Barlow Alumni Travel Grant 2011

Supporting the Chums partnership of Key School, United States, Somer’s Park School, UK, and Chumbageni School, Tanzania

George Waymouth, Bates ’75
Middle School science teacher at The Key School, Annapolis, Maryland

Receiving the Barlow travel grant helped make possible a trip to Africa to support the Chums partnership between Key School in the United States, Somer’s Park School in the UK, and Chumbageni School in Tanga, Tanzania. The partnership was established in 2005, and received a Challenge 20/20 award from the National Association of Independent Schools in 2006. Over the past six years the schools in the partnership have collaborated on projects promoting global citizenship, with a focus on environmental sustainability and education. (View the following link for more information; [http://www.keyschool.org/about_key/external-partnerships/chums-partnership/index.aspx](http://www.keyschool.org/about_key/external-partnerships/chums-partnership/index.aspx)) My wife (Wendy Henderson Waymouth, Bates ’76) and I, both teachers at Key School, have been actively involved in the partnership since its inception. Although we have had the privilege of meeting with teachers from all three partnership schools at two conferences held at Somer’s Park in England, and have been hosts to members of the Somer’s Park and Chumbageni communities when they visited Key, this was our first opportunity to visit Chumbageni. During our visit to Tanga, it was our goal to gain a better understanding of the culture of the school and the surrounding community with an emphasis on supporting water-related study for Key’s sixth graders and planning a service learning trip to Tanzania for Key’s Upper School students. Our experiences also would provide an accurate view of life in Tanzania to enhance unit studies in kindergarten, third grade and in the eighth grade.

Developing an understanding of what life is like in Tanzania in support of unit studies in kindergarten, third grade and eighth grade

In contrast to the United States, Tanzania has a number of infrastructure difficulties that directly affect its residents. We observed the Tanzanians patient approach to living with unpaved roads, congestion and other traffic problems, lack of formal residential addresses, and rolling power outages. Religion played an important role in the lives of the people with whom we interacted, and we experienced first-hand their warmth, caring, sensitivity, and respect. Members of the Chumbageni community greeted us with open arms, welcomed us into their homes, and honored us with gifts. We shared meals and developed new friendships.

There are many children in Tanga whose parents have either died or become unable to care for them, often due to AIDS or malaria. These orphans are frequently taken in by other family members or caring people in the community. Many of the teachers at Chumbageni had taken orphans into their homes,
and the school has collaborated with Somer’s Park School to provide ugali, a porridge made from corn, to Chumbageni’s orphan population at break time each morning. Despite these efforts, we observed many children of all ages on the streets of Tanga who were not attending school. Educators at local schools are passionate about the value of education for breaking the cycle of poverty they see in their communities, and try hard to enroll as many children as possible in school. Primary school is free, but is not considered a priority by some of these families; however secondary school is inaccessible even to families who value education, as students must first pass an examination and then pay school fees that are beyond the means of many families. Local schools look for ways to provide secondary school scholarships to deserving students, but they are not able to help them all. Somer’s Park School has set up a registered charity, Chums for Watoto, watoto being the Kiswahili word for children, which provides secondary school scholarships for deserving Chumbageni students. When Wendy and I met with the head teachers from Tanga schools, a consistent concern was trying to find ways to reach out to and support these students. Interest was expressed in developing relationships with other American schools, in part to support this effort.

Use of water in Tanzania

Over the last few years water conservation has been a focus of the Chums partnership. Though water issues in Tanga exist, they are less severe than in outlying areas. Most homes had available water, although many residents use community wells. During the dry season however, water is often scarce for watering gardens, which many families rely upon for vegetables and fruit. At Key, I have worked with 6th graders to develop a drip irrigation system that is used to water the school gardens. (Follow this link for more information; http://www.keyschool.org/about_key/external-partnerships/chums-partnership/chums-projects-environmental-sustainability/index.aspx. Chumbageni has been interested in using this system and also believes that the watering method could be useful to its students’ families. During our trip it was a priority to educate the school community about drip irrigation and help it to prepare a system for one of its gardens. Several head teachers of schools in Tanga also were interested in the project and came to observe the installation of the system by Chumbageni students and teachers. Later that day, we met with the city manager who informed us about the lead Tanga was taking in promoting the use of rain barrels and drip irrigation. He applauded the Chums partnership for its use of drip irrigation and indicated that, to the best of his knowledge, the system installed at Chumbageni was the first of its kind at a local school.

