

Date: Friday, June 13, 2008, 12:50 AM

Hey Folks!

I feel like I've traveled for a very long to be here to write this email to ya'll. Yesterday I waited for almost 7 hrs along the road for transportation to town. Then, when it finally came I rode in the back of a pick-up truck with 20 other people (and 1 baby!) along the bumpy dirt road for 2 hrs to get to town. Boy, do I miss paved road!

Life in Zambia is good, everything is much much slower, and it feels very nice compared to the fast paced American lifestyle. One thing I am learning is to be patient and I mean very patient. Everything takes a long time in Zambia . Time is very elastic. When meetings are scheduled to start at 8am, it usually starts around 9:30 or even 10am and can go on for up to 6 hrs. I sat in a meeting once and it lasted 4 hrs, did I mention it was 90% in Bemba!

On another note, thank you to all who have sent me letters, cards, and care packages. Receiving things from home is the most uplifting and best part of my day. It makes me feel closer and more connected to home. If I could just request for a big favour, when sending clothes, please try to send dark colors. It gets very dusty in Zambia from time to time and I handwash all my clothes. Thus, it is a bit hard to wash white clothes. Also, please send me an email to let me know when you have sent a package and I will be expecting it. Sometimes, the other PCVs don't receive their packages. As always, it is good to write ~SISTER, or REVEREND, before my name or even write ~RELIGIOUS MATERIALS INSIDE on the outside of the box. This reduces the chances of people messing with the package. I was made recently aware that Priority mail has a flat rate package. The sender is able to fill up the entire box as fully as they desire and they pay only \$40 (I think). A few of you have requested for my address, here is it again:

Staci Pham PCV

P.O. Box 710150

Mansa, Luapula

Zambia

I am really enjoying the village but of course I also like the town. In town, I can buy cheese, ice cream and they even have apples and oranges! The village is beautiful but in terms of variety of foods it is lacking. There are only a few items I am able to purchase in the village, some are kapenta (small dried fish), some veggies, and seasonal fruits (bananas, avocados, ie). This is why I miss ~American~ food so much! America is so rich compared to Zambia .

Sometimes, the poverty level in Zambia breaks my heart. There is so much I want to do to help my village. Some people in the village don't even have shoes to walk and thus they walk around bare footed. The school kids uniforms are torn and have holes and missing buttons. I visited with the basic school (similar to elementary school in the US) and the desk were falling apart, some of the students were falling off their seats. I inquired if any students had ever been seriously injured due to the instability of the desk and chairs (the screws are not the proper size) and the head teacher stated one student was sent to the hospital due to a fall. Lastly, was made aware that

the some students were carrying plastic grocery bags for backpacks. Right now, I am helping a student in the village by paying for his education. He fetches my water from the well a couple of times a week and I pay for his classes. My neighbor Ba Emielie told me his mother died giving birth to the 13th child! Six of his siblings have died and the remainder live with their aunts and uncles. I am told the father is an alcoholic and physically abused the student (his name is Chiconde) so my neighbor has taken him in.

I am so excited to start working on my projects. Unfortunately, the PC don't want to us start writing proposals until late August. For now, I am just trying to work on small projects such as HIV testing and health education with my neighbors. There is so much work to be done and I need help. Please spread this email around to anyone/any organizations who are interested in working with me. We can definitely use the assistance. The village needs anything from shoes, to socks to band aids and school materials. They will be grateful for any assistance. Anyone interested can contact via email or texting, or both (Texting is probably faster since but I don't always get reception). My phone number is 097-896-4898. My village is in need of help and I am asking for you to help me by talking to others who are interested in helping me.

Much love,

Staci