

# Parks' Adventures in Africa

**SAM AND AMANDA PARKS**  
 SERVING THE LORD IN NAIROBI, KENYA  
 livingtheadventure.discoverly.com

## PRAYERS FOR THE PARKS

Prayer for Sam's safety as he travels in rural Kenya working for World Concern

Prayer for Kenya as no resolution has been made between opposing political parties

Prayer for Amanda's migraines, which have come back with a vengeance.

Prayer as Sam explores ministry options in Nairobi for after he graduates this summer.

## FAVORITE STUDENT QUOTES

Written in an apology note for being late to study hall

"I am very sorry for being late to study hall please forgive me. Please forgive me for the times I have used messy hand writing. I will try my very best not to do the same things in U.S. history. Therefore I have come to the conclusion to make my handwriting and behavior as neat as I. I will try my very very hardest to remember what I have said."

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## CALM IN KENYA EXPERIENCES WITH WORLD CONCERN

.These have been an intense two months in Kenya. Actually, I think these have been some of the most intense months in the *history* of Kenya. We praise God that the violence in Kenya has cooled considerably. But Kenya is not quite in the clear yet, and this post-election mess still seems to dominate people's lives. Our jobs here keep it constantly in the forefront of our minds. Amanda works with kids, many of whom are caught up this current culture of political and ethnic rivalries. My job with World Concern demands that I be involved with people who are experiencing the greatest hardships from this turmoil.

### **KENYA THESE DAYS**

The situation in Kenya seems to be changing constantly; the state of affairs today is radically different

from three weeks ago, and who knows what tomorrow will bring. At the point of the last newsletter, the violence has just begun. For five weeks, ethnic and political hostilities were fought out in the streets of towns across Kenya, mostly in areas where there had been a lot of ethnic intermingling.

Finally, at the beginning of February, politicians from both sides have come together to seek out a political solution. These mediation talks seemed to have put the violence at least on hold. But in the wake of all this violence are over 1,000 dead, 600,000 or so internal refugees, and sections of country that have become ungovernable. The lasting problem will likely be that Kenya has become more segregated and divided



A young girl and her brother at a refugee camp in Narok.

## LIFE GOES ON...

I know we have spent a lot of time talking about the situation in Kenya lately. But, it is so much bigger and more important than our seemingly insignificant lives. Nonetheless, life is going on here in Nairobi.

At WNS, we are in the middle of a quarter without a single holiday or day off, and yet life at West Nairobi School is good.

We are in the midst of preparing for the addition of 11th grade for the 2008-2009 school year. I will become strictly a high school teacher, as opposed to middle and high like this year. Honestly, it has been a tough year dealing with

the 8th grade, but I will miss the opportunity to teach and minister to kids while they are in that part-child and part-adult stage.

They are my biggest challenge and my biggest joy. We are preparing for an 8th grade class trip, so I am helping them raise money by selling valentine's day candy grams, caramel corn, etc.

I feel like I am getting to know them better by spending time with them some outside of school, going to sports games and eating lunch with them some days of the week. This past weekend we took a

couple of our students hiking at Mt. Longonot.

Anyways, next year I will teach World History I, World History II, United States History, Advanced Placement U.S. History, and Model United Nations. I am anticipating a lot of work with 3 new courses to plan, but I am excited to teach AP and Model U.N. Life gets boring without challenges!

### **Outside of WNS**

Sometimes I feel like it is difficult to escape the West Nairobi School "bubble." As an expatriate, I have found it difficult to get to know people from

CALM IN KENYA, CONTINUED...



Sam and Amanda ice skating with some friends at the only rink in all of East Africa!

tions from other ethnic groups. After the disputed elections, the relationships that had existed were dissolved, and there were about three days of intense fighting in the town center. Some of the World Concern watched helplessly from their hotel rooftop.

My first trip to Narok was startling and disturbing. The Narok I had known well from my trip in 2005 had changed drastically. Most of the Kikuyus had fled town and many of their businesses had been looted and/or burned. I met some of those who had fled during a day long food distribution at refugee camps. World Concern is in charge of Narok's IDP camps, which are currently home to about 6000 people. The one camp I visited was housing over 200 people in a church sanctuary that could hardly seat that many during a service. I did some economic assessments during my trip that painted an even bleaker picture—because of the insecurity on the roads the whole district

was becoming virtually cut off from food and medicines from the outside!

Praise God for the current peace, though! I visited Narok again last week and found a different story. Better road security had allowed for the much needed delivery of food and medicines. Most businesses (the ones that weren't destroyed in the violence) had reopened, and I even noticed the distinctive dress of Kikuyu women on the streets. At one rural town meeting, I was surprised to hear that some participants had to leave early due to security Concerns. Turns out, though, that the "security concerns" weren't ethnic violence, but lions in the area.

It would be erroneous, though, to assume that Kenya returned to peace: tensions remain high, and a lot depends on whether the peace talks can bring about a quick resolution in Kenya. Please continue to pray for this country.

than ever in it's 44-year history.

WORKING WITH WORLD CONCERN

Narok is a good example of this. Narok is a town where I have done much of my work with World Concern. It is in the heart of Maasai land, but most of its businesses are owned by Kikuyus. There are also large population

LIFE GOES ON, CONTINUED...

the local community. Honestly, the Kenyan culture of asking "friends" for "help" all the time makes it difficult to trust people want to know me for my friendship and not because they think I can sponsor them to go to an U.S. university.

One way I have gotten to know more Kenyans (and some expats) is by teaching Pilates class on Saturday mornings at a local gym. For those of who don't know, I taught aerobics and was a trainer during college— and I loved it! Anyways, most of the members have never heard of Pilates before, plus I am a wazungu (white person), so that also makes me an anomaly. I am slowly getting to know some members bet-

ter. I also met some expats from the U.S. and Britain, who we've had over for dinner and spent time with

Slowly, slowly, we are getting to know our community better. The women at the market know us, even the guy at the deli counter at the super market knows what kind of cheese I buy! However, actually getting to Kenyans deeply and have those life-giving conversations with is a whole other challenge. Sam and I both feel like we are just getting to know this country and these people, so we're excited about having more time to make an impact., and we are looking forward to another year here.

So far, I know Kenya certainly has had

more of an impact on me than I have on Kenya. Tears well up in my eyes when I see a handicapped person dragging themselves down the street or old women with huge bundles of firewood bending them in two.

Sometimes, I don't think my heart can take it, and I just want to go home and forget about the suffering people. But God is good, and I know he is using these sights and experiences to change me.

So, that is our life in a nutshell. You can pray for me next week for when I am on a panel for the high-schoolers on sex and dating— ahhhhh! I am looking forward to spring break in just four weeks when we get our first American visitor— Sam's mom!

*"Blessed is he... whose hope is in the Lord his God... who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry... But the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. Praise the Lord!"*

Psalm 146

PARKS PRAISES

Praise God for Sam's keeping Sam safe through all of his travels in the last few weeks.

Praise God that Amanda was able to, after many hours and frustrations, get migraine medicine into Kenya from the U.S.

Praise God for support we've found through our church

home. We have started branching out and attending home group there (I am pushing for Sam to join the worship band!).

Praise God for all of the faithful friends and family who pray, stay in touch, and faithfully support us here.



Amanda, Ji-Yeon, and Natasha (8th graders at WNS) making caramel corn to raise money for their class trip.