Implementation of the drip irrigation system at Chumbageni is a good beginning. I am encouraged that at least one other head teacher expressed interest in setting up a similar system at his school. The systems will not be effective, however, if they are not maintained. In addition, the irrigation method is even more necessary in areas outside of cities.

On our travels throughout Tanzania, we observed the difficulties that people faced in obtaining potable water, especially during the dry season. With mostly dry riverbeds, often no source of water was readily available. Those with enough resources captured rain with rain barrels and irrigation systems were
provided for fields of crops such as sisal and corn. For any other Tanzanians, however, the search for usable water was much more challenging. Any small catchment of water was treasured and well used. It was not unusual to see people traveling long distances to fetch water for personal use and to carry it back in buckets on one’s head or strapped to donkeys. Finding ways to support the effective use of the water that was obtained may be a future challenge that could be addressed by Chumbageni, Key and Somer’s Park.

Laying the groundwork for an Upper School trip

Considerable progress was made in gathering information to support a trip by Upper Schoolers to Chumbageni. Three different hostels and possible modes of transportation were investigated. In addition, a meeting was held with local head teachers and members of the Chumbageni community to discuss possible activities. Suggestions for service learning included painting the inside and outside of classrooms, assisting with teaching, gardening and installing more drip irrigation, sharing of cultures through dance, music or sports, taking field trips to local sites, and inclusion of Chumbageni students on hikes or safaris. Outdoor education experiences could include hiking and camping in Lushoto, activities in the Kilimanjaro area, experiences in the National parks near Arusha, and organized safaris that combine game drives and camping.

A report from the meeting was shared with Halifa Bilali, the Head Teacher at Chumbageni and the Outdoor Education department at Key. Planning for a possible trip will begin early in the 2011-2012 school year.

- Educating the Key community about the present projects of the Chums partnership

To give a glimpse of what a possible Upper School trip might include, to describe the installation of a drip irrigation system, and to provide insights into the lives of Tanzanians, information was made available to the Key School community throughout the trip. That blog appears on the Key School website (http://www.keyschool.org/about_key/external-partnerships/chums-partnership/chums-blog/index.aspx) and is presented on the next pages.

We look forward to sharing information with Key School teachers and moving forward with the initiatives that have been developed throughout our trip.
We're on our way!

By George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: July 28, 2011

After four days of gorgeous weather on the “English Riviera” (southwest coast of the U.K.) filled with long walks and interesting family history research, we’re now on a train headed for London where we’ll catch our flight to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania this evening.

Our stay in England had the added bonus of giving us a head start on adjusting to the seven hours time difference between Annapolis and Tanzania. We’re hoping the additional two hours adjustment between here and Tanzania won’t be too bad, especially if we’re able to catch a little sleep on the plane!

One of the ways we’re passing the time on our journey is to brush up on some basic Swahili words and phrases. One of the ones we’ve been trying to get down is “Samahani, sifahamu Kiswahili,” which means, “Sorry, I don’t understand Kiswahili.” It might be easier to just shrug our shoulders, but we’d better first find out what that gesture would mean to Tanzanians! Luckily, English is one of the official languages of Tanzania, so most people speak some English, and Godfrey, whose family is welcoming us into their home, speaks English extremely well.

We’re scheduled to land at Dar at 7:00 AM and will be greeted at the airport by our friends, Godfrey and Halifa, the Head Teacher at Chumbageni. Although the drive from Dar to Tanga is on good roads, the journey will take four or more hours, and we’ve been told to expect driving habits quite different from our own. The adventure begins!

We’ll write more once we’re settled and have a chance to access the Internet. Until then, kwaheri (Swahili for goodbye with blessings).

Karibu! Welcome!

By George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: July 30, 2011

Our first glimpse of Tanzania was a magnificent view of Mount Kilimanjaro at dawn from 35,000 feet! Looking down from our plane to the top of the mountain, which these days has only patches of snow scattered across it, we knew we would soon arrive in Dar es Salaam.

