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May 30, 2008

Another school year has passed at Willow Branch (WB), and that always calls for a celebration! Our pizza party was well attended by the children and the volunteers. The children who have been in our music program provided entertainment by playing for us and showing what they had learned. We then recognized all the children with certificates of participation in the after-school program and some for outstanding leadership.



We are very proud of our children, as they do work hard, coming here from a long day at school and then working another two or three hours on homework. These children have a work ethic that is not always seen in children, who may take for granted the many benefits. Our immigrant children especially appreciate their education and are determined to catch up with their native-born classmates.

We have two special reports from our volunteers to share with you this month. I'll let them tell their stories. The first is from a home-school mother who comes weekly with her three children:

“One of the highlights of our family’s school year has been coming to Willow Branch on Wednesday’s to



help the kids with homework. Not only did my kids get a chance to minister to and work with these wonderful children, but they had fun doing it. They always look forward to coming and enjoy the amazing welcome – the genuine hugs, smiles, and laughter that greet us every time we show up. If my kids had it their way, we would come to WB *every* afternoon!

It has been wonderful to see how God has worked through my kids and those at WB. They genuinely care about each other. When my daughter started having severe medical issues, the WB kids prayed for her, made get-well cards, and called her several times each time she went into the hospital. Tamara has become very good friends with several of the girls. In fact two of them even attended her long awaited, much anticipated ‘13th Birthday Sleepover’. It has been quite a blessing for

me to see the girls all enjoying each other so much. My boys, Joshua and Tevin, especially enjoyed playing with the kids after their homework was completed.”

Another lady was so excited one day when one of the fourth-grade Burmese boys came rushing up to her saying, “I obey God! I obey God!”

As she tells it, “I had a feeling that Dyang might be telling me that he had accepted Jesus into his life, but he kept saying, ‘I can’t explain it in your language.’ Things got busy, and I didn’t get to talk to him more that day. I determined to find out the next day, but then he didn’t come. I was disappointed, but then delightfully surprised when he and his mother showed up later in the afternoon.



I called them over to a semi-quiet place and began to question him, saying ‘Tell your mother what I am asking you about.’ I assumed she didn’t understand any English. All three of us were grinning and waving our arms around trying to communicate, when the mother said, in the midst of a Burmese sentence, ‘born again’. I just about jumped out of my skin! It turned out that the mother understood and spoke a little English and was able to tell me that their pastor had led her son and another boy to Christ on Sunday.”

This volunteer claims not to have had anything to do with bringing this young man to Christ, but all of us have provided the spiritual atmosphere where he could see Christianity in action. Everyone rejoices in Dyang’s salvation and prayerfully will build on it with our summer activities and in the next school year.

Our summer is going to be busy, as always. We will have two weeks of Vacation Bible School at our new location in Madison Hills Apt, in Marietta. At Willow Branch we will have one week of VBS and two weeks of academic camp. The camp will be an all-day affair, with instruction in language arts, math, and science. Every Tuesday evening in June and July will be our community outreach events at WB, everyone is invited. We are praying and believing God that these outreach events will bring people to know Him.

In the meantime, we ask for your prayers as we undertake these projects. We need wisdom to use our time well, for planning these upcoming endeavors, for volunteers to help us, and for the financial support that we need. As always, we thank God for you for undergirding His ministry through us.

God bless you.

Handwritten signature of Bennett Ekandem.

Bennett Ekandem

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