

SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter, Edition XV



Greetings, All, from Zambia!

Happy Holidays and I hope the season is full of both Light and Love.

SSAAP's Quarterly Newsletter is delayed somewhat due to the power outages ('load shedding') in the country. Even in town, there is only 4 hours of electricity daily due to the lack of rainfall during the rainy season of last year, and has left the country without enough water to power up the entire country with electricity. Living in the village as we do, this does not affect us until we go to town specifically to use the electricity and find that even in town, there is scarcely any.

Our currency, the Zambian Kwacha, has depreciated greatly, allowing the US Dollar (USD) to stretch even further. And while this is highly profitable for not only SSAAP's projects, as it is at the expense of almost an entirety of a nation unable to afford their own country, we all have our fingers crossed that after the Presidential elections (October 2016) the Kwacha will rise in value again.

Zambia's main export, copper, has also depreciated in value, the root cause of our economical issues here – or so I am told. In the 1970's, the Zambian Kwacha was equivalent to the U.S. Dollar. The Kwacha typically holds steady at 5 Kwacha = 1 USD. There was a time, in 2005, when I was in the Peace Corps that the Kwacha was

very strong, at a rate of 3 Kwacha=1 USD. Today, the rate is 11 Kwacha to one USD, and I was told that a few weeks prior the Kwacha soared to an all-time high of 14 Kwacha to one USD.

Partners: Mississippi State University's Engineers Without Borders Chapter:

“Everyone Deserves Water”~ I have been using this phrase for years and was pleasantly surprised to see one Engineers Without Borders-Mississippi State University (EWB-MSU) team member wearing a t-shirt with these words engraved upon its back; this slogan, used by the EWB-MSU Team for fundraising initiatives, couldn't have summed it up better. Water is a human right.

The EWB-MSU Team came to stay in Simwatachela, in our home in the village, for eight days – cooking, washing their own clothes, and monitored previously-drilled wells as well as drilled four new wells, and assessed sites for two wells to be drilled next year (August 2016).



Dr. Dennis Truax (far left), head of the Mississippi State University Chapter of Engineers Without Borders, brings his team to SSAAP Headquarters, Zambia. Zambians Tomas Mudonda and Gibson Sinan'gombe excitedly greet the visitors.

The Team contracted with two drilling companies to drill four new wells in the well-drilling/dry season of 2015 (*'cilimo'*: August-late October, annually); the new wells we drilled in August are located in the communities of Siloonda, Siankope, Sileu, and Sikalele. As well, the team performed water data collection, testing for fluoride, pH, total alkalinity, total chlorine, total hardness, free chlorine, chloride, sulfate, nitrate, nitrite, copper, iron, bacteria, hydrogen sulfide, lead, pesticides, and fecal matter in seven wells drilled for SSAAP (2012: Sibooli-B; 2014: Siamabwe, Simoono, Sibooli Cikolo; 2015: Siloonda, Siankope, Sileu). They assessed one well drilled for SSAAP in 2012 (Sibooli-B), two wells drilled for SSAAP in 2014 (Simapuka, Kosalala), two wells drilled for EWB-MSU in 2014 (Simoono, Siamabwe), and one well fixed by EWB-MSU in 2014 (Sibooli Cikolo or Sibooli School). We did assessments for future wells to be drilled with EWB-MSU in August 2016 (Sianjina) and the second well to be assessed in August 2016 as there are many communities in need of new wells.



The EWB-MSU Team performs water sampling tests on a variety of elements and potential contaminants for the water wells. Most of the wells drilled ('boreholes' or 'cikuju' in our local language ciTonga) extend 60-85 meters deep into the ground, and are closed so that nothing may enter the water source.

Dr. Dennis Truax, head of the EWB-MSU Team, has visited Simwatachela for three years now – even in SSAAP's absence, and his dedication to the project is astonishing. His concern is genuine and his advice diplomatic, and throughout the past few years he has served as a rock for SSAAP – not only with technical concerns but also with a plethora of other things surrounding the project. Under his advice, as SSAAP currently has a stack of 68 requests for new water wells and 16 requests to repair broken wells (drilled as far back as twenty years ago), that we consider a program for fixing broken and damaged wells, which would be a fraction of the cost of drilling a new well (current rates for drilling new water wells ~ \$5000 USD < x < \$7800). Dr. Truax drafted a questionnaire for assessing each request that comes to SSAAP to repair a broken well.

