

Bennett & Idong Ekandem
MSC Missionaries in Georgia, USA

P. O. Box 1626, Stone Mountain, GA 30086-1626. Tel: (404) 299-7766



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It's May, and just recently in schools throughout Georgia the spring ritual of the Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) was going on. Here at our after-school program we get to see an up-close-and-personal view of kids being prepped for the test and then having it administered to them. For weeks beforehand, we help with practice homework booklets and then interpret notes to parents about being sure their children get a good night's sleep and eat a good breakfast on test days. We also do our part by offering practice sessions on our computers. Whenever the children are finished with their homework, they go to the computer for a time of CRCT practice that we can access and monitor online.



However, during the seven days of testing, the teachers give the children a break from homework. This leaves free time for some fun and games during the usual tutoring time. One of their favorite games is Monopoly. This has been especially exciting to our new Burmese students this year, and they ask periodically, "When can we play Monopoly again?" So volunteers have been overseeing this game for several days, with rotating players as the children come and go. It *is* educational! Learning to count back change is a challenge. If they learn it now, it will be easy when they get to that in their math books!

We've had three little kindergarten/first-grade girls from Burma who have been off-again/on-again friends and foes all year. Somehow, our hand-gesturing lectures in English have finally taken root in the hearts of these girls. They have announced now that they are all friends, and they go around with arms around each other all the time! This reconciliation was just in time for a recent Saturday event whose theme was "Love Thy Neighbor," put on for us by Peachtree Christian Church. With school almost out, summer coming on, and time about to be on their hands, kids need to be reminded of the importance of getting along with each other. We are always so happy when church groups are willing to spend their time and effort to help in practical ways like this.



Speaking of "practical," one of our volunteers invited a student and his mother to her house to help with a big science project. The three of them spent two long afternoons together working on this project, which was great fun for the volunteer, she says. The boy earned every single point he could earn, as they went by the instructions to the nth degree. And in the

meantime, a friendship was born between this Muslim mother and a Christian lady from our program. This is our goal: to build relationships that will lead to openings to explain the Gospel to our Muslim friends. But the relationships must come first.



On another note, we mentioned briefly in a previous newsletter our new “spin-off” ministry in Marietta, GA. This is a very large apartment complex, and the owner wants us to duplicate our ministry there. We are contacting churches in this area now, looking for volunteers to tutor in the new after-school program. There are many ways for one to be involved besides tutoring. We have people at Willow Branch who help us with music, sports, Bible studies, and cultural events, to name a few. Groups come on the weekends to do activities with the children: puppet shows, face-

painting, hot dog lunches, games, all geared to making Jesus known. So if you (or someone you know) have a specialty you can share in any of the above areas, plus ones we haven’t thought of, please let me know. We need all the help we can get!

I recently read an article about the many Muslims worldwide who are turning to Christ. When they were asked what the biggest factor in their conversion was, the bottom line was this, “When Christ’s love transforms committed Christians into a loving community, many Muslims (identified) a desire to join such a fellowship” (Chuck Colson, BreakPoint, 4/23/08). They also said that the consistency between the Christians’ beliefs and their behavior influenced their decisions.

What we are doing is creating a loving, Christian community at Willow Branch and now we have the opportunity to do it again at Madison Hills. Would you please help us spread the word to friends you may know in that area? Of course, nothing succeeds without prayer, so will you pray for us in this new adventure?

I can’t say it often enough – we need you! Your prayers, your financial help, your personal involvement with our ministry mean so much to us. God is big enough to do it alone, but He chooses to have His servants join hands in fulfilling the Great Commission. If everyone does a little, then a lot gets done, and we will someday hear, “Well done, thy good and faithful servant.”

God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bennett Ekandem". The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

Bennett Ekandem

Please support our ministry!

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