a great deal on an '04 Explorer that they

continued...



In the kitchen loving the African weather and the cute clothes that go with it



Bananas growing on our tree



The Quinn's Faithful Steed

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Jason & Emily Atkins Account: 30115

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brought over to G.B. from the U.S. last year because they want the car to stay in use in missions. The offer they're making us is incredibly generous, as the \$9,500 they're asking would buy a 15-year old jalopy here. We've prayed and thought hard about it, and decided it is the direction we should go.

There's never a place where the "ounce of prevention" axiom is more true because of the medical facilities here, so having a safe car that has working seat belts to be able to hold Savannah's car seat is worth a lot. If anyone is interested in helping with the vehicle purchase, gifts can be designated for the it on the donation slip or the comments section of the online giving form.

Packing Every Inch *by Jason*

The last several months in Michigan were a fun, busy, exciting time leading up to leaving. We had lots of fun spending time with family and friends. We also got the opportunity to do the purchasing for the solar system, and pack up the shipping container with the system components as well as a few goodies, to send along on a cargo freighter headed for Africa!

The solar system is a project that is a bit intimidating for me in its scale. I've never been involved in anything this big, electrically speaking. The panels will cover an area about the size of one side of a volleyball court. There are sixty solar panels, in full sun they'll produce 12.9kw per hour, roughly the amount an average American household uses in 12 hours. Here at the youth center, that will be enough (we hope!) to power our guesthouse, residences, water pumps, shop tools, classroom air conditioners, projectors, and forty classroom computers! The system will have connections that are carrying 130amps, which is a lot! Needless to say, I did a lot of reading and studying to make sure we bought the proper equipment to hook it all up correctly and safely. The center has committed one of the biggest donations it's ever received to funding the project, so there's a bit of pressure to make sure that it all gets here and works correctly once it's built!

The last several weeks involved some last minute buying for the solar system, Sam's, Target, and Wal-mart runs for household supplies, and a lot of packing! The smaller things were all packed into wooden crates that we built, each about 7'x3.5'x3.5'. The entire shipping container cost about \$8000 to send, so we wanted to make sure we got as much in it as we could. Trying to fit all of those hundreds of boxes into the crates without leaving any unused space was a lot like a week-long game of 3D Tetris! The container is due in port here in Bissau in late March, so hopefully we'll be able to open it up sometime in April.

The power system will produce in full sunlight each hour enough to:

- ⦿ Drive a Chevy Volt 80 miles
- ⦿ Power a CFL light bulb for 36 days straight
- ⦿ Weld 1/2" thick steel plate for an hour
- ⦿ Run a microwave for 10 hours

We have big thank-you's to send to:

- ⦿ PTL Engineering where we got lots of help packing and loading the container
- ⦿ Everlast Lighting who donated a bunch of extremely nice, uber energy efficient lights that are going to help cut down on our power usage while making the center look mighty classy!



Some friends from Ohio who came up to help load up a few crates



One of the super efficient lights donated by Everlast Lighting in Jackson



One of the 60 solar panels. They're about 6 feet by 3 feet each!



We packed a few of the crates at Jason's parents' house and then trucked it over to the warehouse where we packed the rest of them



Crates lined up to get filled in what Jason calls the world's most challenging 3D Tetris game



That's a lot of crates. I wonder if it will all fit?



The shipping container all packed up, on the truck, and headed for the boat to Africa



They're filling up



Five large crates and one smaller one, three pallets of panels, four chalkboards and some heavy machinery snug as a bug in a rug!

Jason + Emily

We also made an eight minute video of the container packing process:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YKNOYuzrQo>