

SMALL RIPPLES, Continued from page 27

Mama Elizabeth and her husband do contract work. They can work for five to six hours and each earns fifty to seventy Kenyan shillings (just less than a U.S. dollar). Sometimes they work for half food and half money. They have four children. With aid in the way of supplies and uniforms provided by the OFDC, all of the children are attending school. Mama Elizabeth has also received funds to build a latrine on her property which is shared with five other families who provided the labor to build the latrine. She is excited to receive training to get her loan, which she will use to get two sheep to breed, and then be able to sell the offspring for profit.

We spent our days in Bikeke footing, riding fifty pound Chinese bicycles, squeezed into a matatus (van), or taxied on boda-bodas (bicycle taxis); traveling to very remote, rural areas, visiting women like Mamas Rosemary, Alice, and Elizabeth. We are greeted with, "Mzungu, mzungu, how are you?" (Mzungu means white person.) To this we reply, "Mzuri sana," (very fine, thank you).

There is usually much excitement when we are there. Children show us their donated school uniforms. Mothers show us the nets which protect their sleeping children from malaria carrying mosquitoes. Grandmothers (raising grandchildren due to the death of parents, mostly from AIDS) proudly show us their sheep or corn crop, procured with their small loan. They tell us they can now send their grandchildren to school and feed them because of the loans. "Asante sana," (thank you) they say. "Karibu," (welcome) we reply.

We stayed for three weeks, and although my writings only span the first week, we also traveled to other areas by matatu. These small, rattling, rickety vans are usually stuffed with twenty or more passengers, so the rides can be cramped and difficult.

Our stops included Olpusimoru and Melelo; Maasai villages where we work sponsoring children in school (mostly girls). In Kenya, all children are required to purchase their own school supplies and uniforms for school, which puts financial strain on their families. Our funds help to send the poorest of these children to school, and they are excited to go wearing under garments (which most have never been able to afford) and uniforms like other children.

Because Kenya is on the equator, the midday sun is very fierce, and we generally retire at the end of each day very tired and grateful for the chance to rest. We eat our ugali (corn flour and water mixed to a thick consistency) and cabbage and drink clean water from a well funded by the OFDC. We then climb under our mosquito nets to sleep, thankful that we have food to eat, clean water to drink and anti malarial medication to keep us safe. We take so much for granted at home in the U.S.

It is overwhelming—coming home to raise more funds to go back with more aid, but I am grateful to be able to return to modern conveniences like flushable toilets with tissue, and clean drinking tap water. My gratefulness is always outweighed by my sadness at waving goodbye to so many good friends with so much need. But mixed with my sadness, there is always the hope of return to Kenya, my second home. ✨

Wanna Get Away?

According to the June issue of *Parents* magazine—"Carving out time to spend with your gal pals is good for your health, your kids, and even your marriage!" This is where "The Girlfriends Getaway" comes in!

The Girlfriends Getaway is open to all women who love to camp and need to get away from life's responsibilities and get in touch with the inner girl that has been suppressed...but not forgotten. For nearly 48 fun filled hours it's **No Men, No Kids, No Makeup, No Stress!** This weekend is all about you, and it's about time! Relax, rejuvenate, pamper and let loose at camp!

- Bring your friends or make new ones!
- Eat food you don't have to prepare or clean up after!
- Enjoy spa treatments!
- Enlighten with workshops and seminars!
- Energize with activities that include horseback riding, mountain biking, volleyball, canoeing, yoga and dance classes!
- Get creative with crafts!
- Have fun with games, campfire skits, raffles, scavenger hunts!
- Or choose to do nothing but sleep late and read while enjoying the fresh mountain air!

The Girlfriends Getaway is held at the YMCA's Camp Roger.

The Getaway was started by two best friends, Ceci Williams and Deon Atwood, who attended Camp Roger together as kids. Ceci and Deon wanted to give back to the camp that gave them so many great memories while reconnecting as grown up kids.

Your registration fee of **\$225** covers lodging for **3 days/2 nights**, meals and activities. Proceeds from The Girlfriends Getaway will go to support the YMCA's Camp Roger. For more information visit:

www.girlfriendsgetaway.org or
www.ymcasaltlake.com

