

PIAF FELLOWS' FLYER

News and views for and by current Princeton in Africa Fellows.

October 2007



FELLOW(S) DEPARTING FOR AFRICA



Alyson Zureick '06,
*International Rescue
Committee, Sierra Leone*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS MONTH TO...

October 7
Carolyn Pichert

October 9
Michael Broache

October 12
Florence Cheung

October 21
Mallika Ahluwalia

PIAF IN THE BLOGOSPHERE

According to *Spirit Magazine*, 17 blog postings go online every second.

PiAf Fellows are certainly doing their part to keep these numbers up: many current Fellows have started blogs (see list below) where they write about and post photos of their lives and work around the African continent.

Another Fellow will launch a blog on October 8th in an exciting new partnership with Social Edge, an online community for and about social entrepreneurs. **Alyson Zureick** will make weekly posts to her blog—which will be featured on Social Edge's website (www.socialedge.org)—once she has begun her fellowship at the International Rescue Committee in Sierra Leone.

She says, "I want it to focus largely on social initiatives that are coming from Sierra Leoneans themselves. I am also hoping this blog can explore the relationship between 'home-grown' initiatives and the work of foreign NGOs and development organizations in a post-conflict setting."

OTHER BLOGS '07-'08 FELLOWS KEEP:

"Dispatches from the Mountain Kingdom"

David Cape (at Baylor-BMS Children's Clinical Centre, Lesotho)
lesothodave.blogspot.com

"Tales of a Mzungu"

Hilary Robinson (at Plan, Uganda)
hilaryrobinson.blogspot.com

"Joe's Africa Blog"

Joe Falit (at Jacana, Mozambique)
www.jfalit.blogspot.com

"Lindsey in Botswana"

Lindsey Stephens (at Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership, Botswana)
lindseystephens.blogspot.com

"njalo-njalo"

Ritu Kamal (at mothers2mothers, South Africa)
njalo-njalo.blogspot.com

"Tanzania"

Shelly Slemp (at TCRS, Tanzania)
shellyintz.blogspot.com

BENEFIT UPDATE

Keep saving the date for PiAf's Annual Benefit!

November 15, 2007

6:30 PM

New York City

We still need help preparing for our auction!

Please donate creative and unique experiences or items for this auction—or connect us with people you know who can.

Email piaf@princeton.edu

WE'RE RECRUITING!

Know someone who'd be a great PiAf Fellow? As we recruit candidates for the 2008-2009 fellowship year, we need your help to find fantastic applicants! Please tell your Princeton friends—graduating seniors in the Class of 2008 and young alumni—about PiAf and our upcoming info sessions:

- October 5 @ the Career Fair in Dillon Gym
- October 16 @ 7:30 PM in Frist 302
- November 27 @ 7:30 PM in Frist 302

Interested applicants may also email piafapp@princeton.edu for more information.

Gaborone by the Numbers . . .

By Lindsey Stephens, '07-'08 Fellow at Botswana-Harvard School of Public Health AIDS Initiative Partnership

Days I've been in Gabs: 52 days as of October 1st

Miles away from home I am: 10,364 miles

Extension (neighborhood) I live in: 4

Plot I live at: 394

Roommates: 4 – 1 infectious disease doctor, 2 medical students, and 1 UN volunteer.

Largest age difference in the house: 15 years

Number of mosquito bites I got in one night: 28 – my room is now mosquito-netted and sprayed nightly to keep these buggers away. It's a good thing this is not a malaria area.

People in Botswana: 1.2 million

People in Gaborone: 200,000 – it's got a small town feel to it, especially in the expat community where almost everyone is somehow involved with HIV/AIDS or healthcare.

Time I get up: 6:15 am – morning is my favorite time in Gaborone!

Time I get to work: 7:30 am – because it gets so hot here, everything starts early.

Time it reaches over 90 degrees: 11 am – summer is creeping up on us fast! It reaches 120+ degrees in the summer... yikes.

Ounces of water I drink to stay reasonably hydrated: 96 + ounces – drinking water is a must here!

Percentage of people with HIV/AIDS in Botswana: 33%

Doctors I work closely with: 2 – I have two amazing mentors who help me run the study and also are teaching me everything from how to do research to clinical care to the etiology opportunistic infections and toxicities!

Sites in the study I'm working on: 9 – Francistown, Gumare, Jwaneng, Tsabong, Rakops, Ramotswa, Gaborone, Selibi-Phikwe, and Mahalapye. The study is countrywide and a collaboration between the Botswana-Harvard Partnership, the BotUSA Project (a partnership between the CDC and the Botswanan Government), and the Ministry of Health of Botswana.

