



Civic Theater Benefit - *Sponsorships and Tickets available Now!!!!*

Attention all *Annie* fans! Enjoy a night at the theater and help Partnering for Progress. The Broadway production of *Annie* will play at the Civic Theater in May, and P4P is having a benefit night on Thursday, May 17th. All proceeds go directly to help support our mission of providing access to health care, education, sanitation and clean water to residents in developing countries. Mark your calendar; we'll see you at *Annie*.

*See our website for more information on how you can sponsor this event and to purchase tickets.

TEAM RETURNS FROM KOPANGA

Our team of volunteers have just arrived home from Kopanga. Their trip was a success. Following are just a few stories from Linda Hagen-Miller of her first experience in Kenya.



Nairobi to Migori

Africa, I'm in Africa! Twenty-four hours behind the rest of the Partnering for Progress team, but I'm here. Kenyan tour guide Peter picked me up at the airport last night and today we'll drive 230 miles from Nairobi to Migori to join the rest of the team.

Just outside Nairobi, we stop at an overlook at the edge of the Great Rift Valley, the massive earthen gash that bisects Kenya and stretches 3,700 miles from Syria to Mozambique. Small shacks and huts, farm plots and fields dot the wide valley with its dramatic escarpments, over 30 active and inactive volcanoes and the 580 square mile Masai Mara National Reserve.

With 18 years shuttling tourists around Kenya, Peter is an encyclopedia of facts. We pass a billboard

independence from the British. The black is for the people,” Peter says. “White is for peace, red is for blood and green is for the land. The shield is because we fought for our freedom.”

We talk families, countries, politics, bad drivers, education. I teach Peter “road kill” and “photo op” and he teaches me Swahili words for fast, slow, hello, thank you.

Flat-topped acacia trees dot the dusty green plain as we head west from Nairobi. I spot a herd of Zebra in the distance. Donkeys shuffle down the road carrying everything from 10 gallon water jugs to buckets of charcoal, their handlers waving sticks to keep them in line. Iconic Masai wrapped in traditional red blankets herd goats and cows. Motorbikes loaded with mattresses, crates of eggs, wooden tables, chairs and people zoom toward us and veer toward the narrow opposite lane. Peter tells me the motorbikes have only been here five years or so and most of them are taxis, which explains the loads of three and four people. It gives a new meaning to the word carpool.

Past the Masai Mara Game Preserve, the landscape turns hilly with tea fields the color of kiwi, shabby small towns made up of brick, tin and wooden stores. The cool morning air has given way to dry heat, a fine layer of red dust covers everything.

After six long hours, we reach Migori, 35 km from Lake Victoria and walking distance, by African standards, from Tanzania. I’m exhausted but pep up when my fellow P4P travelers greet me like a long-lost sister.



The Team

We’re not the usual P4P group which can run 10 or more people and is usually heavily staffed with medial professionals.

Group leader, Tyler Gundersen, is a dentist from Wenatchee on his third trip to Kopanga. His wife Adria, full time mom, athlete and community organizer will assist him in the clinic. She has one Kopanga trip under her belt so we nickname her the “faux leader.”

Their good friend Camilla Rose, originally from Sweden and now a Wenatchee resident, is a full time mom, runs a graphic design business and will be one of two health educators.

Full time mother, part time volunteer and numbers whiz, Danae Hollinger has a human resources and financial background and will work as the second educator as well as help clinic manager Sospeter with accounting systems.

Her friend since college, Donna Cafasso, works for Nestle Heath Care Nutrition, lives in Spokane and has taken on the formidable job of conducting a pediatric nutrition assessment, establishing the foundation criteria for nutrition support and teaching the staff how to conduct basic assessment.

I’m the “imbedded journalist” charged with documenting our groups’ challenges and accomplishments, interviewing and photographing the staff, gathering what will prove to be an immense array of medical and social information and turning it into stories to take back home.

The Clinic

Kennedy, Nelson and John pull up at 7:30 AM to drive us to the Comprehensive Rural Health Project - Kopanga. The multi-lingual trio will become our Kenya life line this week, guiding us through cultural norms, negotiating for rice and kale in the dusty open air market, taking us to buy Safari minutes (yes, cell phones are ubiquitous here, too) and much more.



Live-wire Kennedy is pastor at a local Methodist church and will be guide, interpreter, trouble shooter and all around go-to guy. Mellow Nelson is a veteran safari tour guide and driver assigned to shuttle us to and from the clinic daily, help with errands and take care of us when we reach Nairobi at the end of our trip. Shy, handsome John, a youth pastor headed for theology school soon, speaks excellent English and will help us in the clinic and teaching classes.

After nearly an hour's drive over a rutted dirt road with rocks the size of toaster ovens and ruts that could swallow a small child, we arrive at the clinic. Our mini van pulls across the wide expanse of slowly drying grass to the white washed clinic, and the staff ambles out to greet us warmly with handshakes and sometimes cheek kisses. They are used to the American's, P4P has been sending teams to Kopanga twice a year since 2008. The two dozen or so patients lining the corridor, however, are not used to white faces and they eye us warily as we smile our way through the open air waiting area.

We help the Gundersens haul suitcases and hard-sided containers of dental equipment into the maternity wing, which consists of two rooms, one about 12 x 12 where births take place and a second the size of an average American kitchen which is used for recovery. With eight rooms in the clinic and no deliveries today, it's the only vacant space. Louvered windows provide some cross ventilation but temperatures have inched up from the morning cool of around 68 to the low 80s. By mid-afternoon, we are all sweating and sure it's 100. Even the Kenyans are complaining of the heat.

Tyler and Adria layout hundreds of dollars of dental equipment on two of the delivery tables and get ready to rock and roll. Detect and drill. Examine and extract.

Donna heads to the room that doubles as Kopanga clinic administrator and head nurse Alice's office and baby intake center to start nutrition assessments. A sling attached to a scale hangs by a rope in one corner of the room, a cooler-sized refrigerator stored meds that have to stay cold. A simple wooden cupboard houses the rest.

Danae and Camilla are nervous about their upcoming health education lessons. We've brought 8.5 x 11 inch laminated posters with drawings of the topics they'll cover -- clean water, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, washing hands, where not to go to the bathroom, mosquito nets, wearing shoes, germs. It's all very basic information, but the ladies want so badly to do this "right" and aren't sure just yet what right is. A translator will be with Danae and Camilla through every word, and the women are ready to flex their curriculum if necessary.

I'm set to wander from room to room with a fully-charged camera, notebook in hand, a dozen pens (I ran out of writing instruments on a river rafting trip and will never come up short again). Truth be told, I'm a little nervous, too.

We hope you enjoyed Linda's stories and that they gave you just a bit of insight on why our work in Kopanga is so important. Stay tuned next month for more stories from the rest of the February 2012 Kopanga team.



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