There are a few experts in the Simwatachela area, highly trained and skilled in repairing wells, and so SSAAP will be working hand-in-hand as well with these individuals and paying them directly (also via contract) to repair broken wells drilled years prior. Please note that those wells drilled by SSAAP/EWB in the last 3-4 years require 25% community contribution by SSAAP, and 10% community contribution by EWB-MSU, and therefore the communities are expected to respond to broken wells responsibly and independently and thus will not be assisted by SSAAP in the expense to repair the well, as this expense is considered part of the community's contribution. However, many of the broken/damaged wells in Simwatachela were drilled primarily by the Zambian government, often during the rainy season (November-April; 'mainza' in ciTonga) when the water table was quite high, and thus these wells were drilled only 20 or so meters deep. Many of these wells, which were drilled during the wrong time of year and not drilled to a satisfactory depth, cannot espouse water for the people. But some of the broken wells drilled many years ago in the village *are* salvageable, and those are the wells SSAAP will assist in repairing.

The Zambians suffered draught this year; many of the wells were unable to extract water as it rained only a handful of times in the November 2014-April 2015 rainy season ('mainza'). Due to this extreme scenario, the drilling company SSAAP/EWB-MSU employed visited Simwatachela and added additional pipes to pump stems for wells drilled in October 2014 with SSAAP: Kosalala community and Simapuka community. This work was completed the second week of October 2015.



From start to finish: Sileu Community. Far left: contaminated water source, humans sharing with cows, goats, sheep, and pigs. Center: SRR Drilling Company begins drilling in an area that the Water Diviner, Sileu Community, and Dr. Truax all believe will offer water beneath the soil. Far right: hand pump installed and SRR Drilling Company workers set up the mold to put cement around the hand pump.

Besides working hard, we also had a whole lot of fun – very important to me as work should be fun! The team is always very respectful of SSAAP’s quite modest and humble home and living / cooking conditions.

The team has worked tirelessly toward the betterment of Simwatachela:

<http://www.msstate.edu/newsroom/article/2015/11/msu-student-group-wins-grant-expand-zambian-water-project/>

The engineering students have raised an additional \$2000 by hosting a Hunger ‘Banquet’, t-shirt sales, a 4K ‘Water U Running 4’ race, and placing a display on the campus drill field. These funds help the team travel to Zambia.



A huge *thank you* to Dennis and the entire team. The project has grown, blossomed, re-seeded and bloomed again thanks to you all.

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Partners: Boston University's Engineers Without Borders Chapter:

Literally the same day we parted with the EWB-MSU Team (August 10, 2015), my daughter Radiance and I, along with two members of SSAAP's team, met Boston University's Engineers Without Borders Chapter (EWB-BU) in Choma town, an hour from Kalomo town (four+ hours from Simwatachela). Together, we rode to the rural community of Naluja, 2+ hours from Choma, where the EWB-BU Team is working towards sustainable health initiatives at the local Rural Health Centre (RHC) and its prenatal clinic.

EWB-BU's Team has worked extensively with sanitation and hygiene programs in the Naluja area. Their projects include construction of 'tippy-tap' hand washing stations, monitoring the clinic's hand-pump well, construction of bio sand filters for clean drinking water, and monitoring the clinic's latrines.



SSAAP representatives took the opportunity to learn more about the Naluja project and the responsibilities SSAAP would have in its monthly monitoring.



Boston University's Engineers Without Borders program works with the prenatal clinic in Naluja, ensuring clean water by building hand-washing stations, assessing latrine quality and building bio-sand water filters within the community. SSAAP's team of representatives consists of seven members who will take monthly monitoring and evaluation trips to Naluja, in EWB-BU's absence, taking water samples and performing water tests, as well working with the Naluja community with the hand-washing stations and latrine projects in exchange for cattle for the Simwatachela community. The first cow EWB-BU will donate to SSAAP for its monthly monitoring and evaluation (M&E) services and is expected by January 2016; we are clearing land for the cow shelter now, as well as buying vaccines, antibiotics and vitamins for the animals and anticipate buying a female cow.

As I come from a culture where we name animals, I have already informed the SSAAP team I want to name her 'Lucy'.