Once landed, we quickly made our way through immigration and customs and found Godfrey and Halifa who warmly greeted us with the traditional Kiswahili welcome “karibu”. It was then off to take a quick tour of the city. Unfortunately, Dar es Salaam has what Godfrey and Halifa
call a “traffic crisis”, and we soon discovered that they were not exaggerating. At rush hour, with not all of the traffic lights operating, we were soon in the middle of a conglomeration of cars, pedestrians and bicyclists, all dodging one another as everyone made their way into the city.

It took us well over an hour to reach the city center, which is right on the Indian Ocean. Along the harbor front, there are many modern buildings, luxury hotels and lovely gardens, in stark contrast to the run down storefronts and homes we saw on our way in from the airport. We stopped for a nice breakfast at a lovely outdoor restaurant. When we said we wished to pick up the tab, Godfrey insisted that it would be “unAfrican” to welcome us in that manner, but we made him promise to let us show our appreciation with a meal later in the week.

The drive to Tanga ended up taking another five hours, most of the time spent passing through the countryside. Although we were in a bit of a daze by this point in the journey, we appreciated the variety of the scenery rolling by us as it changed from flat scrubland to sisal farms with the impressive Umsambara Mountains in the distance, to Tanga’s tree lined coast. There has not been a drought in this part of Africa, and the dry season has just begun, so everything was much greener than we expected it to be.

A contingent of Head Teachers from six different schools in the area was waiting to greet us in Tanga. Their smiles and hugs made us immediately feel at ease. Then it was on to Godfrey and Victoria’s home. Godfrey kept warning us that it was not very “western”. Although it may not be typical of U.S. homes, their home is absolutely lovely, with a large living room and adjoining dining room, both with big windows to let in the breeze off the ocean, a kitchen, multiple bedrooms and bathrooms, and a huge rooftop terrace where you can relax and watch the world go by on the street below. Our bedroom is quite large with its own bathroom with a shower. After assuring Godfrey and Victoria that our accommodations were quite luxurious, gifts were bestowed upon us; roses, a Tanzanian shirt for George and kanga cloth to be worn as a skirt and shawl for Wendy. Next a bottle of champagne was opened and we toasted everyone’s good health, “Afya” followed by tea with cake.

The rest of the evening was spent relaxing on the rooftop deck enjoying good company, food and drink. Victoria had prepared a traditional meal of freshly caught fish accompanied by rice, potato, peas and carrots, cooked greens, watermelon, mango and avocado. Just as dinner was about to be served, the electricity went out, a common occurrence here as power is being rationed in the form of unscheduled daily rolling blackouts. For us, it just meant that we could see the stars shining above us more clearly and were able to enjoy soft mood lighting during our meal. Before too long we were completely relaxed and having difficulty keeping our eyes open, so it was time to say “lala salama,” sweet dreams.

Whirlwind Weekend

By George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: August 1, 2011
This weekend has been a very enjoyable whirlwind!

Saturday morning George was invited to accompany Godfrey and two of his colleagues from the local Lions club to provide supplies for a local orphanage. Though the number of orphans was relatively small, the experience was moving. The children had been anticipating the group’s regularly scheduled contribution. They gathered as a group to show their appreciation through song. After the session, pictures were taken, and each of the volunteers signed the guest book.

While George visited the orphanage, Victoria gave Wendy cooking lessons.
The food we are being served is prepared with fresh local ingredients, some coming straight from Victoria and Godfrey’s garden. Victoria is an excellent cook, and Wendy is interested in learning more about Tanzanian cooking, so Victoria and her helper demonstrated how to grate fresh coconut using a native contraption which consisted of a seat equipped with a with a special blade that took some skill to use effectively. Wendy also was shown how to peel and grind garlic and prepare plantains for cooking. Victoria’s kitchen is partly indoors, partly outdoors with two sinks and is a very pleasant place to prepare food.

This must be the friendliest nation on Earth. Everywhere we go we are invited to sit down, eat, drink and enjoy friendly conversation. Even just walking down the street we are quickly recognized as visitors and are greeted with “jambo!” This is usually followed by quick Kiswahili banter between Victoria, Godfrey and our greeter, accompanied by big smiles directed our way. During our stroll around the neighborhood Saturday afternoon, we came upon a community league soccer match and were able to enjoy watching the boys play barefooted, with a homemade ball, but proudly wearing their team’s uniform and enjoying the support of an enthusiastic crowd.

