



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

February 2024

This month two different groups of American friends blessed us with visits!

Work Trip From Tulsa *by Jason*

This month we were delighted to receive two small teams from the U.S. The early February group was a first trip from members of The Builder's class of First United Methodist Church in Tulsa. The three guys who made the trip have been part of our ministry for more than a decade, so we were excited to host them. Between them, they've supplied us with several of the major pieces of equipment we use in our ministry including the compressed adobe block machine, my main lathe in the shop, and the Cat skid steer. They've been a big blessing over the years, so we were excited to finally be able to show them around Guinea-Bissau in person. However, when they got here all they wanted to do was work, so we kept them busy! (This was a difficult proposition for my Guinean workers to accept, because they really don't like letting older people have to do manual labor, so seeing Jim Redyke, at 81, spend all day working was something they had to get used to!)

We accomplished several milestones while they were here, and we were very thankful for their help. First, Jim R. spent the better part of their week digging dirt out of our mine with the skid steer to finish (finally!) the fill for the floor of the shop. It was a task I had been working on for months in my spare time and it seemed like it would never end. But now we're up to the level where we're ready for gravel to finish the subgrade and then we can pour the whole rest of the shop floor in chunks!

Larry Voight, who is a retired finish carpenter, happily volunteered to be pressed into service in my makeshift woodshop to produce the windows for the first guest bungalow. He might not have known what he was signing up for before seeing our chain-saw-milled hardwood, but he and Jim Ecrete produced some beautiful windows eventually! We're now one more step toward the bungalow being finished and ready for its first guests. Jim E. also was able to give some really helpful feedback on the tile floor in the bungalow (the first tile floor at the site) since that's his background. The tile we have available here varies



Jim R. spent most of the week digging dirt out of the mine and filling the shop footprint, a task I had been working on and thought would never end!



Larry and Jim E. had their hands full transforming local chainsaw-milled African Mahogany into windows for the guest bungalow but did a fabulous job!

wildly in quality, so his advice about choosing our material moving forward was great.

They brought us suitcases full of helpful supplies and construction material, and even managed to bring a new cappuccino maker from Portugal, to Emily's surprise and excitement, to replace ours which has been broken for a year.

Filter Factory Results *by Jason*

After saying goodbye to the Tulsa trio, I spent eight days making sure my crew had work lined up for the next few weeks and then headed back in to Bissau to pick up our filter factory founding chemist friend Richard, making his 14th trip to Guinea-Bissau, as well as his brother Gary visiting for the first time.

We spent the first few days of their trip in Canchungo, catching them up from the jet lag and seeing the progress at the site. Richard is a fun benchmark because he walked the land with us only weeks after we bought it, dreaming about what it would one day become. We've accomplished a lot since then!

The rest of their time was spent in Bissau working at the drinking water filter factory and meeting with the local church-run non-profit that operates it. He and Gary (also a chemist) did some more bacterial-removal testing on the filters. Through a serendipitous accident, they accidentally tested the filters with far more contaminated source water than we're used to using. Previously we had tested and found that the filters were removing > 99.8% of the bacteria (before applying the colloidal silver that kills everything anyway). However, by using hyper-contaminated test water

they were able to find that the filters they tested were actually removing 99.99999% of the bacteria! Praise the Lord for such good filters being produced!

The rest of the time was spent meeting with the non-profit that now needs to gear up to sell these filters. Production has slowly improved over the years and is now steady, making about 100 good filters a month. Now the non-profit needs to expand its sales efforts, as they're only selling about 100 a year. Increased sales will both get clean, safe drinking water into more Guinean homes but also bring the project closer to being able to sustain itself financially instead of depending on funding from the U.S.



Richard and Gary's bacteria-removal testing of the filters revealed that the factory workers are producing even better filters than we'd previously thought. The next step is helping the local non-profit gear up for marketing and sales!

Still Clean! *by Jason*

We recently completed our new site's annual well water test, and are happy to report that the water is still free from bacteria. Many of our neighbors continue to get their family drinking water from our community tap, which has given away 305,300 gallons since we started counting in March of 2021!



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