

A Heart of Gold

As he waits patiently in the building coordinator's office, Matthieu glances at his watch. It is his lunch break but he may have to skip his meal until later. This is one of the days he has had to excuse himself from work to reserve a room for the next Lolonyo general meeting. His calm demeanor reveals little about the concessions his voluntary duty requires.

Matthieu and his wife Jaqueline are natives of Togo and live in Ypsilanti with three beautiful children. Though his accent is undeniably francophone, it is impossible to tell that Matthieu learned to speak English only after arriving in the US in 2002.

To say that Matthieu and his family are dedicated to Lolonyo is an understatement. He is always ready to oblige when asked to be the spiritual leader at Lolonyo meetings. Though the reservation process has moved online, Matthieu still makes an effort to show up before meeting time to ensure the doors are open. On rare occasions when he is unable to attend, Matthieu has always left the assignment in capable hands. Even when the family was unable to attend a recent meeting, Jaqueline still made the trip with just enough time to lay out her tasty cuisine for the members' social hour.

Matthieu once shared a story about a fellow African who had received devastating news after only being in the country for a month. Knowing he had no one to lean on, Matthieu and his family shopped for provisions and



Matthieu Fagbedji
Lolonyo Ambassador
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To be invaluable is to give our best in everything we do

presented a modest donation to help console the bereaved stranger. He told the story with such emotion that his sincerity in helping people was undeniable – a gesture in the true spirit of Lolonyo.

He may not seek it, but everyone pays attention when Matthieu speaks because his words come straight from his heart. For the gestures of kindness and dedication, Lolonyo wishes to celebrate Matthieu and his family in the month of July and August as ambassadors of friendship, community and sharing.

In all our efforts, no matter how small and especially when our actions impact others, let us be inspired by Matthieu's example to give our best. Very often, it is not spurts of excellence that define character but the accrual of dedication in all things we do from the smallest errand to the most significant endeavor.



Matthieu and Jaqueline



A Beautiful Family