Saturday evening Victoria and Godfrey took us out to eat at the Tanga Yacht Club. Our table looked out over the Indian Ocean, and coming across the water we could hear traditional songs being sung at a nearby wedding reception. This is not the lifestyle of a typical Tanzanian family.

Sunday morning we attended a local Lutheran church with Victoria, and two teachers from nearby secondary schools, Gerhart and Baraka. Our hosts insisted that we attend the English service, although they would normally have attended the Kiswahili service, along with most of the rest of the congregation. Everyone gave us a very warm welcome, and the pastor invited us to stay for refreshments after the service. Tanzanians just don’t feel as though they have properly welcomed you unless food and drink are offered.

After church we visited, Elohim Boys’ Secondary School, a private, boarding secondary school where Baraka is an administrator. The school is only two years old, but is it impressive what they have accomplished in that time. The buildings and grounds are beautifully cared for and it is clear that high standards are being set for the students. Baraka is passionate about his work and he and George enjoyed discussing the education of teenagers. Baraka then took us to a very nice hostel near his school so that Key can consider it as an option for students to stay if a group of upper schoolers is able to visit Tanzania.

Sunday evening we had dinner at another Chumbageni teacher’s home. Her family lives just down the road from where we are staying. Her son walked down to pick us up and escort us to his family’s home, which is a very small apartment on the fourth floor of a complex of fifty or more units. A feast had been prepared for us which they graciously shared it with us, along with wonderful conversation about our families, schools and life in our countries. The son wants to become a lawyer, and is studying hard in order to pass the examinations required to eventually go to university. It was very interesting to see another slice of Tanzanian life.

As we were eating dinner, another power outage occurred, and we are learning that this is a daily occurrence, alternating between mornings and evenings. While the Tanzanians adapt to the
rationing of power, they are not happy with the situation. Frustration with the current government has been expressed and the public feels that those responsible should be held accountable. Ultimately, any long-term solution will require developing new energy sources to supplement the electricity now primarily produced from hydroelectric power.

Tomorrow we will spend our first day at Chumbageni School. We are so looking forward to meeting and working with all of the students and teachers!

Our First Day at Chumbageni

By George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: August 2, 2011

We could hear a quiet rumble of activity as we arrived at Chumbageni Primary School this morning. The children were gathering in the assembly area, and as soon as we joined them, they began clapping and, in unison, welcomed us using perfect English, “Good morning! Welcome teachers!”

They then sang their national anthem, school songs and performed a traditional dance. Although we knew to expect this kind of welcome, looking into their smiling faces and hearing their beautiful voices proved to be a very moving experience.

A visit to the new kindergarten room came next. Key School kindergartners, 3rd graders and eighth graders have worked together over the past few years to raise funds to make this classroom possible. It was filled with children aged three to five who today were learning to count to nine in Kiswahili. The teacher wrote the numbers on the large chalkboard at the front of
the room and the children did their best to copy what she had written on small slates at their desks. Most did well, and a few were selected to come to the board and demonstrate their work. The children also sang counting songs and sequenced paper numbers. The kindergarten teacher has quite a challenge guiding over fifty children of varying skill levels, but the children were very enthusiastic and mostly on task. We presented the class with three big picture books that we hope will be helpful in teaching the children the alphabet and colors.

There are many children at Chumbageni who do not have parents able to adequately support them. These children, who are called orphans even if a parent is still alive, depend on the school for a bowl of ugali, a kind of porridge made from corn, which is served at their morning break. As it was the first day of Ramadan, Moslem children were fasting, so there were fewer children than usual coming to the kitchen for ugali. Halifa assured us that others in the community would make sure that these children received a meal when they broke fast that evening.

At break time there were also soccer and other ball games taking place on the school grounds. An organization from the U.K. has recently donated an outdoor basketball court. We brought along two basketballs, which we presented to the children.

The rest of the day was spent visiting two more secondary schools. One, Macechu, has been very involved with the Chums for Watoto project, developed by Somers Park School in the U.K., which provides secondary school fees for deserving Chumbageni Primary School graduates who otherwise would not be able to continue their education. We met three of these students, now in their fourth year and preparing for the national examinations. Their headmaster is confident that they will do well on their examinations, and hopes that they will be able to go on the high school, which is the level between secondary school and university.

