

August 2024

KEEPING UP WITH KENYA

Monthly Newsletter

WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US?

Rachel

I will be honest that my time with the Lord has looked differently this month. My days have been long at school so I haven't had capacity for deep Bible study at night. However, Caleb and I have been doing New Morning Mercies together on our morning commutes. It has been a sweet time to remember God's promises and goodness.



"God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble." Psalm 46:1

Caleb

This past month, hope has been a common theme in my reading of Acts, the Bible study I am in at West Nairobi School, and the Good Morning Mercies book that Rachel and I read together in the mornings. In Acts, we read about how God wants His message of hope and salvation to extend to all people! In Colossians 1:5, Paul gives thanks "because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the gospel". And finally, Good Morning Mercies points to my verses for the month.

Psalms 20:6-7 "Now this I know: The Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."



WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL

School started on Wednesday, August 7th, it was a short week and a great way to get back into the swing of things. This year, Caleb is teaching two World Geography classes, one World History course, and a new AP Modern World History course. Rachel is delighted to be with her favorite age group, Kindergarteners.

The start of the school year has been slow for both of us due to significant renovations in Rachel's new room, which wasn't ready until just before school began. And as of August 31st, Caleb is still waiting for his classroom in the new building. The rainy season in Kenya delayed construction projects last year and over the summer.

Despite these challenges, we are thrilled to be teaching and very grateful for your donations of classroom materials for Rachel's class. Your support was crucial in getting her elementary room ready!

We got an opportunity to grab dinner with all the second year staff members at West Nairobi. It was an evening filled with laughter and great conversations. This is Rachel's first year teaching at West Nairobi School and it was encouraging for her to feel that everyone's workload is feeling a bit lighter as they start their second year at the school. God has been so kind to provide us with this community of people.





WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL

The progression of Rachel's room all in the month of August.



Above is the room ready to start setting up.

Finishing Up Construction

Below is the finished classroom!

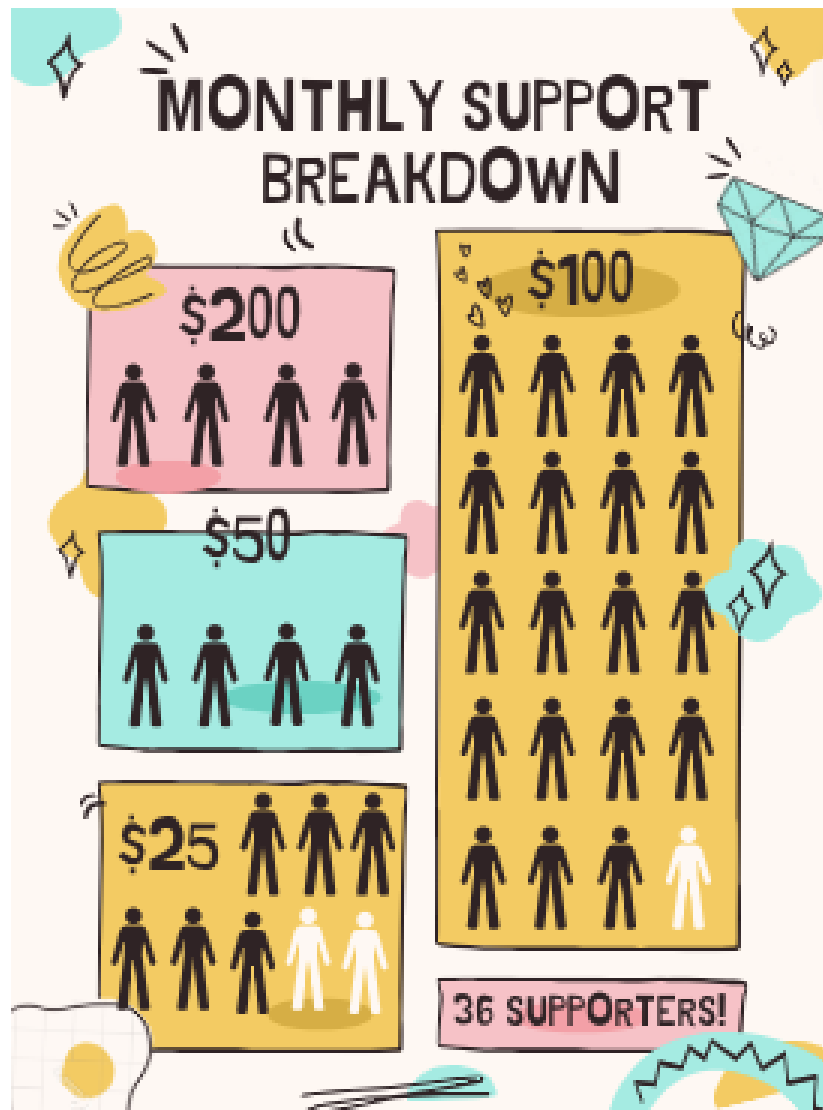


Every Wednesday we pray as a staff for a grade level. I am the only kindergarten class at the school so I got to host everyone in my classroom recently. It was such a blessing! I was able to host my students' prayer requests on the screen and hear the teachers in small groups praying. This transition to Christian education from public education has been so sweet.



