

Hello Everyone!

Moni from Malawi! I hope that you are all doing well and enjoying the cool fall weather. I know I would be; it's over one hundred degrees here right now!

I've been in Malawi for just over a year now and thought it was about time for an update to my friends and family on my Peace Corps service and life overseas.

I have been teaching science courses and working with students at a Community Day Secondary School in rural Malawi called Gwangwa CDSS. I really enjoy my work and have seen such a markable difference in my students since the beginning of the year. I spend most of my time at the school preparing for lessons, answering questions, running the library, laboratory and various after school clubs like Debate Team, Girl's Club and sports.

I'm happy in my village and community. I finally feel as if I am home when I am there. I have many wonderful neighbors and friends who check in on me and share meals and conversation from time to time. I've been throughout my area on foot and by bicycle to visit my students and their families at their various homes. I am speaking Chichewa and living like a Malawian woman cooking on firewood, carrying my water on my head from the borehole, cleaning my house and laundry by hand and even planting corn and other crops in my field.

Since I've arrived I've worked on a few other projects besides my primary work at school. Last August I applied for money from Peace Corps and received funding to hold a five day science camp for students from all over my district. We had over forty students, 20 girls and 20 boys from schools in the surrounding area. A few of my fellow Peace Corps Volunteers came to help and teach classes, so it really turned out to be a great experience for everyone involved.

Currently I'm working with other volunteers to plan a larger camp for the end of this month. This camp, CampSKY, will host over 100 students from all over the country, bringing them together in the capital city for classes, field trips, and a variety of guest speakers.

One of the biggest challenges that students in my area are faced with is the very long distances they must travel to and from school each day. To alleviate this we started a boarding and feeding program at my school. We've started this last term and it has truly made such a large difference in the performance of my students. They're able to be at school for studying and after school activities each day and

they don't look as if they are too tired and hungry to continue learning when I attempt to teach my afternoon classes. It truly has been a good start to a good thing.

Currently, I am trying to raise funds from back home to build a kitchen for this boarding program. The kitchen we are using now isn't big enough to feed our many students and is in very poor condition. It doesn't have a roof, adequate space for food storage or hygienic food preparation.

My school and community is providing about 27% of the cost which includes the bricks, sand and transport of all materials. We need help to fund other important materials like cement, pots, tin sheets, nails, planks, etc.

I know times are tough at home, but if you are interested in making even a small donation to the project you can do so at the link below. All donations will be tax-deductible and made directly to the Peace Corps who will ensure that I receive all of the funds after they have been raised.

I suppose this short email doesn't really sum up my life in Malawi. I've learned more about other people and myself than I'll ever be able to share with everyone back home, but I look forward to trying. I've been keeping my online blog and picture page updated regularly; so if you want to read more about my work and life here you're welcome to browse the links below.

<http://hellomalawi.blogspot.com/>

<http://picasaweb.google.com/kpetrows>