



Ben and Katy Ray

Link Letter no. 30 | March 2023

Contact details:
benandkaty@hotmail.co.uk



Location: Tanzania



What we do: Showing God's love and changing attitudes in the community through providing training and employment for disabled people

Dear friends,

Land Cruiser challenge

How many single mattresses can you get into a Land Cruiser? As you can see (pictured), Bishop Joseph attempted to find out before heading for St Michael's School, Kilolo (the diocesan secondary school) back in February. Very sadly, the boarding school had suffered a series of fires in the girls' dormitory. We thank God no one was seriously hurt, but a number of students fainted with shock after the first (of three fires in one week) had been extinguished. The bedding was a donation from the staff at the Neema Crafts Centre. Police are suspecting arson, but currently the culprit is unknown. Please pray for the diocese and the school as they regroup and rebuild after this harrowing event.



23 mattresses, 52 sheets
and 27 blankets

Coming soon...

We're getting ready to welcome Hannah and Joseph Adams to Neema Crafts in April. They will spend their first couple of months learning Kiswahili and Tanzanian Sign Language (TSL), then we'll be slowly easing them into the many (and varied!) responsibilities of running the centre. Within the management team, they will be joined by Diana Nzagi, our operations manager (see last link letter), and Erick Moshi, our new accountant and business trainer. Please do pray for the four of them as we prepare to place the running of the centre into their capable hands from August.

Erick Moshi

Erick, 32, first made contact with Neema in 2013 when he volunteered his spare time as an undergraduate in community development at Tumaini University. Ten years later, he has just left his home in Dar es Salaam to take up his new post with us. Erick says: "I love Neema Crafts because it is taking care of a community that was previously left behind. It feels good to be part of the transformation taking place here – changing others' perceptions about people with disabilities and also improving the lives of its participants. In my new role at Neema, I would appreciate prayer for wisdom and good decision making so that the outcomes of what we do have positive impacts in every direction."

Hunting in Arusha

The five of us Rays spent February half-term up in Usa River near Arusha. We hope this town will soon become our new home. We are very excited about sending our children to the local international school there and continuing to grow the impact of SAFI Tanzania (our new NGO) from this well-connected city. The current

Support Ben and Katy:
churchmissionsociety.org/ray

**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



challenge is finding a place to live! Rents are extremely high in this part of Tanzania, to the point that we're considering building our own house. Half-term was spent hunting for plots and understanding the lay of the land. Please pray with us as we look for the right space for a family home, new offices, design workshop and outlet.

Sad news

Very early in the morning, on our way to Arusha, we were nearing Dodoma when we had a call from the diocese office. We were told that Yared Kisalodya had taken his own life the evening before. We quickly turned the car around and headed back to help with the funeral preparations. You may remember, Yared was our chaplain at Neema Crafts, but had been working at his own parish church for the last three years. Rev Kisalodya had suffered an unexplained mental breakdown back in December. He had visited a neurologist in Iringa and

was awaiting an appointment for a CT scan when this tragedy happened. His wife Happy works with us at our home and we are close to their three children Anna (22), Stephen (19) and Alpha (5). Please do remember each of them in your prayers.

George's trike

George is a deaf and physically disabled shoemaker in Kilolo. The restoration of his hand-trike is a great example of what is being achieved by the Neema social enterprise in partnership with SAFi. At Neema, persons with disabilities (PWDs) produce crafts to earn a living. These crafts are bought wholesale by SAFi and sold for a profit in affluent parts of the country. With the profits, SAFi employed a disabled bike mechanic to fix George's dilapidated trike. George has been given a working hand-trike to ply his trade all over Kilolo town. He's mobile within his home now too with a lightweight wheelchair also supplied by SAFi.



Any Dream Will Do

Last summer, we spoke to many of you about our fears for Zaki (9) and Alessia's (7) schooling this year. They've been faring well so far at our Ugandan friend's new international school in Iringa. Zaki will soon be learning from his fifth classroom teacher – his current teacher is a Swedish lecturer and his next will be an Iranian chemist. Two days a week he joins a project-based "hybrid" class in which he works alongside 14-year-olds, led by a music teacher from the UK.



Alessia has had only one teacher this year and has lots of similar aged girls in her class. Unfortunately, she's missed at least four weeks due to sickness this year. Please do pray for good immunity for our children in the coming months and adaptability to all the change.

Legacy school is performing the musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at the end of this month. Ben will finally be fulfilling his lifelong dreams of stardom when he sings alongside the children in the role of Joseph. Meanwhile, Katy will be shunning the limelight, but designing all of the costumes.



Thank you to those churches who've asked us if we plan to come back to the UK this summer. Because of all we have to do before term starts here in August, we've decided to stay put in Tanzania until December.

With love and blessings,

Ben and Katy X

Photos from top to bottom: Erick Moshi, Neema's new accountant; Ferdinand gets measured up for a new wheelchair by SAFi; sticking around; Zaki makes the most of Iringa.



Going further with Church Mission Society

Stories from the edges: Find out how God is meeting people on the edges around the world through CMS people in mission. Go to churchmissionsociety.org/stories

Please note that opinions expressed in link letters are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400. Church Mission Society is a mission community acknowledged by the Church of England. Registered Company No. 6985330 and Registered Charity No. 1131655 (England and Wales) and SC047163 (Scotland).