Cattle are a way of life for the Tonga people (Southern Province, Zambia); without cattle, there is truly no life for these people, as cows are responsible for feeding the Tonga families both directly and indirectly: through milk and meat, as well as by plowing their fields and providing the manpower to assist in building their homes, kitchens, and other living shelters. The cattle are as important to the people as their children, which is part of why I insisted we name the cows that EWB-BU donates to SSAAP.



Every two weeks SSAAP Representatives for the Naluja project meet at SSAAP Headquarters. The Representatives are interested in the project and enthusiastic. Each member of the Team is without cattle and are therefore valuing the program diligently and with deep interest.

Art for SSAAP: *Everyone Deserves Art!*

Art is a way of life and its own culture, which is a source of healing and spiritual insight for many of us. I have loved art since I was old enough to write my name. Every day of her life, my daughter wakes up and draws a picture or paints; her day is not complete without doing so. Art is a practice that many people – specifically in the hard-to-reach rural catchment areas SSAAP serves – are not fortunate enough to engage in. The use of color, and expression through drawing, coloring and

painting is not a part of life here. In ciTonga, we have only words for: green ('nyanzibili'), blue ('makuumbi'), red ('usalala'), white ('utuba'), and black ('usiya'). There is no Tonga word for yellow; if someone wants to discuss the color yellow, he says: "the yolk of an egg" as there is no specific word for yellow in Tonga.

Most school children have never held a crayon between fingers or have any notion of how to draw. Our local school, *Sibooli Cikolo*, has invited me to come teach art twice in a month to the school-aged children, as well as to adults who are interested. We began in September 2015 with the start of Term 3 discussing colors, the spectrum of the rainbow, and how to use a crayon. Shortly, we moved on to drawing simple things (flowers, trees, leaves, clouds, huts, houses). All of the crayons, pads of paper, pencils, and colored pencils were generously donated to SSAAP, as well as coloring books, and have brought so much joy to the children. They gasp and cheer when I enter their classroom (every other Tuesday) with my daughter. We are also using old cans, leftover from canned food, to make art as well as to hold crayons. We recycle everything that comes our way.



Class One schoolboy coloring a little dinosaur.

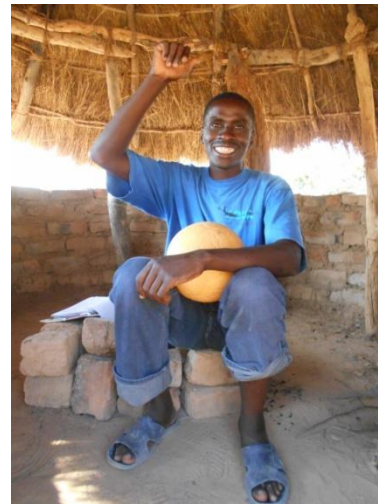


Sibooli Cikolo ('school') shown to the left; on right, Class Five schoolgirl draws a rainbow. We are learning about the spectrum of colors in the rainbow and the acronym 'ROY G. BIV' which helps to remember them.

Distribution of Soccer (“Footballs”) to teams in Simwatachela:

SSAAP is currently distributing soccer balls to teams in the local community associated with a youth group or school. Three balls were donated from a sports store in the U.S.A. and were given to a foundation in Lusaka (works exclusively with youth soccer ‘football’ camps; executive director of this foundation is my longest lasting friendship in Zambia); the remaining nine balls, donated by Engineers Without Borders-Mississippi State University, are currently being distributed in the Simwatachela community. Interested coaches of youth teams are instructed to fill out a Request for Information form, and required – upon receipt of the ball – to write a letter of thanks to the donor as well as three mandatory reports per year as to how the ball has helped their team improve.

Thank you to EWB-MSU as well as the sports store in the U.S.A. for bringing added joy to the people of Simwatachela’s lives!



The ball project has been a huge success in Simwatachela. Soccer balls are in high demand. Much thanks to the EWB-MSU Team for donating them to our local youth teams!

Water Filer Distribution in Simwatachela:

SSAAP is currently working to continue with water filter distribution to schools in Simwatachela without a clean or reliable water source. Five filters remain from the middle school which donated nine filters in 2012/2014. Four were already distributed in 2012 and 2014, and one was donated to Lubanze Village in October 2015.

Art in Simwatachela:

SSAAP buys art made by local artisans, typically from a group of artists working under Clifftone Sitali with the Mosi-oa-Tunya Artisans Association – but it is not limited to only one group. SSAAP also purchases its art from craftswomen and craftsmen in the villages: hand-made rugs, baskets and wooden goods.



