



Twitti Community School Visitors Report - July 2019

Judy Kramer, Carina van Heyst, Andy McLachlan, & James McLachlan

In July 2019, Judy was pleased to bring friends with her to visit Twitti: recently retired principals Carina and Andy and, fresh from graduating university, their son James. In total, we spent about three wonderful weeks at Twitti.

Nothing gets in the way of a warm Twitti welcome, not even a flight arriving at 2:30 in the morning. Nonetheless, Arthur and Austin were there to greet us with the bus to take us to Anina's for some rest. Our first week was a wonderful welcome to Zambia and to Twitti including a special meal with Granny (Lydia Maonde) and an assembly at the school with a performance by a local high school group of traditional dances from all around Zambia. We arrived with several suitcases of instructional materials and equipment for the school and spent much of this first week organizing the items for use. In particular, thanks to Pearson Publishing, we were able to add several sets of levelled readers to the program that they are using (Fountas and Pinnell Levelled Literacy Intervention). Arthur took us shopping so we could purchase baskets and we were able to set up the levelled books in a way that we hope makes them easier to use. Indeed, it didn't take long before Mr. Banda was sitting with small groups working with the new materials.



In our time at the school, we engaged in a number of tasks. As a board member, Judy met with Lydia, Arthur, Simon, and Headmaster Mr. Munyama to discuss a number of school issues. Judy talked about how to increase parent involvement through the PTA. There are many parents and caregivers who are very creative and eager to come and help the school. They also discussed ideas for a nutrition/snack program for the students.

Over the three weeks, Judy, Carina, and Andy also interviewed all of the sponsored students to find out how they were doing in school, what things they liked, and what their hopes are for the future. James took portraits of the students to accompany these reports. In addition, we worked with teams of teachers to demonstrate a collaborative method for discussing how to support struggling students by sitting with colleagues to look at work samples and discuss next steps to take to support the student. Lastly, armed with lists of teacher requests, we made several visits to local shops to find items to support instruction in the classrooms.



As a recent film graduate, James's main task was to document life around Twitti. He took photographs and video, in particular, recording an interview with Lydia about the history of Twitti School. The final video can be found [here](#).

After three wonderful weeks at Twitti, we were sad to be saying goodbye. Of course, there was no slipping away quietly: an enthusiastic Twitti send off was in order. Staff and students held an assembly to say goodbye to us which included the traditional visitor tree planting. We were happy to be able to use this occasion to inform the school community that sufficient funds had been raised in order to be able to buy a new school bus. This was particularly poignant on a day when only one of the buses was in fact in working order and so we saw first hand the challenges of transporting all of the students with multiple runs using only one bus. The announcement of a new bus was met with great cheers and dancing by all of the staff and students.



And Twitti School had one last trick up their sleeves: the following (early) morning when we were to head to the airport to travel to South Luangwa, we were met by not just Arthur and Austin in the bus but also teacher Janet and seven students who insisted on carrying our luggage and who accompanied us all the way to the airport for a joyful farewell.