



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau with



West African
Vocational Schools

August 2018

The shipment from the
U.S. finally arrived!

Shipping Container *by Jason*

Well, it wasn't exactly Prime Next Day delivery, but the packages we sent to Seattle last October have finally arrived! "Arrived" makes me think of someone showing up at my door with a clean box. Perhaps we should say, we wrestled them away from customs after massive delays, sketchy storage arrangements, and the packages changing hands several times along the way. The path the packages took used almost every method of transportation known to man.

The cargo arrived 10 months after we sent it, and it arrived looking about like you'd expect after such a long trip, having spent time bounced by ocean waves, housed on the ground in back-room "warehouses", and tarped on an open truck in pouring rain. Unlike previous containers where we've packed things into plywood crates that have been undisturbed throughout the trip until we opened them on the other end, these cardboard boxes had been handled, reshuffled, stacked, and moved. Surprisingly, given how many of them had been crushed, gashed open, and several lost, most of the supplies arrived still functional.

We're relieved both to have the contents of the packages, and also to be done with the process of getting them here. Dealing with the logistics and customs issues with this shipment has been a task hanging over our heads for months, so it's a big relief to check that item off of the "to do" list!

The shipment included new (used) equipment and supplies for my shop, supplies for the school, and a few American favorites for the house like Sweet Baby Ray's, Tim Horton's coffee, and banana pepper rings. Emily was especially thankful to get the kids' homeschooling materials for the next several years. It also included a new batch of equipment for the school's New Entrepreneurs Program, helping graduates get the materials they need to put their skills to use. More on that next month!

Thank you to all of you have prayed for our struggle with this process. We're glad to have it behind us and move forward making good use of all of the new tools in our arsenal!



Even these plastic totes couldn't stand up to the rough trip over!

Three Little Creole Speakers *by Emily*

When we arrived in Guinea-Bissau in December Nathaniel in particular had a rough transition back to life here. Part of it was the sadness of saying goodbye to our family, which is heart wrenching at any age, and part of it was frustration at not really being able to communicate. When he was younger most of his playing with other kids was just running around the throwing things, but as a four-and-half-year-old, he was starting to interact more with other kids, and his frustration was leading to lots of scuffles and hurt feelings.



Playing with friends, building marble works towers.

Three Little Creole Speakers (cont'd) by Emily

As with Savannah, me working with him wasn't helping (it's hard to try to think of Creole words when you know the person sitting across from you can speak English). So, in March, I hired a young woman from our church, Kadi (Kah-DEE), to come over for a few hours each afternoon to help me with the kids, with one of my main goals being that she would help Nathaniel learn to speak Creole. For the first few weeks I sat with them, showing her how to choose a few words or phrases and repeat them frequently as they played together (open / shut, building / crashing, look at that, where is it / there it is, etc).

I'm happy to say that it worked! After a few months of "lessons" where Nathaniel listened a lot and didn't talk much, he started saying all kind of phrases, sometimes when I least expected it, Kadi gradually and patiently worked simple words into simple phrases, and lately they have whole conversations. Now he is able to play inventive and silly game with our neighbors' kids everyday.

The funniest part of the whole process has been Miriam. She has always been fast to pick up on new words, and for a while she was speaking more Creole than Nathaniel. I'd say they are closer to even now, but both of them can play with friends, speaking and being spoken to for hours with no problems at all.



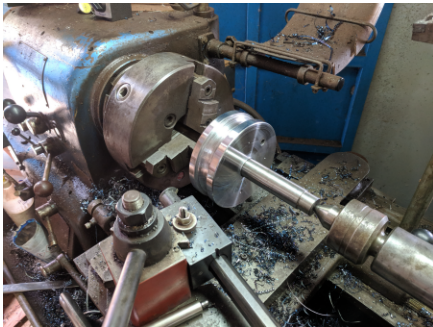
Savannah and her friends playing "Mega Jenga" on our back steps.



Nathaniel with his language teacher Kadi.

Follow-up: Here is the new bending die! by Jason

Last month I talked about how important it is to have times to refresh things. One of my rainy season projects was figuring out how to make new forms for our tube bending machine. In addition to being heavy to ask someone to bring over, the manufacturer doesn't produce dies in the sizes of some of the steel we have available over here, so learning how to make custom ones expands the usefulness of the machine greatly. Now that the process has worked for one, I can reproduce it to make dies for other sizes as well!



Roughing out the shape of half of the 25mm round tube, 10 thousandths of an inch at a time.

Right: The welding teachers and interns carefully measuring the angle of the first test bend.



The one from the factory for square tube on the left, and the new one for round tube on the right!



When the cuttings from your drill press are going "clink clink clink" as they hit the floor, you're really drilling!



The results are great! The staff used the bent tubes to make handles to attach to the front of their generator/welder, which didn't use to have wheels or handles!



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