



Name: Ben and Katy Ray

Location: Iringa, Tanzania

Our call: To show God's love for the most marginalised in Tanzania by providing training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our role: Directors of the Neema Crafts Centre for people with disabilities.



Hello from Tanzania!

Dear friends,

I write to you from a drenched and overcast Iringa. The rains have finally come to our highland town having waited much longer than usual to begin. With news of near-starvation and crop failure up the road in Dodoma, and tough conditions for farmers across the country, we are smiling at the dreary grey skies.

Since we last wrote, Neema Crafts has bid farewell to its much loved volunteer managers, Eric and Maria Holbein from the US. Having been with us for three years and helped to develop so much at the project, they have left a big space in our team as well as our hearts. Although we have been reaching out for some time now for a couple to replace these volunteers, we have so far not found a suitable match.

This feels like new territory for Katy and I, as up until now we have found that the Lord has brought the right people at just the right moment. We don't doubt that this will remain the case in the long-

run, but right now we are having to walk in greater faith as we try to meet all of the demands of such a large enterprise on our own. If you know of anyone who might be able to join us as managers, please do visit this page: <http://churchmissionsociety.org/mission-opportunities/managers-neema-crafts>

Neema Crafts update

The Neema Crafts Centre continues to be a source of hope and inspiration for people of all abilities and from all over the globe. It is a great privilege to work for such a well-loved project. Just this last month, we've hosted entrepreneurs from America who'd like to partner with us, a German film maker who filmed our work, a visitor who wrote her PHD thesis on our deaf community and a Bolivian couple who want to set up a similar project in their home country.

Closer to home, our staff are



Top: Paulina and family outside their new home

Above: Claud carving a chopping board



Top left: The Neema deaf footballers

Top right: Bryson on his trike



reaching out to rural parishes of the diocese as they work with the diocesan youth co-ordinator, Joshua Mkoga. This new programme came about when Joshua asked us to help finance his parish visits across the diocese. Since funding his work from Neema would be tricky, we spotted an opportunity that would be mutually helpful. The Neema deaf football team are always looking for new teams to play and what better way to build a fixtures list than to play the village teams across the diocese?

Since a football match always draws a crowd (especially young people), pastor Joshua has not had to work hard to speak to a wide range of people. Once a month, Neema funds a coach for the team and a few physically disabled representatives to travel out to a village of Joshua's choice. Before and after the game, he gives a message and our representatives are given a chance to share their testimonies and encourage the community to invest in – rather than hide – their disabled members. The football game is also a powerful sign to the village that people with disabilities should not be overlooked. So far the team have been very diplomatic in their

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games, drawing every one of them, 2-2, 1-1 and 3-3!

Bryson's story

Whilst walking through the workshop last week, I was approached by a man crawling along the corridor. This is not an uncommon site at Neema as many of our staff choose to get around this way rather than use their wheelchairs. What was unusual, however, was how far he had come for this encounter. Somehow, news had reached Bryson of a centre in Iringa that helped people with disabilities, through both employment and also mobility.

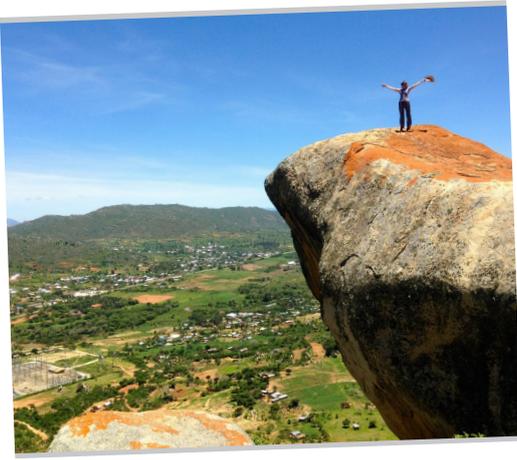
Bryson came from a remote village some way from Morogoro, itself a journey of 300km. In order to get to us, he had caught a train (which ran very infrequently) to a town called Makambako, about three hours' drive (165km) from us. He then caught a bus to Iringa and found the centre. He had done all of this on his own, with no one to help him and no wheelchair.

Bryson's request was for employment and a hand trike. Amazed by his tenacity, we did all we could to find Bryson a hand cart and took his contact details in case we had space to give him training in the future. Meanwhile, I asked him a bit about his background. Did he have job back at home? And did he have a family that looked after him? He'd never had a job or any training and all of his relatives had died apart from an uncle who gave him space in his house. He was 50 years old and judging by his legs, constricted hands and his slurred speech, I guessed he suffered from cerebral palsy. Fortunately we found Bryson a hand cart that he could take home with him.

When we asked him where he would be staying that night, he said that he would just sleep out in the street so we arranged for one of our staff members to host him. The next morning, once he'd collected his cart and bus fare home, he insisted on praying for us and the centre. This was an incredible

PLEASE PRAY...

- For Tanzania as it suffers from late or reduced rainfall and increased maize prices.
- Praise God for another good year of visitors, sales and development at Neema Crafts.
- Pray that we would be able to find the right people to help us manage Neema Crafts over the coming years.
- Pray that we can receive our much needed building permits to start the staff home again.
- Pray that our inspirational staff would receive the teaching and pastoring they need.
- Pray for wisdom as we look into the future growth of the project.



Above: Katy's mum on top of Lizard Head Rock

moment as he placed one hand on me and prayed that God would bless the centre and all the work that he saw being done. The workshop clapped when he was finished and we wished him all the best with his new, more mobile life.

“The Devil Goes Missing?”

This is the title of Katy's dad's latest book; it is a guide for those involved with deliverance ministry and was released whilst he and Mama Katy were visiting us back in January. Discussing some of the subject matter at both our English speaking fellowship and at Neema Crafts opened doors to a great number of opportunities to pray for individuals. Within the English speaking community, John was called in to pray for someone suffering from insomnia and a lady who felt she was being troubled by tormenting spirits.



After speaking to our staff at their weekly Bible study, John was inundated with prayer requests. Using the quiet space of a little church next door to Neema, John prayed simply and gently for people's healing and deliverance – a contrast to the shouty approach often adopted by local pastors. John was ably assisted by Paulina,

Neema's business trainer, who herself had been released through prayer from recurring pain and trembling fits that would descend on her from time to time. It was eye-opening for me, to see just how close to the surface people's spiritual needs often are, and even amongst the ex-pat community how open people were for prayer once a discussion had been started.

Family news

Stop the press! Alessia is now sleeping through the night! Katy and I are so encouraged that over the course of the last three months, our little one year old daughter has gone from waking up four times a night to sleeping through until at least 5am. Praise the Lord for sleep.

Both Zachary and Alessia are in great health. Zachary is still enjoying his Montessori pre-school and a few weekends ago was able to see one of his best friends Alex at her safari lodge home in the park. He was delighted when he saw lions, elephants and giraffe for the first time in the wild, but best of all got to change gears on the safari vehicle whilst he did it!

As a family we have enjoyed having granny and grandpa with us for a month. During their stay, we went on a few inevitable butterfly photography

expeditions. On one memorable weekend visit to Mufindi, we met Francis who is a Tanzanian butterfly expert and well into his 70s, but still adept at capturing the fast moving butterflies. Ben's mum has also joined us for 10 weeks on “Bibi” (grandmother) duties, which we are very grateful for as Katy is now having to work longer hours at Neema.

Love,

Ben and Katy

You can give online to Ben and Katy at:

churchmissionsociety.org/ray

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Left: Zachary and Alessia in Mufindi