



Rosstracks

June 2009

Milestones

We have celebrated several milestones since our last letter in February.

Tyler officially became a teenager! He celebrated his 13th birthday in March with a fun-filled party with his five closest friends. *"The coolest thing about us is that all six of us were born in different countries."* ~ Tyler

Kristen too reached a milestone in March. She celebrated her Sweet 16 with her first mixed party (boys and girls) since she was seven. *"It's weird to think that my friends in America are driving now!"* ~Kristen (18yrs is the driving age here).



John and I celebrated our 20th Anniversary this month!

The Unexpected Gift

God gave our family an unexpected gift in April. As many of you know, John grew up in Manila, Philippines. He has never been back since he left in 1985. However, he has always wanted to return and show me and the kids where he grew up. For those of you who know John's mom, Joan, you know that it has been her dream as well to return and show her grandchildren around.

Faith Academy has a great view of the Manila skyline.



In March, our organization let me know that they wanted to send me to Manila in April to help run a 2 week conflict resolution/mediation training program. What an incredible opportunity to do what I love and get to see Manila at the same time! From there, things snowballed quickly. It ended up that the rest of our family (and grandma Joan too) joined me for several days prior to the training. We had about 5 days together, then John and the kids flew back to Thailand to resume work/school, and I stayed for the 2 week training.

We got to visit the FEBC compound where John lived from age 4 to 18. We were given a tour of the radio station where John's parents worked. Our kids got to touch radio equipment that their grandpa Jim (who passed away in 1998) built, see the studio rooms where their grandparents broadcast programs, see photos of their grandparents behind the microphone doing their radio programs in those very rooms, search the archive library for their shows (unsuccessfully), and see the 300 ft radio tower that their dad climbed in his teens. The next day we got a tour of Faith Academy, where John went to school from K – 12th grade. We also got to eat many foods that are unavailable in Thailand – Dr. Pepper, Taco Bell, Chili's, Krispy Kreme.

The whole time we kept marveling that we were all actually in Manila together. How did such an amazing trip get thrown together so quickly? How did the week before my conference in Manila just happen to fall during the kid's spring break in Thailand, making the timing perfect? Why did Joan's airline



Sarah making her own doughnut at Krispy Kreme.



decide to give her a free round trip ticket from California, even though she didn't have quite enough miles? How did I end up with an expense paid trip to the one place I really wanted to go? How did we manage to find an incredible deal on Kuwait Airways for the others that was less than half the normal fare, which just happened to be on the days we needed it, and just happened to be between Thailand and

Manila? Did I mention that we just happened to get the last available seats on that flight? Why did the guesthouse offer us a 3 bedroom apartment for the same very low price as a regular room? The only answer we have is that God delights in giving good and unexpected gifts to his children!

Work/School

Kimberly – As you can guess, my workload was pretty backed up when I returned from almost three weeks in Manila. That, coupled with the fact that May is my busiest month anyway, made for some very long days/weeks. One of my main responsibilities is managing teachers. The months that they come and go (May and August) are very busy. Things have slowed down to a normal pace now, but will pick up at the end of July as new teachers start arriving.

John – The computer support, data conversions, web site updates, etc. never end so I'm constantly facing new challenges. We basically try to do whatever we can to help the Bible translators, language researchers and surveyors, administrators, etc. to get their work done without being hampered by computer issues. For example, some of the major things I did last week were:

- Traveled to the northern border to help transfer several languages of Bible translation text from an older computer into the translation software on the new computer and setup the required fonts and keyboards. The national translator I was helping brought 3 laptops from a neighboring country for me to work on. He was questioned at the border about the laptops and thankfully they let him through with no problems.
- Completed the first part of a program to convert older text from a minority language in a nearby country into the newer Unicode format.
- Worked on an updated template for a website that I'm in charge of.
- Figured out why the database engine for one of the translation programs would not install properly on a computer. We've seen this issue several times and I think I finally found a relatively easy work-around for this problem.
- Removed viruses from two computers.

Kids – The last day of school was on May 29th. It was a full year for each of them and they are now enjoying a much appreciated break!

Praise/Prayer

Finances – As the economy has fallen in the US, so has our monthly support. We reached an all-time low this month. That, coupled with some unexpected medical expenses, gave us some cause for concern. However, God surprised us yet again when we received an unexpected gift which helped. Please pray that our support would go back up to closer to where it should be.



Sarah's teachers presenting her with the Kindness Award at the 2nd grade end-of-the-year pool party.



Medical – Sarah is having orthodontic work done to correct her jaw/palate. There are some scary looking machines here and she is very brave. Please pray that the work done will be as painless as possible for her and that it would correct her problems.

I had to have an abscess removed from my eyelid. It was a pretty minor procedure, but it was my eye they were working on. Let's just say I wasn't as brave as Sarah when they were coming at me with scary equipment! It doesn't quite seem to be healing correctly, so I would appreciate your prayers.

Tyler broke his ankle last week. Please pray that it would heal completely and quickly.

Special Request – A tragedy occurred at the dorm across from the kid's school, which although was in a different organization, still affects us personally and as members of the community. The day after school ended, the dorm dad (and father of one of Tyler's close friends) made the decision to end his own life. Please pray for the widow and her two sons (13yrs and 9yrs) and for the students as they return to school in August.

Please pray for us for wisdom as we try to help our kids through this. In our family, the one who is most directly impacted is Tyler. We were only acquainted with the parents and Kristen had a friend in the dorm. Sarah doesn't know the circumstances and we have struggled with how to answer her questions.

However, Tyler was close friends with the oldest son, and another of his close friends lived in the dorm. It is hard for him and the rest of his group, but it has been encouraging to see the boys rally around their hurting friend. They are a very caring and sensitive group of 13 year old boys! It will be hard on all of the boys when the family returns to their home country in July.

With thankfulness for you who care about us and pray for us so faithfully,

John, Kimberly, Kristen, Tyler, & Sarah Ross

Serving with SIL International in Southeast Asia.

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