The headmaster and his faculty made it clear how important Chums for Watoto (watoto is the Kiswahili word for children) has been to these students and his hopes for finding continuing support for them as they prepare to go on to high school, as well as for future Chumbageni
students who would like to come to his school. All of the teachers we have met have been passionate about improving the lives of their students through education and are eager to talk with other educators.

Once again, for dinner we were welcomed into the home of a Chumbageni teacher and her husband. In the tradition of the Yaha tribe, to which the young couple belongs, our hands were brushed with a small reed broom followed by an offering of coffee beans to all who would be sharing the meal. Once we had all finished the beans, the ritual was complete and we were no longer new acquaintances, but had become “members of the family.” Although the couple’s home was very modest, we were offered a feast.

After our meal, we retired to the living room for a lively conversation about how important it is for foreign visitors to share experiences with residents. We agreed that without these kinds of interactions, visitors are merely tourists and are not really able to gain any kind of meaningful understanding of a country’s culture. We are so fortunate to be able to have these kinds of personal interactions with Tanzanians, and are excited about the possibility of having some of Key’s Upper School students enjoy this kind of experience.

As our visit drew to a close, we were surprised by the presentation of what was described as some “simple” gifts. Wendy received a beautiful African patterned cloth with which a dress can be made, as well as a bracelet, and George was given a bowl, coffee beans and reed broom in order to welcome guests in the proper Yaha manner. Our saying “asante sana” (thank you very much) felt very inadequate to express the gratitude we felt for all of the hospitality we had been shown.

**Rafiki**

**By George and Wendy Waymouth**

**Posted: August 3, 2011**

Today we spent more time at Chumbageni. A highlight was the introduction of Rafiki Bear, a Key School Kindergarten teddy bear, to the Chumbageni Kindergartners. Although the Kindergarten children here speak very little English, teddy bears know no language barrier, and broad smiles lit up the children’s faces as they each had a chance to shake Rafiki Bear’s paw. Rafiki (which means friend in Kiswahili) then shared his journal containing photos and messages from all of the Kindergartners at Key.
The Chumbageni students were most interested in what people in America like to eat, and were surprised to find out that American children also enjoy bananas and mangos as well as chips (French fries). The children found they also shared a liking for basketball and soccer. Thanks to Edith, a teacher who was translating what Wendy said into Kiswahili, the children were able to get quite a bit out of their session with Rafiki. Wendy also taught them some Key Kindergarten songs, *I Go to Key School* and *Make New Friends*. Just like their counterparts at Key, they particularly enjoyed jumping “to the front, to the back, to the see saw side” while singing *I Go to Key School*.

George observed classes of older primary school students and especially enjoyed watching our hostess, Victoria, in action. She was teaching her students how to make scones and bread. She divided her large class into three groups and expertly guided them through the task. In addition to providing an opportunity to practice some math, science and collaborative skills, Victoria believes that practical skills, such as cooking, are very important for her students to learn. When they share the food they made today with their families, the school’s bond with the community is strengthened and the way is paved for conversations about the rest of their classes at school. Victoria’s students certainly enjoyed this activity and it was obvious how much they respected their teacher.
At lunchtime, Halifa and Edith brought us to a nearby Montessori school that is supported by the Catholic Church. The methods and hands-on materials used at the school are very good and Halifa seemed interested in exploring if there might be ways to incorporate some of what was being done there into Chumbageni’s program. For lunch, the nuns had prepared yet another feast for us. We have learned that if one does not take a second helping at meals, the host is a bit offended, so we now take two mid-sized portions. The following phrases have become very important at meals:

Chakula kizuri! = Good food!
Asante sana, tosha. = Thank you, that’s enough.
Asante sana, msheebe. = Thank you, I’m full.

Gathering Information

By George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: August 4, 2011

Today we visited three hostels to gather information for Key’s Outdoor Education department regarding potential options for housing a group of Upper School students next summer. The hope is to provide an opportunity to travel to Tanzania that combines service learning and outdoor education experiences.
Each of the hostels we visited was very reasonably priced and could provide good accommodations. We are looking forward to sharing our research with the Outdoor Education department when we return.

