



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau with



West African
Vocational Schools

January 2018

From playdough on the back porch to rice thresher repair in the shop, reengaging with our community!

Amigus (Friends) by Emily

One of my kids' favorite things about our home in Guinea-Bissau is all of the other kids that live in our neighborhood. There is not a day that goes by where I don't have kids smashing play dough with Miriam on the back porch, tromping around and collecting leaves and twigs in the great outdoors with Savannah, or running, jumping, and throwing rocks into the tidal river behind our house with Nathaniel. Sometimes they even sit down and do some coloring or play a card game. There are language frustrations, play differences, and general culture clashes; but for the most part, kids are kids and they have lots of fun!



Above: When these two play together Francisca chatters away in Creole and Miriam repeats everything she says with a few extra giggles thrown in.

Below: Miriam loves being with kids (big or small) and they all love hanging out with her too.



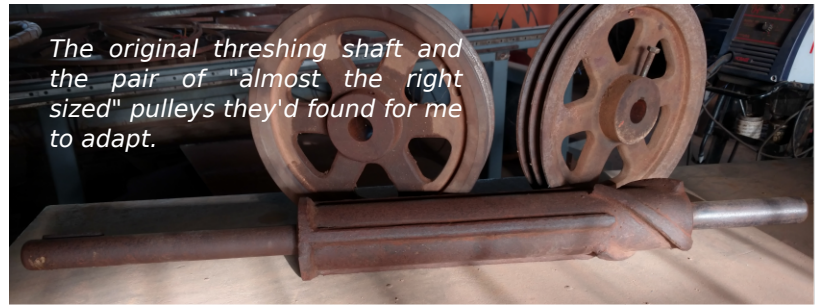
Spot It! is one of everyone's favorites.

One man's truck axle... by Jason

Several projects were waiting for me when I got back to the shop. After putting them off for a few days to clean the shop up, uncover and lubricate machines, and get things organized a bit, I dove in. The welding program (under the leadership of the Guinean teacher and assistant) has been going full swing since October even with us away, but we don't yet have anyone else trained on machining. So, several projects had piled up waiting for that side of things to reopen.

I'm thankful for the equipment we have, in a region where we're the only machine shop. The equipment, while not state of the art or by any means new (most of it is from the 70's), is still capable of some impressive work when compared with the (lack of) alternative. The projects are varied, which is fun for someone still learning (me), to be pushed to keep developing new skills. I'm glad for the tangible ways that the work can help the community keep vehicles on the road and people fed.

One of the projects waiting was the central shaft of a rice threshing machine, for a neighboring agricultural co-op, that's apparently been broken for a decade.



Boring the new shaft extension from the material we had available, in this case a (very hard) forged truck axle shaft.



After flipping the new extension around and pressing it on to the shaft, I turned down collars for the bearing journal and the pulley, then cut a keyway.



Hardware for teeter totters the welding program is building for a local park.



The employees of the agricultural co-op that owns the machine installing it!



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