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Jason, Emily & Savannah Atkins

Financial Update *by Jason*

There have been a couple of major changes in our expenses the last few months that are causing us some difficulty on the funding front. We're looking for more monthly supporters to help make up the gap so that we don't have to come home early to raise money. We'd really appreciate your prayer and help spreading the word to anyone you know who might be interested in joining us.

Since the beginning of our time here in Bissau, we've been operating on less than 75% of our budget. We've been able to do that because of some generous giving at the beginning of our ministry, which gave us a reserve. Most months, by carefully spending less than we had budgeted in some areas, such as not purchasing equipment for the youth center, we've managed to only use a few hundred dollars a month of that cushion.

For several years we've been able to use bits of the cushion each month. Now however, the situation has been complicated by some increased expenses, primarily a big increase in our health insurance costs – an expense we don't have any way to minimize. The effect of this is that instead of being able to continue on as we have for several more years, the amount of the cushion we'll use each month, even with careful planning, has grown such that we won't have enough to make up the gap - in a matter of months.

We greatly appreciate all of the loving support that has been poured over us since we came to Guinea-Bissau for the first time in 2006. We love what we do here. We love that we're able to be here. We really feel like the work we've been called to is worth our time and energy and makes a difference in the lives of a lot of Guineans. We appreciate the people who go above and beyond to support our ministry and we're praying that God would lead more people to get involved financially. When we did our new budget for this fiscal year and realized that we were in trouble we started praying hard for guidance and over the past two months four families have contacted us to say that they want to start supporting us monthly! If you think God might be leading you to join our support team would you please pray about it?

Following Christ is supposed to bring a level of uncertainty with it. We serve a big God who works in a lot of ways we don't understand and He calls us to follow still. As we've been thinking and praying about what else we can do we are heartbroken at the thought of having to leave. Each time we receive a financial report from YFC we wonder if we're going to have to move back to the States in the next few months. Life here is stressful in many ways, and while God has given us the grace to adjust to many of those stresses, they still take their toll. We would love to be able to focus totally on the work that God has for us here instead of worrying about how much longer we're going to be able to stay

Q: **How much does this have to do with the new car?**

A: **Almost nothing, the missionary family that sold it to us is letting us pay a little over \$200 a month for it, which we're paying out of our salary.**

Q: **How much more is needed?**

A: **About \$1,000 a month to cover the health care increases and allow us to do the projects that are in our budget.**

Q: **I don't have any money, what else can I do?**

A: **We'd love to be put in contact with churches or friends who may be interested in supporting the work we've been called to do here.**

More than anything, please pray with us that God would bring people to our support team and show us how He wants us to move forward. If you have any questions please email us: jasonpatkins@gmail.com or emilymarieatkins@gmail.com

continued...

Contributions are under the control and administration of YFC/USA and are tax-deductible.

www.yfc.org/give

Please make checks payable to

YOUTHFORCHRISTUSA
PO Box 4478
Englewood, CO 80155

For the ministry of:

Jason & Emily Atkins Account: 30115

Serving with Youth for Christ / Guinea-Bissau, Africa

Donation Information:

Check # _____ Amount _____

Please apply this to my pledge.

This is a new pledge per month of: \$500 \$200 \$100 \$75 \$50 other

This is a one-time gift for their ministry.

This is a gift towards the vehicle

Please send me information regarding automatic monthly Electronic Fund Transfer

Me and My Assistant *by Emily*

I love teaching and when we got here I really wanted to help out with the advanced English internship that started in January, but I wasn't too sure if I was going to be able to fit classroom time into my schedule with my little tag-a-long, Savannah. Right after we arrived Jason and I started praying about how I could be involved, and then I got a great idea – I could teach at our house. We have a little front porch that's just right for 15 students and a teacher (with a tiny assistant) to cram onto, so I asked the leadership of the English department what they thought about the idea. They were overjoyed and the next weekend Savannah and I started our six week class.

The class ended last week and I'm so glad that I had the chance to teach it.

The main focus of the class was improving the students' writing. At the end of the internship we chose some of the interns to be English teachers, so I also spent time on what the Bible says about teaching and what Youth for Christ expects from it's professional teachers.

Savannah was a complete angel. Most days she just rode around on my hip and smiled at everyone for the first half hour or so and then I tucked her into her bouncy seat and she took a nap for the last hour. There were a few times when I gave the students something quick to work on and brought the assistant inside for a much needed diaper change, but aside from that she was a perfect little helper in every way.

Construction Update *by Jason*

We've had a month full of busy preparation, and things are about ready to start blooming! I mean that metaphorically, while plants are just starting to bloom for you poor people who suffered through the winter, they never stop here. ☺ No, I mean our different projects! The shipping container carrying the solar system arrived in Bissau on March 27. It took us several weeks to convince the shipping company that it was in fact here after it arrived, because of a paperwork error on their part. Now, the container documents have been filed and are making the rounds through the various government offices that need to approve them. They've been held up by silly things like the government building not having power for several days to be able to print the authorization form, and the department head not being there to be able to sign the piece of paper. At any rate, after they return from Easter vacation, we're expecting the container to be authorized and released in the next week or two, right around the beginning of May.

We've also been preparing for the solar system by building the support structure it will sit on. It's going to occupy a fairly big space, so we couldn't put it just anywhere. We had to balance the need for avoiding shade, staying away from the edge of the center where it would be easier for thieves to reach, and staying away from the court so no errant soccer balls would crack any panels. We've got our spot picked out and have started to build the structure, which will be reinforced concrete pillars, on top of which we'll build a steel frame to hold all of the panels. We've sunk eight 3'x3'x5' footings and are starting to pour the pillars today. This project has led us down a few necessary rabbit trails, mainly that we needed a cement mixer and didn't have the money for a new one – so we've found the rusty body of a 1989 Italian mixer and fixed it up – it's working great now!

Here are a few pictures of the construction progress. There are much more detailed descriptions and more pictures of the whole construction progress on my blog at jasonpatkins.blogspot.com

Jason + Emily



Sitting on our front porch grading papers for class



Lining up to pour the first pillar



The yard in front of the guest house where the solar system will be. You can see several rebar skeletons that will be cement pillars in a few days



After a lot of sanding and some rust proofing primer the old cement mixer is getting pretty in preparation for its new motor