

Dear Family and Friends,

We had a great day at Tracy's Heart today. The two visiting ladies from Germany did come to see us. They sat in the living room of the Tracy's Heart Center and with the help of a translator, which was me part of the time, they told the ladies their stories. There was crying and hugging going on. Some of the tears were tears of joy when they spoke of how they have changed since coming to Tracy's Heart. For part of that discussion I left the adults and went outside where Elizabeth Baird and Kasavubu, my two assistants were teaching the children. Kasavubu said that Elizabeth did a very good job this time. I helped Elizabeth get the kids started making small posters using some stickers. This craft was sent to Elizabeth by her sister Rachel Shew in Lincoln, Ill. The kids really loved it. After the visitors left I had the mamas come outside to see what the children were doing. After they saw it the mamas wanted to make one of their own so they did. We all had a great time. Elizabeth and I had purchased some alphabet cookies. They were similar to animal crackers. Everyone loved them! They have asked for that kind of cookie every month. One little girl, Flora, remained in line to get cookies and just ate what was in her cup and put it in front of me to fill it again. I finally caught on that was what she was doing and I hugged her and laughed. I told her she could have more cookies after she ate the ones I had already given her and she did not have to rush in order to get more. She just grinned and went and sat down. Later she returned for more cookies.

I was amazed at how much fun we all had together today. Having the entire center to ourselves helped a lot. The women were more relaxed and open than I have ever seen. They laughed and teased me. They made a craft, ate cookies, and drank Kool-Aid after having a Bible lesson. It was kind of like VBS. None of them have ever been to a Vacation Bible School so it was a new experience. They did not leave the center until after 2 ½ hours. One of them told me it was like coming home to a place just for them; a place where they can be themselves. It was a joy to see their joy bubbling over. The current women and children in the Tracy's Heart program have had some horrible unspeakable things happen to them. For a few hours today they were able to forget all that and all the daily struggles just to stay alive. They were able to relax and be themselves in a place where they belong. I was very encouraged about the progress they are all making and how the program is working so well. These women and children are survivors and they are trusting God to see them through these extremely hard times. God is doing that very thing and he is giving them a joy they cannot get from anyone else. Please continue to pray for our women and children. One is to be baptized Sunday. Maybe we will get to go to church there and see it happen. She is coming in the morning to get \$30 to use for her new outfit and shoes she needs to wear in front of everyone and to purchase a small amount of food for a party afterward. We are all filled with excitement and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus for his mighty work. Love, Brenda