Baskets made by local women in our village in Simwatachela (left); Clifftone Sitali of Mukuni Village, Zambia has worked with a team of artisans and sold artwork to SSAAP since 2009.

Loan/Goat Program in Simwatachela:

Two goats were donated to the EWB-MSU team during their stay in Simwatachela (August 2-10, 2015) by Siloonda and Sileu communities who received a well ('borehole') from EWB-MSU. The goats given by the communities were intended to feed the team. However, the students opted rather to donate the goats to SSAAP.

SSAAP's Zambian Team has been vaccinating the goats and has currently hired a worker to build a shelter for the goats behind SSAAP's headquarters. Goats will continue to reproduce, and their offspring, will also receive quarterly vaccinations and weekly vitamins.

A goat was also donated to SSAAP previously in 2015; all three animals will be part of SSAAP's loan/goat program in Simwatachela, and will be part of the loan 'pool' for SSAAP. SSAAP provides individuals, groups and clubs with loans for 6 months, 9 months, or one year, interest-free. In 2015 SSAAP will have the opportunity to provide seven loans to participants.



EWB-MSU students named the goats Gilbert and Sullivan ~ problematic as one goat is male, the other female!

Eyewear Distribution Program in Simwatachela:



Glasses were generously donated to SSAAP in March 2015 by a glasses company in Fort Collins, Colorado. Eyewear is distributed based on need: partially-blind persons have first priority, followed by those suffering from extreme near-/far-sightedness. SSAAP has seventy-three pairs of glasses and three pairs have already been distributed.



Shadreck Kantambo, for whom the Eyewear Distribution Program in Zambia was founded, selects his glasses. Shadreck is blind in one eye and partially blind in the other eye, which is also a lazy eye.

SSAAP runs a weekly eye clinic in which people come to select a pair of glasses and a case, and a lens wipe (supplies permitting). Recipients are required to write a thank-you letter (in ciTonga or in English) thanking the donor in the U.S.A.

Please note that many of the eye impairment issues in Zambia are a result of measles, prior to the time that a vaccination to prevent such outbreaks was available in the nation. Now, all children under age five are required to vaccinate their children against measles.



Renovations on SSAAP's Headquarters/House:



SSAAP's Headquarters, also Heather and Radiance's house, has a cement floor that due to sun exposure and delay in laying the floor in 2012, had begun to crack.

Heather called the communities which had benefitted from SSAAP's efforts (i.e. communities which had received a water well from SSAAP) to come help bring building materials to the house. The builders, Rodwell Nsumo and Ackim Hamaleka, offered their services to construct the cement floor for free; Rodwell and Ackim are working with the Naluja Cattle-Rearing Program.



The SSAAP-Headquarters Renovation Team. From left to right: Leonard, Heather, Ackim, and Rodwell. Other members of various communities came and went, but the four of us were in the construction process for the long haul. As a way to thank this team for their effort, Heather is hosting a Christmas party and will cook/bake/kill four chickens in celebration of their efforts.

Local and National Government Officials Visit Simwatachela:

On November 18, 2015, local government officials from the Zimba District Council (Simwatachela is part of the Zimba zoning district) as well as the Permanent Secretary for the national government of Zambia visited Kabanga, a centralized meeting point in Simwatachela, to grant the Simwatachela Women’s Association (a group of 400+ women) two tractors to plow their fields and to empower them. The people of Simwatachela gathered together to welcome them for the passing over ceremony of the tractor to the people and I had the pleasure of meeting the visitors in an effort to explain to them what SSAAP is doing in the rural Simwatachela community.



Zimba District Council Officer (left); the passing over ceremony for the tractor to the people of Simwatachela (right). Pictured wearing orange and red is the Zambian Permanent Secretary (right photo)

Healthcare Programs Administered at the Local Rural Health Centre(RHC):



Approximately eight kilometers from SSAAP's headquarters is Kabanga Rural Health Centre (RHC). The Health Centre is responsible for the centralization of many health-related issues. Therefore, SSAAP is working hand-in-hand to initiate the following programs:

