



The Atkins Family

Ministering in Guinea-Bissau
www.jasonandemilyatkins.com
jatkins@myyfc.org
eatkins@myyfc.org



Back in the rhythm of working and teaching in Guinea-Bissau

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Savannah and Nathaniel love playing with our neighbors under their giant cashew tree.



If Miriam is being cuddled she's a happy girl.



Savannah introducing guests to the Ladybug Game.

A Shady Tree By Emily

Shortly after arriving back in Guinea-Bissau I was reading in Hosea 14 where God talks about restoring Israel and gives the picture of a giant Cedar tree that sends down deep roots, grows young shoots, and provides a shady place for people to come and rest. As I read I saw a picture of myself standing in the middle of our home -- the roots signifying how God has connected my heart to the community around us; the shoots my kids, thriving and growing; and streams of people coming in and out, feeling refreshed by the 'shade' of peace and love that God would give us for them.

I was so blessed by that picture and have returned to it many times over the past two months as we have literally had a flood of guests -- three different groups of Americans staying for several days to a week each, Brazilian friends spending the night, groups of Guinean friends coming from the capital to spend the day with us, and there has hardly been a day where friends and neighbors from Canchungo haven't stopped by to have some juice and a good chat.

At some points the sheer volume of people in and out of our house has been overwhelming, especially because, with the exception of the Americans, people either just show up or call the day that they are coming. I'm so

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thankful that God gave me such a beautiful metaphor for my current ministry, and that He gives me the strength I need to continue to pour myself into the people He surrounds me with!

Vision Trip *By Emily*

One of the teams of Americans that we hosted was a vision trip for a group from Healdsburg Community Church in California. For the past several years that church has been praying fervently and giving generously to get the drinking water filter factory up and running. When we traveled to Healdsburg to speak there in January we could tell that God had given them a tremendous love for the country of Guinea-Bissau. The purpose of their trip was to check out other ministries here in the country in which they could be involved.

Jason picked them up in Senegal and was the transporter and translator for their trip. They spent a day working at the drinking water filter factory and had several meetings with the Guinean NGO the factory is partnered with.

While they were at the factory they took turns working the various stations that transform the raw materials into unfired filters. Right now the workers are mixing the clay and sawdust together by hand because there is still work to be done to modify a mortar mixer so that it can mechanically mix the filter ingredients together. After mixing a few filters worth of material, each of the team members agreed on the necessity of mechanizing the process!

One other issue the factory is dealing with is that the specific size of trash bag they use to keep the clay from sticking to the mold while being pressed isn't always available. One of the team members is an engineer, and was able to give them some good ideas to try to operate the press without the need for the trash bags. He also met with people at an injection molding factory to figure out what type of molds would be needed to get the plastic receptacles for the filters made in Guinea-Bissau.

The team also visited a Christian orphanage in the capital and spent a few days in Cancungo with our family -- working in Jason's shop, encouraging and praying with us, and drinking tea with our neighbors. It was cool for us to see more of their vision take shape and to have the opportunity to see Guinea-Bissau through the eyes of people who had never been here before.

New Machine Day *By Jason*

The team also very graciously agreed to carry over many tools, including a brand new 100 pound machine (in pieces) for the shop! The new steel tubing bender will be useful for all kinds of things, and be a great addition to the equipment available to the students at the school.

The biggest plan for the bender is to make a simple metal chair, similar to the stack-able kind used in a lot of church sanctuaries. If the project is successful, it will provide another stream of income for the school to continue subsidizing the welding classes (which currently cost far more to provide than the students are able to pay).

Most churches here use fragile plastic lawn chairs, have pews, or use factory-made chairs sent in from Europe or the U.S. A. Creating a simple chair is certainly within the capabilities of our welding students once I design the prototype, so I'm looking forward to eventually seeing locally made chairs in our churches, schools, and conference centers!



Learning how to run one of the stations at the drinking water filter factory.



Jason giving a group from the US a tour of the shop.



The new tube bender in action. Works great!



Playing Spot It with one the groups of visitors from Bissau.

Jason + Emily