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**Jason, Emily & Savannah Atkins**

**Check Check Check!** *by Emily*

You know those things on your "to do" list that aren't urgent and just keep getting bumped to next week, next month, or possibly next decade? After a while lists get so clogged up with stuff like that that they seem completely overwhelming! This past month Jason's been making an effort to broom out his "to do" list. He has two guys working for him that he's trained. While he's measuring and welding, they're cutting, sanding, and painting. Together they've been spending a day here and a week there making all kinds of stuff.

▪ **Teacher's Desks:**

With 24 teachers teaching more than 50 English, French, and Computer classes every day, the classrooms in the Youth Center are being used constantly – as one class walks out the next class walks in. That's great for everyone but the teachers themselves. They're always sitting in the back of another teacher's class to grade papers and walking in and out of the computer classes to print tests and handouts. The leadership of the Center decided that the teachers needed a work room, so they built it and this month Jason designed and welded desks and a printer stand to give the teachers a place to work.

▪ **Jitterbug:**

Jason welded up this tool to push the little rock pieces down out of the top inch or so of cement when pouring a slab so that the floor doesn't chip as easily. People here hadn't heard of it, but a friend from the States suggested it. We're excited to try it out and see if it makes a big difference.

▪ **Bunk Beds:**

Our teammates in the village of Mansoa are building a dorm to house the students that come to their three-month discipleship school. Right now they only have room for 8 to 12 students a semester, but after the dorm is completed they'll have room for 100. There's nowhere to buy bunk beds here, so Jason drew up some designs and started building one. The head and foot are done and look great. Once we get the design all worked out we could end up making as many as 50 for the dorm.

▪ **Volleyball:**

Last year we brought over a volleyball net for the court, and this month Jason made poles for it. The court is already used for tennis, basketball, and soccer, but on Saturday afternoons the volleyball net goes up and Jason's been having a great time teaching lots of different people how to play.

▪ **Sandbox:**

Since Bissau is the capital city, lots of missionaries who live out in the villages come into Bissau to rest, use the internet, buy groceries, and run all kinds of other errands. Many of those people have become our friends and it's a rare week that doesn't see different people eating with us. Many of the people who stay at the Guest House have kids and Savannah loves to share her toys with them. This month Jason spent a weekend adding a new super fun toy – a giant sandbox for Savannah and all of her little friends.



*Jason's new jitterbug-welded, sanded, painted, and ready to go*



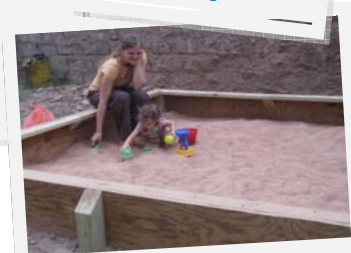
*The stand Jason welded to get the printer off of the floor along with the very grubby Jason who welded it*



*The head and the foot of the bunk bed Jason designed*



*Playing volleyball at the Youth Center. You can see the solar panels high in the air above them ☺*



*Yay! Sandbox time!*

*Continued...*

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He's also been welding up new shelves for the shop, storm shutters for the houses in Mansoa, and fixing all kinds of little things around the Center that have broken over the past few months.

### By Our Love *by Emily*

The month of February always makes me think about love. Our friends and coworkers here do such a great job of loving us even though we make our share of cultural mistakes.

☺ In the end of January, Jason and I were talking about how loved we feel and Jason brought up Jesus' words about love in John 13.

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* – John 13:34-35

We often think about loving non-Christians to show them the love of Christ but in these verses Jesus is saying that non-Christians will understand the love of Christ by the way that Christians love each other. In honor of Valentine's Day we decided to go out of our way this month to show love to other Christians.

We took two bags of groceries to an awesome Christian family who takes care of four extra kids from the neighborhood whose families can't care for them. We had a tea party for some single missionaries who live next door. We arranged for a Guinean mom to come over and use our computer to talk to her two daughters in Brazil on Skype. We made presents for missionary friends here in Guinea-Bissau to remind them that we're praying for them, and we wrote encouraging notes to all of the workers at the Youth Center with a little piece of candy attached.

Just to show you how something small can make a big difference – I saw some bright orange, very fancy, eyelet lace type fabric, bought it, and took it to my friend Virginia. She loved it, and I was happy. Then a few weeks later she came to my house with a bag in her hand and she was so excited. She pulled out a beautiful dress, with a matching skirt and head scarf that she had made from the fabric I gave her. She loved the dress so much that as soon as she finished it she brought it over so that I could see her wearing it, and she put it on and turned all around. She told me that she's never had a dress made from fabric that fancy before and she felt beautiful. She asked me to take her picture and print her a copy. I never realized how much a little something extra special would mean.

We had a good time thinking up plans to go out of our way to show love to people around us. We decided that we want to make an effort every week to go out of our way to do one extra thing to show a fellow believer how much God loves them.

### Solar Power System Up and Running *by Jason*

The solar power system's first month of being fully up to finished capacity was a major success! The system saved about \$820 worth of generator fuel, almost halving our normal bill! The system so far has generated over 1 megawatt hour of electricity, powering the entire youth center each day from morning until about 4:30 pm. We're also really glad to have power on the weekends now!

### Campaign Craze *by Emily*

Elections in the US are crazy because of constant campaign ads and people polarized by the loud opinions of a minority of political extremists; but elections in Guinea-Bissau are crazy because of blatant corruption, violent protests, and rigged votes. On March 18 the people of Guinea-Bissau will elect a new President to replace President Sanha (elected in 2009) who got sick and passed away at the beginning of this year. Over the past 17 years, none of the presidents elected here have finished their five-year terms. All three of the guys before President Sanha were either kicked out by coups or assassinated.

There have already been demonstrations because the voter register hasn't been updated since the 2009 election. Protesters are claiming that up to 100,000 people have turned 18 since then and should be allowed to vote (there are only around 600,000 eligible voters on the register, so 100,000 is a big swing!) People are also upset with the government because the public school teachers nationwide are on their third strike of the year due to the fact that the government hasn't been paying them. If they strike much longer the entire school year might have to be cancelled.

In the middle of all of this we have been hearing some cool ways that God has been at work. The wife of the Prime Minister got saved several months ago and she has gotten really active in our church. Several other leaders in the government have been turning to the church in the past few months interested in things ranging from English classes to large joint projects.

Please pray for peace during the election process and that God would raise up leaders in the government who would seek and follow the Lord!

*Jason + Emily*



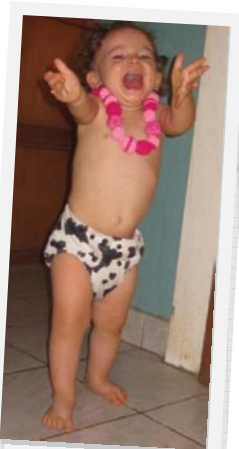
*One of the shutters for the houses in Mansoa drying in the sun*



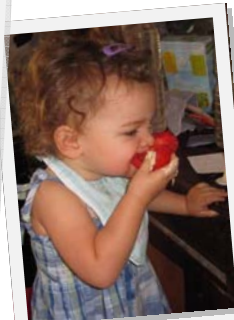
*Savannah's first tea party*



*Virginia in her new dress ☺*



*This picture pretty much sums up Savannah since she started walking-she runs everywhere and giggles with glee*



*Munching her favorite food in the whole world - a tomato. Yes, she does have dough on her hand, she was "helping" me knead bread when she grabbed the tomato.*



*One of Savannah's favorite activities when we're on the porch is taking Sydney's food dish and feeding her one piece at a time. Keeps them both occupied*