SUPPORT RAISING UPDATE

Would you pray about financially supporting us at West Nairobi School?



\$150 monthly remaining! WOW!

The chart to the above represents our combined support goal during our time at West Nairobi School. The dark figures represent commitments and the light figures represent what is still needed.

Currently, there are **33 of the 36 (95%)** needed supporters that have made commitments. We continue to pray and trust God that He will provide the finances we need during this season of life.

If you or someone you know would like to give, please email us at calebmdarden@gmail.com or rachelyoung826@yahoo.com.

MERCY Nairobi

August has been a very busy and fruitful month at the church. Our first residency program has started. You can see Pastor Allan pictured with the 8 residents. These young adults have made a 1-year commitment to study theology, serve in different ministries, and pray through God's next steps for their lives whether that's in full time ministry or in their career fields.



The church has hired two new staff members. Niko is our new missions director. He already has great experience with missions in Kenya and other countries. We are excited for the ideas he will bring to our church. He has already started a ministry called 047 (Nairobi's county code). This ministry happens weekly and provides an opportunity for homeless people in the city to shower, get clean clothes, eat a warm meal, and hear the gospel.

Please pray that the resources will be available for this ministry to continue. 100+ people are already showing up and it has only been a ministry for 3 weeks. Winnie has been hired for administrative work to support staff, church members, and visitors.



The college director has started a ministry for freshmen at the local college campuses. The church residents and other members visited college campuses to meet freshmen and to have gospel conversations with them. Now that those relationships have been built, they are meeting at the church building and having a great turnout each week.

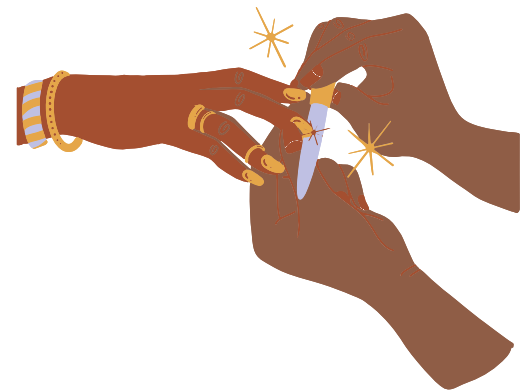
We have been honored to be asked by a young couple at our church to be their mentors and accountability partners. This role allows us to share our experiences and insights, fostering their spiritual growth and strengthening their relationship.

MERCY *house*

Jesus
Saves!

The 4 current women living at Mercy House have all accepted salvation! WOW! This is why Mercy House was started. A personal, relationship with Jesus is the best thing we could give these women. I am so proud of them all and can already see the Spirit softening them and changing their spirits.

The women have also made great progress in building their independence. Three women have completed their hair training and have started apartment hunting. I have spoken with one woman that has already found the apartment she wants to move into. She is so excited when she talks about her future. The fourth woman is still working on her high school education and attending nail tech school. It is so humbling getting to see these women go through the Mercy House program from beginning to end (hopefully soon). The current goal is to have all women transitioned to independent living by December.



Mercy House has been given custody of 2 small children (1.5 years & 3.5 years). Please pray for the leadership, matrons, and residents as they love on these two children and try to make wise decisions for them.

PERSONAL UPDATE

August 26 was Rachel's birthday and this birthday felt like Kenya was home. Caleb treated Rachel to some time at the spa. It was so nice to relax together. Then on Saturday, we had friends from work and church over for pizza and game night. The Kenyans brought some fun Kenyan traditions into the evening. They sang a Kenyan song while she blew out the candles. They also gathered various bowls and pitchers with water and washed me. The tradition of washing is very common in Kenya on birthdays. This was Rachel's third birthday in Kenya and she was excited to finally be washed on her birthday.



Recently, West Nairobi School has experienced an illness affecting students and staff across all grades. This has led to a lot of absences in elementary and secondary. Luckily, most people are only sick for 3 to 4 days and then back to full health. Unfortunately, there have been some, including Rachel, who have gotten sick for around two weeks.

We are currently praying for direction on the next steps for Caleb's Ph.D. program. As he completes his classwork this semester and transitions to his dissertation in January 2025, he is contemplating focusing on Kenyan history due to the distance from American historical archives.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Rachel

-good health and building immunity to the virus germs

-building a Biblical worldview into my educational philosophy as I transition from public education to Christian education

-mental energy to dive back into my Acts Bible study

Caleb

-To find a dissertation mentor for a Kenyan topic

-Overall wisdom with next steps for being able to finish the PhD

-gut health

West Nairobi School

-good health and recovery for all staff and students that are sick

-all new staff to continue adjusting to a new school and home

-for the new building to be completed and for the staff moving in (like Caleb) to have a smooth transition

Mercy Nairobi Church & Mercy House

-047 ministry

-college ministry (especially building relationships with freshmen)

-MH: women as they begin processing their transition plans for the next few months