



"The bestest luck ever"
Steve Vinton, May 18, 2007

I have some glimmer of good news concerning Sawala. A little girl in Canada prayed that we would have "the bestest luck ever" – and maybe just maybe we might have gotten it! We're definitely not out of the woods yet my friends BUT rather than the inspector we affectionately refer to as the "dragon lady" who has always held things up, the inspectors who were sent to inspect our school were nice, polite, methodical, and congratulatory to Godfrey for the fact that we are trying to give the kids in the village a chance to get an education. The glass can be half empty or it can be half full and these guys chose to see our glass as half full. They seemed to only see the good in what the people had done to build that school. My prayer was that the inspectors would see behind the stones all of the back-breaking labor, would look at the walls and see all of the hard work that went into making those bricks, would look at the roofing and know that good people had sacrificed to give the money for it. Their report of course finds a few short-comings in the school (that was to be totally expected and shouldn't be in general a problem) and contains a list of recommendations of improvements that we should make (and that too is "normal"), but these inspectors very wonderfully accentuated all that was positive in our school and the bottom line, well, they gave their recommendation that on balance with all things weighed and balanced the school be registered! That is the hugest of sighs of relief.

I received over 160 emails from people literally all over the world in the last few days to express their interest and to promise their prayers and to say that they were concerned for and cared about those kids in the little village of Sawala. Allow me to share with you one of those emails from a group of students in a 6th grade class in Canada that I got yesterday:

My grade 6 class is praying for you today. They have some things to say to you. I hope with all my heart that you get your wishes.

Hi, my name is Sarah and I like going to school. I hope and pray that your kids get to go to school too.

Hi, I work with Mr. Roque and the grade 6 class. I know what a joy it is to see the kids learn and feel good about themselves. Mr. Roque has brought this to our class and I know with prayers you too will bring joy and learning to the children there. Good Luck in all you are doing. Lynda Dopp

Hi my name is Shane and I go to St. John's School and I hope you get a new school because school is fun and a great experience we hope and pray that you get a new school and it is very kind to try and give them a new school.

Hi I'm Kendra I go to St. John's School. I hope that lady changes her mind then all of the kids love the new school and I will too and all of the students will be happy with the new school.

Hello my name is Tesa I think that building new schools is very generous of you and very helpful for lots of kids. Everyone deserves a chance to get an education and probably they are very smart. You should be proud to help these kids and make paths for them in their future.

Hi, we're hoping and praying that that the school gets opened. It is very kind of you to do this. Best wishes, Sidney

My name is Emitte I hope the school opens.

Hi, my name is Kelby. I really hope that the school opens, and I wish the best of luck to you. Every child deserves a chance for their own education.

Hello, my name is Melanie and I think that this is a great idea to give the children in Tanzania the opportunity to go to school and get an education. I wish you the best of luck and that you succeed with you goal.

Hi my name is Vanessa I hope that you get this school open I think this was a Great Idea.

Hi my name is Shaina and I hope that you get the school open because it is a great thing and it sounds great.

Hi, my name is Solomia. I think that what you're doing for these children is a great opportunity for them to learn and get educated. I think everyone should go to school. All kids in the world should have schools so they can experience reading and doing math, anyways i hope you have the bestest luck ever. Sincerely, Solomia ps. good luck again.

Hi, my name is Julio. I hope your school will have great success. I hope all the kids have great success too. Me and my school have prayed for your school and the children for good luck.

Hi, my name is Maria. I think is really nice of you to help kids in Tanzania go to school you didn't have to this, but you did so its really nice of you to do that. Good luck!!

Hello my name is Claudia and dude I think you are amazing building these schools. Every child should have the same educational opportunities that I have here in Canada. I am praying for you every night because this is a larger than life opportunity for the 138 kids. I think you are a hero doing this for all the kids. I really hope that you are able to make this school. I am going to tell my church about you and we will pray for you. I hope you will keep building schools for needy children all around the world. I hope the inspector changes her ways and shows compassion for your school. Remember you are in my prayers. Good luck, Claudia

I hope you know now that we're thinking of you guys. Carlos Roque Grade 6

How could any man doing what I'm doing read an email like that and worry about what's ahead of us. I know I have to be cautious and not get overly excited yet. We have made it over an extremely major hurdle Thursday, but on Monday their report goes to the zonal chief inspector in Mbeya and he will have to agree that their recommendation is valid. That's a scary hurdle and a big one. It is his signature that enables us then to move to the national level, where we need then the approval of the national chief inspector, then we need the signature of the chief educational officer, and then we need the signature of the head of the national examinations council. We have exactly 43 days to complete that process.

And so now as I rejoice in the "very bestest of luck" that we were fortunate enough to have, I sit here thinking about Claudia, the nice little girl in a sixth grade class in Canada. That little girl hit the nail on the head and she made it personal in a way that counts --- ***Every child should have the same educational opportunities that I have here in Canada.*** If a 6th grader can see and speak that truth so clearly then indeed there is hope for the future. I dream of that day when ever little girl in every village here in Tanzania gets to go to school. And if we've got so far to go that we can't make that a reality in my life then I want us to get so close so that even if I personally never see that day well then I want Claudia to see that day. I have resigned myself to the fact that the world doesn't care if this happens or not, but even if the whole world doesn't care anything about these kids, then we who are Christians will! I know it's impossible to build enough schools in this country so that every kid will get to go to school. But we're sure going to try.

Anyway enough of all of my philosophical musings and wishful thinking and dreams of magical days in the future. Time to return to the here and now. We need your prayers. We've got 43 days to go and 4 more signatures to get. Lest the bureaucratic pitfalls ahead of us seem overwhelming, and it would be easy to be discouraged because with "one signature down, four to go" and the knowledge that that first signature took a whopping nine months to get, well it might be easy to say that we'll never make it. But we've got to make it! Those kids in Sawala need to take those exams and they need to get to go to school and they need to have a future. So today is not a day to be discouraged or to look ahead to what is before us and to be afraid or timid or fearful. Today is a day to rejoice that we finally made it over the first big hurdle. That hurdle is the painful one. Hurdle number two is a doozy as well. And between hurdle number one and hurdle number two we have to pass through the "dragon lady" who always stymies us. They told Godfrey that she still has to sign off on their report before it goes to the chief inspector. Its thumbs up or thumbs down on Monday.