

Jess's February 2010 Update

Hi Everyone!!!!

Well, there has been a LOT of activity in my life since I last wrote you all.... one thing to start off with as the English like to do, is talk about the weather!!!

Weather wise:

On the phone to my Dad, he told me that he left the church early last Sunday because he was too cold his teeth were chattering and even after standing next to the radiator didn't help! I told him in response, that it has been so hot here in South Africa, last Sunday at church, I had to leave the building half way through the sermon, because I was fainting from heat stroke, even after sitting by the fan!!!

It has possibly been the hottest weather here that I have ever had to live and work in, some days it has been getting up to 35-40 Celsius, and I think my English body is just not handling it as well as everyone else!!! Please pray for me for physically managing to function on these hot days!

School wise:

I have been working in the schools for three weeks now and LOVING being back after the long holidays that the schools broke up for. We have started from the beginning of the curriculum and I have been diligently making notes of how each lesson works, so that at the end of the year, I will have a good overview of each lesson, so that I am prepared to lead it next year in a new school.

The last two weeks at the JG Zuma school, the Principle has sat in on our lessons while we teach!!! This has been super encouraging for us, as he always tells us after each lesson how impressed he is with the curriculum we teach, and how interactive the students are in responding to us. It is quite something to have him walk into the class though, the children all stand up quickly and they have a call and answer conversation with the Principle which goes something like 'Good morning class, how are you?' and the class responds together 'We are fine, thank you and how are you?' They are very respectful towards him and we have no problems with discipline with him in class!!! After sitting in our class, the Principle also announced afterwards that in the following two weeks, the whole school's devotions in the mornings will be focused on 'Love' which is what we were teaching about (Real or fake love). He told the class that they were going to be responsible for leading those devotions everyday!

This year we have also found that the students are able to understand and speak a lot more English than last year's class, apparently, John and Margaret who have been there for three years say that every year, grade 8's have better and better English, they think it is mostly to do with the children watching more media and understanding English through having more access to and watching more TV etc. This is actually good because the better they can speak and understand English, the better chance they have of finding a job after school.

So schools are going good, I am now going into three schools teaching lessons and bible studies, and after Easter, we will also be going into another school called Tholowazi, which I worked in last year, but has not started with the CrossRoads Curriculum yet.

Please pray for the new classes we have for this year, that we will make a great bond with them all, and that they would really take what we are teaching and apply it to their lives. Also pray for the bible studies, that more students would come to them. At the moment

Mpume (a Zulu girl I work with) and I lead the bible studies together and have on average 10-15 girls come each week.

Studying wise:

I have started Studying!!!! Yey!!! All the lectures that I have at the Varsity college, all fall on a Monday, so I have been going to classes on Monday 9am-5pm, and doing schools in the mornings and early afternoons around 7am-2.30pm on Tuesdays to Thursdays. In the afternoons/evenings I get down to studying the other modules that I am taking correspondently. I have made some lovely friends through the Varsity College (Martine, Gemma and Annel) who are all studying to be teachers! They have all asked me to bring them to the township schools we work in as they would love to get the experience of it. Martine and Annel are both Christians, and Gemma is a Catholic girl, all who are very down to earth and passionate about God.

Please pray for my diligence in studying hard!

Accommodation wise:

I have now officially settled down in my new Grannie flat with my fabulous room mate Ruth, who is also from the UK!!!

It has been such a blessing. Jason's Parents (Gary and Cheryl), offered me to come to stay in the grannie flat on their property next to them. This has been such a blessing, as it is super safe there, with two dogs, and it is right next to them if I need any help with anything, and they are renting it at an affordable price. I'm so STOKED (a phrase for happy in South Africa!).

Other bits and pieces that have been going on in my life are....

I joined a Girls soccer league!!! We will start matches from April onwards over the soccer world cup! I am really enjoying it, and it has been good exercise, and a great opportunity to meet new people.

I have also been running a Girls group before Youth on Fridays down in Port Shepstone where I go every weekend to visit Jason. We have been making pancakes, going down the beach and doing art and crafts. At a youth planning weekend where we focused on how to develop and structure youth for this term, we decided to start this group for girls to develop older youth to take on more leadership by leading the devotions or planning the activities, and developing mentorships between older and younger girls in the youth group. The youth group has now got about 90 youth coming every Friday and is going super well! Our youth leader Biron has just left, so please pray for the youth group I still go to in Port Shepstone, as they are searching for a new youth leader, and pray for the remaining leaders to step up in filling the gap while we are waiting for another Youth Leader to fill his place.

Thanks again for your support and prayers! Over the last few months I have really sensed God's hand over me here and I feel like his angels really have been surrounding me and only allowing things to happen to me which God allows. I really praise him for his protection over me here, and how he has really lead me so faithfully to be in the place where he desires me to be so I can grow and become who he plans for me to be.

All my love to you in Christ!!!

Jess x