

RWANDAN UPDATE

MacGregor Family August 2019



Dear Friends,

Tona got her first taste of proper school this week as she joined the nursery where Keza goes (8am till noon). She has been longing for this day since the beginning of the year but sadly her expectations did not quite match the reality, as she is finding settling into life at Nursery a little tricky. Often what we expect is not exactly how things turn out. I must admit that at heart I am a bit of a pessimist, but then seeing the possible negatives in situations has, at times, been very helpful for planning and helping our work in Rwanda to grow. Of course the danger as a pessimist is that you get to a point where the problems seem simply too big and then fear creeps in and you stop moving forward at all. So, the goal I strive for is to be a hope filled pessimist, which I agree does appear to be something of a contradictory term, but it does seem to work. The most recent example has come in the Azizi Life building project – we know that God has a permanent home for Azizi Life, but the pessimist in me made sure that, despite everyone saying there would be no issues, we did not pay any money for the land we bought until all the permission to build could be obtained and so we did not lose out when we hit what would appear to be an insurmountable barrier. However, we also did not give up hope but we threw ourselves energetically into looking for solutions to what seemed impossible. Although we are still waiting to see the final result of all this, just recently we discovered a possible way through and have begun the process of presenting our request to the Minister of the Environment. I know my faith and experience as a Christian helps me to remain hopeful (despite my natural pessimism) as time, and time again, despite things seeming impossible they have, after prayer, always fallen into place.



This month has seen some big challenges and changes for Ritah's work, Toddle Care. With just one month's notice the Landlord for their shop increased the rent by 175% despite the fact the roof is still leaking and has been for the past 3 years. Quickly the Toddle Care team found a new location, one more suitable to their vision for the future and despite being short of the full deposit they signed the paperwork in the hope the funds would arrive before 1st August. As Ritah was leaving the meeting with the new landlord with the signed rent agreement

in hand, she got a phone call from a school ordering a large amount of furniture, once paid that will more than cover money they needed for the move. Praise God!

As the Impact projects (adult literacy, renewable resources, bee keeper training, saving groups and bible study and distribution) at Azizi Life have greatly increased over the last year we really needed a new full time worker to go to the community, monitor progress and run trainings and so the hunt began. We started with over 60 applicants and through a process of tests, role-plays and interview we narrowed that down to just one person, Felix, and he joined our team on 1st August. There is still a three-month probation period but he seems to fit well with the team and is bringing some new ideas and energy to our impact work. One of main increases in work was a change we made to the adult literacy program by condensing the course from one year to six months. Even with this shortened course, we have discovered that the graduation rate remains the same but we are able to help many more people through our 6 learning centres. Also with the introduction of the work with prisoners in the first half of 2019 we helped more than 350 people learn to read and write which is already more than we did in the whole of 2018. Classes have started for the second half of the year and we expect to have about the same number of graduates, which will

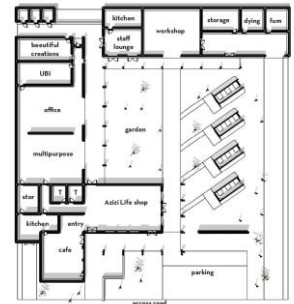


take us to 700 people for the year. This is wonderful but has had financial implications. Each graduate gets a bible but as we had so many in the first part of the year we were only able to afford the New Testament (previous years got the full bible) and we are out of funds for bibles for this coming batch of students. Please pray we find a solution to this before the end of the year.



At the beginning of the Summer we had to bid a fond farewell to the lovely Lawsons. Sean was the driving force behind our work with beekeepers and Emma was the author of much of our blog (<https://azizilife.com/category/blog/>). Thankfully before they left they put everything in place for their work to continue. Sean trained Nathalie and Claudine to take over all bee related things and Emma set up and trained our Story Team (a group of 4 Rwandan's) who have taken on the writing duties.

Azizi Life has recently engaged the services of a Charity (Journeyman International) who have provided a skilled Architect, called Carly, to help create a design proposal for building a permanent home for Azizi Life. We need this design proposal to request permission from the Minister of the Environment who is the person authorised to grant us the permission to build or not. We have now submitted our proposal to the Minister so please do pray that it will be met with approval swiftly so we can start construction before the end of the year.



Azizi Life US had a wonderful opportunity to take over the work of a California based Business called Local & Lejos (www.localandlejos.com). They have been a big customer for the Azizi Life artisans and we have been supplying all their baskets and trays for a number of years. They sell direct to customers across the US and have a much larger online presence than Azizi Life does. We shall take over all of their Rwandan made products and also their social media platforms giving us access to thousands and thousands of new customers who already love Rwanda. It really was a miracle how everything fell into place to allow all this to happen and it has helped Azizi Life to take a massive step towards its goal of growing ten times bigger by 2022.

As most of you know we will not be able to make it back to the UK this year. We are sad to not be able to see our friends and family from our British homeland but would like to remind you all we were blessed with a wonderful house that has many spare rooms. If any of you ever want to visit then we would be happy to welcome you into our home and show you the sites of our beautiful Rwandan homeland.



Prayer Requests

1. Please pray for the Toddle Care team as they strive to complete all the new school furniture orders they have and settle into their new home.
2. Please pray the Azizi Life building plans are accepted and loved by all the officials and that we can start construction soon.
3. Please pray for the Bee Keeping & Story Teams as they continue to grow the work started by Sean and Emma.
4. Join us in thanking God for the wonderful opportunity to take on the work of Local & Lejos. Please pray we able to make the most of it and reach our growth goals.

If you do want any more specific information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or regular mail (**PO Box 146, Gitarama, Muhanga, Rwanda**). Also remember to visit our Facebook pages to see more photographs and details about what we are doing.

Much Love,
Tom, Ritah, Keza & Tona