



# The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,  
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau with



May 2019

Our tropical-blooded  
kids have their hoodies  
ready to land in the  
Michigan on June 11th!

## A Good Time with Great People *by Emily*

The second weekend in May was the annual staff retreat for all of the workers at the vocational school here in Canchungo. We've actually never been before because the kids were always too little for us to take them along, and honestly the thought of camping was super intimidating to me. The kids have grown (they just keep doing that) and Jason has somehow been running a successful campaign this year to get me camping almost once a month (I guess after 3 times I'm becoming a pro), so we joined the rest of the staff for two nights of camping on a beach about an hour from where we live.



*My first time preaching on the beach!*



The school has a staff of 17 plus 5 interns, and though a few of them couldn't

make it, a few other family members joined us for a group of 22. During the weekend we did a community service project, ate great food together, had an encouraging meeting where each person got to share about growth they've seen in their department this school year, and even had a church service on the beach that was joined by several other people who happened to be in the area. As with all camping trips, we didn't get a lot of sleep, but once again I was so impressed by what an amazing team of smart, dedicated, loving people that God has surrounded us with here. Investing in their lives, personally and professionally, is such a privilege and I wanted to thank each of you for your investment in us that gives us the chance to be here!



## Teaching, in English! *by Emily*

As the Staff Training Specialist at the vocational school, I teach and work with the whole staff during our quarterly training days and monthly gatherings, but this year I also started investing quite a bit of time in our English program. For the first four months I was working primarily on our curriculum, and this month I have also been teaching once a week in the level three English class. For several years all of my teaching and preaching has been in Portuguese Creole, so giving my measured, slow English teacher voice a workout has been a fun and strange flashback to my pre-kid days, when I spent years teaching English at the Youth for Christ Center in Bissau.



## Closing Up Our Third Year *by Emily*

We just started the final week of our school year with Savannah finishing up second grade, Nathaniel completing Kindergarten, and Miriam right in the middle of two years of preschool. This morning I asked the kids about their favorite thing they have learned or done this year.

A definite highlight for all three of the kids has actually been the history lessons. We have been studying ancient history (from the first people to 500 AD) and Savannah was completely fascinated by really every part of the rise, daily life during, and fall of the Roman empire. Our study of the solar system in science made the biggest impression on Nathaniel and he is full of facts about planets. Miriam said that her favorite part was "our study of tape and scissors". I laughed and asked her when we had studied either of those things, but after a little more conversation I figured out that she was saying that she is proud of all of the new ways that she can make things now - using scissors, tape, and markers on her own.

Even though I often feel a bit overwhelmed with the day-to-day work of homeschooling, I really am grateful that our kids have the chance to learn and grow so much each year.

## Welding's Quick Roof *by Jason*

This month the welding department took a day trip to install a roof at the drinking water filter factory. The factory uses a pair of shipping containers for lockable storage, but often these second-hand containers have some rust holes that leak during the rainy season. Having the containers covered will help keep the equipment and water filters stored inside cooler and dry.



The welding students, whose course is wrapping up next month, did an excellent job. In Canchungo they took my roof design and fabricated the

trusses in half-sections. Then, in one day, we took them out to the factory, they welded the halves together, set the trusses, welded purlins, and covered the small roof! It's so much fun to see how much their abilities have grown since the course started last October! Roofs are one of the more lucrative kinds of metalwork in Guinea-Bissau - so even though working on location involves more logistics, we like to include at least one roof each year to give the students a picture for their portfolio and some practical experience!



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