Patients in the study I'm working on: 974 – The study seeks to evaluate how being enrolled in the Botswanan Government's antiretroviral therapy program (the "MASA" program) affects the patients' quality of life. We are currently collecting the baseline data at the patients' initiation onto HAART (highly active antiretroviral therapy). We will then survey patients at 12 months post-initiation to see how being on HAART has affected their attitude towards their health, future, family, work, religion etc.

Days I spend in the clinic: 2 mornings a week – I shadow doctors at the Tshepo clinics, which is running a study on ARV resistance and adherence strategies. I am learning a lot about HIV/AIDS treatment and how care is given in places where technology is limited and resources sparse. In Botswana, there is no MRI machine in the entire country, no medical school at the present, and patients need to go to South Africa for major surgeries.



Above: Every day on her way to work, Lindsey walks across these school fields where young Botswana play sports



Left: The Tshepo Clinic where Lindsey shadows physicians working on an ARV resistance study; *right:* Plot 394 where Lindsey lives in Gaborone.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

by Shelly Slep, '07-'08 Fellow at Tanganyika
Christian Refugee Service in Tanzania

On August 8th, I left Virginia and set out for Kibondo, Tanzania. Kibondo is a small town in the western part of the country next to the border of Burundi, and it is the stereotypical rural community many people imagine when they think of Africa. Though I have running water, flush toilets, an indoor kitchen, and electricity, 80-90% of my neighbors and friends do not. Thankfully my coworkers speak enough English to communicate—which is a blessing because I'm still working on my Swahili—but like my housing situation, this is not the norm. Most of the people can say little more than “good morning,” so I review all pertinent Swahili words before heading to the market. I've been very happy to find that this language barrier has not discouraged anyone from warmly welcoming me. “Karibu” means “welcome” and I probably hear it no less than thirty times a day. Tanzania should be called the “Karibu Country” not only because the word is said so frequently, but also because Tanzanians have a very welcoming spirit. Already, I've been invited into more

Shelly's Kibondo Top Five...eeerrr... Six:

1. Pineapple that melts in your mouth and costs less than \$1
2. Getting 8 hours of sleep every night because the electricity is off from 11:00pm-7:00am
3. Finally reading those books I was too busy to read in college
4. Burundian and Tanzanian mountains—they're beautiful
5. Playing pick-up basketball with locals after work
6. The Tanzanian kids who live next door and speak wonderful English!

than half a dozen homes for lunch and to join four different families for Christmas. Karibu indeed!

I work for the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS), an NGO that cares for poor and marginalized Tanzanian populations. In practice this means that we run

two refugee camps and have several different development projects in poor, rural villages. Presently, our camps house about 51,000 refugees, the majority of whom are Burundian and a few thousand of whom are Congolese. (It's been fascinating and very humbling to talk to them—they've been through so much!) My job is to turn Tanzanian English into American English so we can work with donors like Church World Service and partner organizations like UNHCR more easily.

The remaining Burundian refugees are being pressured to repatriate even though many are reluctant to go. As far as I can tell, they hesitate because the living conditions in the camps are better

than what they expect to find in Burundi. Don't misunderstand me, camp life is tough, but in the camps they are guaranteed access to medical care, primary education, security, and at least a small amount of food, which simply isn't true in Burundi. The international community has been generous in supporting Burundians while they are refugees outside of their country. But, we have been much less generous in supporting them in their home country.

So what can we do for Burundians now? This question was posed to me by a 14-year-old boy just before he returned to Burundi. I continue to ponder what the answer may be. It certainly isn't to dump millions of dollars into open hands—that would be a temporary (not to mention irresponsible) solution, just as the refugee camps are temporary solutions. But, it will take money to implement more lasting solutions. One piece of the puzzle is to improve education in the country. To this end, I'm currently working with Burundian NGOs to find donors to support Burundian schools. Pictures from Ntende (below), our first focus school which is only an hour drive from my office, and repatriation convoys (above) will give you an idea of what and whom we're working for.

In the meantime, please know that you are always welcome in Kibondo! Karibu!



Loading trucks in the repatriation convoys; facilities where refugees spend the night before returning to Burundi

Left: Shelly in the TCRS office; middle: Ntende, which is flooded with returning refugees and local students; right: Ntende's primary students