We ate lunch at Halifa Bilali’s home, and really enjoyed meeting his wife, Mama Bright, and two sons, Bright and Stuart. Stuart is almost a year old and kept us all amused. He found George especially fascinating, and stared at his mustache throughout our meal. Halifa shares his home with two other families, and his housemates’ children also popped in to meet the friends from America. After lunch we hurried back to Chumbageni for a Skype session with Stuart Sewall, Head Teacher at Somer’s Park Primary School. It was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas with members from each Chums partnership school.

When we returned to Victoria’s and Godfrey’s house, Wendy continued her cooking lessons. Last night she helped to make mandazi and chapati bread. Tonight we prepared pilau and shared the meal with Victoria and Godfrey’s extended family. There were close to twenty people at dinner! The cooperative efforts in the kitchen and steady stream of family coming through the door made us feel as though we were at Thanksgiving dinner, which in many ways, we were.

Tomorrow, George will give a drip irrigation demonstration, and if all goes well, he will help Chumbageni students and teachers install a system in one of Chumbageni’s garden. The word is out in the community about the project and head teachers from a number of local schools are expected to join us.
Drip Irrigation

George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: August 5, 2011

When we woke up this morning, we looked out the window and saw something we hadn’t seen since leaving Annapolis, rain. Wouldn’t you know that on the day we’re planning to work on the drip irrigation project, nature is taking over! As they say in East Africa, “Hukuna matata,” no worries. When we arrived at Chumbageni and saw that a crowd had gathered, colorful kanga cloths pulled over many heads in an effort to stay dry, we knew that a little rain was not going to interfere with our plans. In fact, the drip irrigation project had become an event!
Happily, the rain let up just as we began our work. Initially, the language barrier kept the students on the sidelines, with George doing most of the work, but as he modeled what needed to be done, and Chumbageni teachers translated as needed, the students soon took over the construction of the support for the water bucket, and measured, connected and sealed feeder and drip lines. The big moment came when Head Teacher, Halifa Bilali, filled the first bucket of water into the system. Everyone crossed their fingers and watched to see if it would really work. Smiles broke out all around as the first few drips of water emerged. Students exclaimed, “Pole, pole,” “Slowly, Slowly,” as they watched the water slowly seep into the ground.

George had already explained how watering a garden with a drip irrigation system conserves water since the water slowly seeps into the earth with very little being lost to evaporation. Tanzanians fully understand the importance of water conservation and the teachers here believe that this type of drip irrigation can be used very effectively both at school and at home.

Later, we visited Tanga’s Head Education Officer and City Manager at City Hall. The city officials are aware of, and strongly support, the Chums partnership. They expressed appreciation for all the partnership has accomplished, and were very interested in learning more about the drip irrigation project. They were aware of other drip irrigation efforts in Tanzania, and said that Chumageni would be the first school in the region to be using one to water their gardens.

We had another wonderful dinner with family friends of Godfrey and Victoria. Very quickly, Mary and her sons Baraka and Peter felt like old friends. We had met Baraka on Sunday at his school, Elohim, and he had also attended the drip irrigation session at Chumbageni. This family is of the Meru tribe who come from the same area in northern Tanzania as the Maasai. At the end of our visit they presented us with traditional gifts, two beautiful cloths depicting the Serengeti, and a Maasai warrior and Maasai mama, carved from wood. There are well over 100 tribes in Tanzania. In Tanga, most of the people we have met have been from tribes in northern Tanzania who have come to Tanga because of its better job opportunities. We have been told that there are no tensions between the tribes. We have seen a few Maasai dressed in traditional clothing, but
otherwise we cannot tell what tribe someone is from unless they choose to tell us. Tanzanians pride themselves on being a very cooperative and peaceful people.

Last Day at Chumbageni

George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: August 5, 2011

This morning we visited six other primary school in Tanga, all of which have links with schools in the Worcester and Hereford regions of England. They all gave us a wonderful welcome and eagerly told us about their schools. Many expressed an interest in finding schools in the U.S. that would be interested in establishing a triangular link such as our Chums partnership. We will be having dinner with many of these teachers this evening.

It was very difficult to say goodbye to the students and teachers at Chumbageni today.

Before it was time to say goodbye, they had us help them plant two lemon trees in our honor. There were many hugs, and even a few tears, as we said, “Kwaheri, goodbye.” We have made life-long friends and look forward to staying connected as we work together on partnership projects.

