

## Keeping in touch with Michelle Arthur (Normanton to Zambia, Africa)

Muli-Bwange! To which you reply 'Tili- bweno!'.. lesson one in Nyange ☺



Thought I should write and assure you all that I'm happy and healthy after my little medical clinic visit last Monday. I can imagine what you were all imagining when my dear mother first filled you in, but thankfully it wasn't Malaria (as first expected) and the clinic/nurses were great. An injection in my bum, a blood and poo test, 5 hrs on a drip, a brown paper bag full of antibiotics and 400,000 kwacha (about \$135) later I walked out of my first day in hospital in 26 years. Another memorable experience to tuck under my belt, hey?! I've succumbed to buying bottled water instead of being stubborn and stingy and trying to boil it ... although not sure if it was something I ate or drank. ANYWAY, all's well that ends well ☺. And Michelle keeps the bottled water company thriving for the rest of her stay.

**As for the teaching part of life over here**, I'm not sure who really learns more- the kids or their 'teachers!' We are handed a book and told what to teach for that lesson/subject (5 mins before we teach it) and somehow at the end of the day I manage to pretend well enough to fool the students into thinking I actually know what I'm talking about. Hopefully most days we all walk away having learnt something! Today I learnt about Relative Pronouns and subtracting fractions. Yesterday I taught the Gr 7's about diseases! It wasn't too bad until I asked them to give me an example of a disease that's passed via skin contact, and one boy put up his hand and said 'AIDS'. To make it worse the kids all laughed. (As 12/13 yr olds do) Having no idea what kind of sex-ed these kids have had (or are allowed to have) and also knowing that there were kids sitting in front of me who were HIV+ (so I had to choose words carefully), I launched into this dodgy explanation about blood and semen and immune systems and then decided that I was probably better off just shutting up, so mumbled something about being careful and that was that! Struth. I take my hat off to you teachers! The little kids I had earlier this morning were much easier — we concentrated on counting to 20, sung songs and practiced our shapes. That I can handle! We have a great timetable though and the week passes before we know it. This weekend Jacob, Violet and the kids are going to Livingstone for a wedding, so we're home alone. Looking forward to lazy days and maybe doing some yummy cooking! I've started driving around with Jacob but we won't have transport so will have to venture out on foot somewhere I think. It's Catherine's b'day next Thursday so I'm thinking we might do something special to celebrate.

Nothing much more to report on from this side of the Indian Ocean. I suppose you've all heard about the crisis in Zimbabwe. Couldn't BELIEVE it on Sunday when Morgan T. (opposition) pulled out, so now Mugabe is declaring victory (being the only one to vote for). Hopefully the international community will finally do something — simple minded me has no idea about the ins and outs of politics but know enough to be devastated for the people in that beautiful country who have been suffering for so long-under his pathetic leadership. (Can I say that?) Most people we've met just want him dead. Anyway, time will tell what happens.

I'm still not sure when I'll head home — my visa runs out (unless I extend it) at the start of Sept, so I'm thinking about what to do for a few weeks until my flight back to Sydney, which at this stage is booked for the 28th, but I can change it and perhaps bring it forward. September feels like years away, but June is almost over and no doubt July and August will fly past too. It's getting chilly over here but so far so good, haven't needed the thermals or gloves since we were on the safari. We went for a walk this arvy and explored our little neighbourhood which was fun. Of course you don't make it more than a few metres without passerby's wanting to practice their English on you, and we hear 'muzungu' (white person) everywhere we go. It will be a relief to get home and walk down the street without attracting attention!

Rightio my great mates, I shall love and leave you. So much for this just being a quick email to let you know that I'm ok! Hope you are well. Promise me you'll enjoy your next shower twice as much on my behalf! And on behalf of the millions who tonight go to sleep hungry, make the most of every BITE ☺

'Ni-koo konda' .... I love you!! 'Nyenda!' (Bye) Michelle xx

Note from Hazel: The below in italics is Michelle's response for friends who are keen to do something to provide needed water.

*Some of you have been asking about how you can help out with this bore for Chibolya, and I promised to let you know, so here it is. But before I say anything, let me assure you of a few things...*

- 1. What you decide to do is totally up to you, I won't ask and won't say anything about this matter again. You are definitely under no obligation! I'm giving you the director's email address so if you want to donate any money to the organization and work here you can contact him. This way the donation is tax deductible and goes through the organizations books so you'll get a receipt, etc.*
- 2. The grand plan is to build a clinic and school on the block of land where we want to put the bore. (We'll also need the bore to make the blocks, etc to build with) I'm believing big and hoping we can get enough to put the bore in before I leave!*
- 3. I know one of the biggest things that concerns us with giving to overseas organizations is that so much of the money is taken out in overhead costs, etc etc and we worry that the money doesn't actually get to the people who need it. All I have for you is my word, but this is definitely ground roots work and I ASSURE you that what we raise will go towards giving these people free, clean water.*
- 4. This is really hard for me to write — I have deleted and rewritten this paragraph at least 10 times already! I'd hate you to think I'm asking for money for something, even though I know it's not for me. But lots of people replied asking how they can help so hopefully you can understand that I'm just letting you all know. I feel really strongly about this and am excited for what we can do together to help the people of Chibolya. Every cent counts, right?! Those who want to give something can contact David Christmas on davxmas@hotmail.com. If you have any further questions or want to hear more about the work of 'Action for Empowerment' here in Zambia, or the bore, please let him know. We'll keep you updated!*