- Hand-washing stations outside of local congregational points (schools, agriculture sheds, youth football fields) and anywhere where a toilet serving a large population of people is situated and built by SSAAP, called 'tippy-taps'; Heather was trained by the Red Cross in Sierra Leone as to how to construct a tippy-tap station.
- Sanitation and Hygiene workshops offered to Community Health Workers (CHW) in Simwatachela: one-day workshop with lunch and tea breaks included. Eighteen people in attendance. Offered twice in 2016 or once in 2016/once in 2017 (dates to be announced). First workshop completed on November 18, 2015. The workshop was very interesting.
- Participants will receive a notebook for taking notes, pencils/crayons/colored pencils/pens for noting diagrams, and soap/hand-lotion, generously donated to SSAAP by EWB-MSU. Workshops taught by Kabanga RHC workers and Heather Cumming, using the guide: Where There is No Doctor: A Village Healthcare Handbook by David Werner and Helping Health Workers Learn by David Werner and Bill Bower.
- Dental Hygiene workshops offered to Community Health Workers (CHW) in Simwatachela: one-day workshop with lunch and tea breaks included. Thirty-five people in attendance. Offered twice in 2016 or once in 2016/once in 2017 (dates to be announced). Participants will receive a notebook for taking notes, pencils/crayons/colored pencils/pens for noting diagrams, and toothbrushes/toothpastes, generously donated to SSAAP by EWB-MSU as well as dentists in U.S.A. (Florida and Colorado). Workshops taught by Kabanga RHC workers and Heather Cumming, using the guide: Where There is No Dentist by Murray Dickson.

**Please note that the Sanitation & Hygiene workshops and Dental Hygiene workshops, as well as construction of Tippy-Tap hand-washing stations will also be distributed to the people of Sierra Leone (rural Moyamba and rural Port Loko, Sierra Leone).*

School Sponsorship Program: Zambia 2016:

In the past, SSAAP's School Sponsorship Program in Zambia had consisted of Heather working with the head teachers of various schools in Simwatachela. Heather would ask the head teacher to fill out a sponsorship form for each student unable to pay his/her school fees, and Heather would pay the school directly for the student's school fees (three terms per year), uniform and notebooks (funds permitting). The sponsorship program was funded per student on an annual basis.

However, SSAAP felt too far removed from the school sponsorship program and has decided to take a more hands-on, organic and active approach to the school sponsorship program in 2016 (school year in Zambia is three terms, beginning in January and ending in December of each year). SSAAP has decided to *seek out* those who need help.

Every year, and more especially this year, there are many funerals in the village. Sometimes the funerals are for the elderly, oftentimes for small children; this year, most of the funerals Heather attended were for people in their mid-thirties, and early forties. Thus, many of these deceased left behind small school-aged children. When Heather attended their funerals, she came armed with a SSAAP School Sponsorship Application Form. It is a small thing to offer a family who has lost so much.



*Sibooli School Head Teacher, Mr. Owen
Sibundonga, with his wife, Previous.*

Priority for sponsorship is as follows:

1. Children who have lost both their mother and their father ('double-orphans').
2. Children who have lost one of their parents ('single-orphan').
3. Children who are the off-spring of polygamous marriages in which the father is refusing to support the children of the wife he doesn't favor.

SSAAP is fortunate to be able to offer fourteen sponsorships for the 2016 school year in Zambia. Schools must provide receipts for school fees for three terms, and guardians for the pupils must

provide receipts from the tailor for the school uniform(s). Each family in-need is limited to two pupils to be served under this program, as many families have seven+ school children in need. The schools must provide sponsored students' attendance records, report cards, and an annual report of the sponsored pupils' progress.

The sponsorship is, at this time, limited to primary school aged children: grades 1-7.

Schools SSAAP will work with in the Simwatachela area in 2016 include: Sibooli, Sikalele, Jokwe and Kabanga.

Many grandmothers who had lost their daughters came to SSAAP, asking for assistance for their grandchildren to attend school. As well, one young lady, approximately age twenty-two, came to me, asking for help for her niece. Her sister had passed away last year, and she was the sole guardian of her sister's only child. I was touched by this young lady's youth; usually, I have noticed, women in Zambia rarely take initiative until their late forties/early fifties.

The fourteen sponsorship slots have already been filled for 2016 and SSAAP is currently accepting applicants for the 2017 school year in Zambia.



A woman in her nineties in the village. This is rare, as the life expectancy in Zambia is approx. age 35 and most of the elders are in their sixties or seventies.

Programs for Women:

One of Heather's best friends with whom she attended university in Ohio (1999), is coming to visit Zambia in 2016 (either February or June), fingers-crossed. A master seamstress, she sews professionally and owns her own shop in Philadelphia, U.S.A.

