



NURSE'S NOTES

CHARTING ON MY LIFE IN RWANDA

February, 2018

Volume 13, Issue 2

February! What a Month!

In my last newsletter, I shared about Baby Amanda and her need for surgery to remove the malfunctioning section of her lung. For months we tried to arrange the surgery which finally happened in February—one of the busiest months for us at Kibogora.

Amanda's mother, one of my nurses in neonatology, flew off to Kenya with Amanda for the surgery which took us down to two nurses per day in the NICU instead of three. At the same time we had a large medical team coming from Alabama, including a neonatologist and medical students learning neonatology. So fewer nurses, but more translating needing to be done by the nurses! I hired a nurse graduate, Valerie, who hadn't gotten a job yet, to translate for the team. I was told she was quite pregnant but didn't think of that as a limitation.

We started February with very few hospitalized babies, but the word must have gotten out because the number of babies kept increasing!! By the time the neonatology team left, we had eight babies who were 31 to 34 weeks gestation along with a lot of interesting cases! But now let me divide these two stories and tell them separately.

Valerie

Valerie did a great job of translating for the Alabama team, but one day she came to work in shock. She'd just had her 30 week prenatal visit and been told she was expecting twins! Good thing they told her when they did, as 10 days later she went into labor. Her babies, a boy and a girl each weighing just over 3 lbs.,



joined our batch of premature babies in the nursery! The babies are now off their oxygen and doing well; they just need to stay infection free and grow, so they can go home.



Baby Amanda

It was a real honor to be involved in Amanda's story—seeing how God provided step by step 1) for us to learn about the hospital in Kenya, 2) people stepping forward to give money for her surgery, 3) the surgeon agreeing to do the surgery, 4) Amanda and her mama flying to Kenya, 5) last minute money being given so her father could be there, 6) safety during the surgery, and 7) that the surgery was done on a Monday and Amanda was discharged on Saturday, so she could fly back to Rwanda on Sunday! Wow! Six days!

And yet despite watching God do all of this, I still found my faith wobbled at one point. Friends who live near the hospital invited Amanda and her mother to stay with them until hospitalization. Amanda's mom wrote me one day to say one friend had a bad respiratory infection. At that point getting a cold could have killed Amanda, and I asked God, "You didn't take Amanda all the way to Kenya for her to die there, did you?" As soon as I thought that, I realized, "Where is my faith!?!?" Of course, God was faithful, Amanda did not get sick, and the surgery went well. Amanda is now home and a happy, healthy little girl!! (The family says thank you so much for your prayers!)





What To Do In The Next Three Weeks?

The middle of March I'm leaving Rwanda for six weeks, so I'm looking at what I need to get done in the next three weeks—reinforce some of the nursing care tasks that have slipped, improve punctuality, get all the visa applications ready for the doctors coming while I'm gone, finish two quilts that are in process, make a presentation, apply to speak at a conference in October, attend meetings, and more. I can do this. ☺

Christian Medical and Dental Association

In March there's a ten day conference put on by the Christian Medical and Dental Association, USA. It's held every year, and its purpose is to offer continuing education classes on the latest practices for overseas Christian medical workers who need to keep their licenses up-to-date. An added bonus is the fellowship with others who are living overseas and working in healthcare.

I was really excited about the conference until I learned there'll be 800+ people in attendance. That number is a little overwhelming. Once I visited an orphanage here in Rwanda and saw a nine year old girl sitting behind an open door. The door created her little corner where she could be alone. I think I'll learn from her and find "my space" in the midst of the 800. ☺



A Promise

When I left the USA, I promised my sister's foster daughters that I'd come back to visit in one year. They're 7 and 4, so I felt that being gone for two years was too long for them—especially when during their early years, so many people disappeared from their lives. I wanted to make sure I wasn't one of those people.

So after Italy I'll fly home for one month to invest in the girls' lives. Then May 9th I'll be back to work in Rwanda! Whatsapp is such an amazing way to keep connected. I can send the girls pictures of the avocados growing on the trees here, pictures of strange bugs, my cats—ordinary daily things that I wouldn't send except for this easy convenient form of communication!

p.s. As of January 16, the girls are now adopted. My nieces!

Vacation

The roughest part about the conference is that it's held in Greece. Oh, bummer! ☹ I'm looking forward to exploring during the bit of time we have off. From the conference I go to visit friends in Italy for a week. Kayla worked at Kibogora for five months a few years ago. She and her husband are now stationed in Italy. Then I meet two more friends flying to Italy for a few days of sightseeing.

Airbnb and [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com) are such amazing options when traveling on a budget!!

Prayer Requests

- Safe travels
- Neonatology while I'm gone
- Learning valuable information at the medical conference

Praises

- God's supernatural protection of Amanda
- A chance to meet other Christian healthcare workers
- Time with friends and family



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