Tomorrow we will leave Tanga and head up to Arusha with Halifa and Godfrey. On Sunday, we will spend the day on safari at Tanangere National Park. We may not have access to the internet while we are there, but will continue to write about our experiences and will post to the blog as soon as we can. We really appreciate all of the comments you have written!
Safari

By George and Wendy Waymouth

Posted: August 10, 2011

A crowd gathered Saturday morning, members of Victoria and Godfrey’s extended family along with teachers from various schools and a group of students from Chumbageni, to say goodbye and wish us a safe journey. Over the past eight days, each had gone above and beyond to make us feel at home while educating us about their community and culture. We know we will stay in touch with these wonderful friends. We agreed not to say goodbye as we left, but tutaonana, Kiswahili for we shall meet again.

The drive to Arusha took most of the day. We have learned that traveling anywhere by car in Tanzania takes at least twice as long as expected. Although the road was paved all of the way, it was just one lane in each direction and there were speed bumps to slow down for at each town, as well as random police check points along the way. We finally settled into our hotel a little before dinner, met with the safari operator, and prepared for the following day’s safari to Tarangire National Park.

It was cool and drizzly as we climbed into the Land Rover Sunday morning.

Our guide, Moody, let us know that it would take another hour and a half to reach Tanangire, so we sat back and watched the scenery go by. Arusha was bustling with crowds heading for church or selling produce. After passing the lush green coffee plantations at the edge of town, we were out on the savannah. Brown grass dotted with green acacia trees spread out before us until it met a line of dark mountains shrouded with clouds on the horizon. We had entered Maasai territory.
Here and there we saw small villages of round mud huts with thatched roofs. Maasai boys dressed in colorful robes herded cattle. Some of the boys’ faces were painted white to show that they had recently participated in their circumcision ceremony. Most riverbeds were dry and any available water was precious. Women and children walked long distances to watering holes, returning with buckets of water balanced on their heads, or strapped onto mules. The only other people we saw on the highway were in some variety of Land Rover headed to a National Park.

As we began our game drive within the park, the sun began to peek through the clouds. We immediately saw impala, wildebeests, warthogs, ostriches and zebras. A little while later we saw a gathering of vehicles and our driver found out that a cheetah had been spotted! Although one needed binoculars to get a good view, a cheetah could be seen lounging peacefully under an acacia tree. At lunchtime, we headed down to the river and saw animals everywhere, baboons and vervet monkeys playing in and around the baobab trees, large herds of wildebeest and zebra running across the road, giraffes munching acacia leaves and elephants cooling themselves in the river. We were fortunate to see a group of female elephants with some very young babies relaxing on the riverbank.

Some rolled in the mud while others sprayed one another with water, and mothers tenderly fed their babies.
A little further down the river as we were admiring some very colorful birds, our driver spotted a female lion, perched on a mound of earth, less than thirty feet away from us. It was a magnificent sight and we quietly watched for quite some time before she decided to get up and slink into the long, golden grass that quickly camouflaged her from view. Our driver believed that she was hunting and had spotted some zebra and wildebeest headed for the river.

We spent the night at the Lake Manyara bandas, about forty-five minutes from Tanangire. These bandas consist of ten round, thatched, brick huts each equipped with electricity and a bathroom with hot water. Blue monkeys played in the trees and baboons picked up food scraps as we gathered in the dining hall while our cook made dinner. There was even cell phone service there, and Godfrey called Halifa to see how the three of us had enjoyed the day. On the drive to the park we had noticed the cell phone towers dotting the landscape, and driving through a village we had seen the interesting juxtaposition of a Maasai man chatting on a cell phone.

The next morning we got up very early to catch the bus back to Dar Es Saalam. The bus ride turned out to be a bit of a nightmare as it took much longer than expected and we were en route for about fourteen hours before checking into our accommodations at Dar. We now know not to plan on driving from Arusha to Dar in one day! Thank goodness for Halifa who accompanied us on the safari and bus trip and saw that we arrived on time to the airport on Tuesday morning.

Safari in Kiswahili means journey. We are writing this final blog as we fly home and are just beginning to realize how much we have learned during this journey. We look forward to sharing more of our experiences, as well as ideas for Chums partnership projects. We also have a lot more photos, which we promise to post soon. Most of all, we take home with us the friendships of the amazing people we met in Tanzania and extend their warm wishes to all of the Key community.