Heather is currently organizing for a sewing workshop with many of the women from all over the Simwatachela area. Heather's American friend has agreed to teach the women how to be resourceful with scraps of discarded clothing, as well as tips on hand-sewing.



SSAAP Schedule 2015-2017:

- December 22, 2015: Sibooli School Christmas Party, hosted by SSAAP
- December 2015 – July 2016: SSAAP-Zambia; SSAAP will remain in Simwatachela.
- August 2016: EWB-MSU visit to Simwatachela; will drill two wells, monitor and evaluate previously-drilled wells, and potentially fix broken wells (funds permitting). EWB-BU visit to Simwatachela, conduct bio-sand filter workshops. SSAAP will also visit the EWB-BU Team in Naluja, Zambia.
- September 2016 – April 2017: SSAAP-Sierra Leone; SSAAP will dig five wells in rural Moyamba, Southern Province, Sierra Leone, as promised in June 2014; monitor Port Loko school gardens and poultry project, begin Moyamba pig-rearing project, conduct sanitation and hygiene as well as dental workshops; sponsor children and teenage mothers to school (funds permitting); pursue Global Rotary Grant with Bo Rotary Club (Sierra Leone) and Denver Rotary Club (U.S.A.).
- May 2017 – July 2017: SSAAP will visit Ethiopia; will evaluate/investigate/research whether or not SSAAP is workable in this nation.
- Late July 2017: SSAAP returns to Zambia
- August 2017: EWB-MSU final trip to Simwatachela; EWB-BU visits Simwatachela; SSAAP visits EWB-BU Team in Naluja, Zambia
- September 2017 – November 2017: SSAAP-Zambia; SSAAP will remain in Simwatachela, Zambia.
- November 2017: SSAAP will return home to U.S.A.



On a Personal Note:



Zambian church service, under a mango tree.

My daughter, Radiance ('Mumuni' in Tonga [Zambia]; 'Amara' in Mende [Sierra Leone]), is doing wonderfully. We are enjoying being back in our home in the village, cooking for ourselves (using charcoal), and the abundance of our life here. Our cat just had two kittens and we watched them be birthed; it was a beautiful experience.



Radiance is five and a half and will be six a few days before Christmas. She is in kindergarten and I am home-schooling her. We have books and materials, donated to us by a plethora of generous home-schooling parents, who have also provided a network of support in the form of knowledge and encouragement regarding home-schooling. For that I am most thankful. Radiance is learning traditional Western teachings such as reading, writing, counting, telling time, phonics, nursery rhymes, and science units (dinosaurs, birds, stars, clouds, snakes), as well as traditional African teachings such as making art from clay, writing in the sand with sticks, cooking n'shima or caring for goats and chickens. She is learning ciTonga (better than I can speak) from the children we live with on the compound in the village (12+ children) and I hope she will remember her Krio when we return to Sierra Leone in 2016. Her socialization is coming from our African village(s).



Our home school (left), and Radiance with her friends on the compound (right).

In short, I could help the Africans for the rest of my life and still it would never be enough for all that they have given to me. We love our work intensely and thank you all for giving us the tools in which to do it with: whether emotional encouragement, in-kind materials, resources, or funding. **Thank you.**



We are not suffering in Africa. On the contrary, we are enjoying the extent of what the village has to offer: organic food, long hours of restful sleep, and quality time as a family as well as with the beloved people of Simwatachela.

I feel *abundantly* thankful to be doing the kind of work that I believe so wholeheartedly in: sharing the resources of the world, and through the energy of Love giving, sharing, receiving. I recognize my fortune in that I have been able to synthesize my passion, my beliefs concerning human justice, my love and my everyday work and energy together. This is the fusion, I believe, of life's greatest elements.

It has been a miraculous journey.

Love, Light, and Literacy,

Heather



Life is the beauty that we make it.

*

“Wild Wisdom is the shaman who strengthens your spine as you bear witness to the horror of mountains beheaded, forests demolished, oceans acidified and children starving. She is the trickster who cracks you open to love beyond human reason, gives you courage to take a stand, shoves you off your comfort ledge and clashes a terrible gong just when you’ve reached enlightenment. She is the Timber Wolf who chews off her leg to be free.”

~ Lea Bayles, from ‘Wild Wisdom’



Have a beautiful holiday season!

