



## **Habari from Aubrey**

### **May 2022**

Hello Everyone!

My name is Aubrey Ziems. For those of you who might not know me, I am the oldest daughter of Todd and Ann. I am also a member of the SON International Board. Some of you may remember when I used to write updates when I lived in Tanzania quite a long time ago. I was recently blessed to be able to visit my parents in Tanzania. I was there for two weeks and wanted to share what a phenomenal experience it was.



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During my first week we spent a lot of time at the filter workshop in Morogoro. The last time I visited was in 2014 when there was only an empty field. It was incredible to see the fully functioning workshop. Everything was so much bigger and grander than I remembered. I had heard about it of course and seen many photos. However, being there in person was really amazing. I was especially impressed with the rainwater catchment system, the organized and systematic way the filters were made as well as the inventory that is maintained. It was a

proud moment. I remembered when we were just starting out and it was just my parents and one other person making these filters, one or two at a time. Now they can make up to 9 filters in one go if necessary and keep a large inventory for deliveries. Another remarkable thing was reuniting with the SON Tanzania team in Morogoro. I remembered a few people from during the time I lived there and others because of stories and pictures. It was really great to meet them all in person! I was able to do a lot there, working with the team and taking many many photos. The SON team has grown to 27 team members. Pictures truly speak louder than words so here are a few from the workshop.















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Two team members I really enjoyed getting to know were Rahab and Joyce. I took one opportunity to go with them to a local school and be a part of the Puberty Education Program. This was the third session of the program and the girls were learning how to keep clean, use and make their own reusable pads for that time of the month. This is so important as many of the girls miss school during that time.



I was impressed with how Rahab and Joyce were so very interactive with the girls. These are often embarrassing topics to talk about for young girls especially as it isn't done often in the Tanzanian culture. Yet all the girls were interacting asking questions and openly expressing themselves even with giggles, hunched shoulders and some blushing or hiding their faces.

Part of this lesson is teaching them how to sew, using a thread and needle, so they can make more pads for themselves. That was quite the experience! I hadn't quite realized how many of these girls didn't know how to sew. The majority of them seemed to really struggle. These girls were determined though and with some guidance, they all seemed to manage. Surprising us all, a teacher even offered to help anyone who needed it the next day! That certainly doesn't often happen I was told. The smiles on the girl's faces were amazing to see. Each girl received a gift of underwear, shields, pads and as well as the tools needed to make more. Learning these things gave them such a better opportunity for the future. They could be proud to be a woman but also learned that they didn't have to hide during that time and miss out on anything, especially their education.





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## WASH EDUCATION!

I also accompanied Joyce and Rahab to another school where they teach the WASH (Water Sanitation & Hygiene) program to younger (5th grade) students. This school was quite large, and it was so very very hot that day. I had seen this program taught before, but I think I had forgotten how excitable the Tanzanian kids can get when they see a Mzungu (white person). I was quite the distraction at first, especially with my camera! The kids often wanted to see themselves. Once the lessons started it was better.

Joyce did an amazing job of making everything interesting; often asking many questions and making sure all participated. Rahab, who I spent the most time with, made sure all the children participated even those kids that were a bit shy. She easily teased them out of their shell to participate in the games and questions.

As we were beginning to leave, a few of the kids were touching and pulling at my hair, trying to be discrete and sneaky about it. It was like a game, with me trying to catch one of them doing it. Rahab told me that they couldn't believe how long it was, still curly, but such a different color from their own. It was a joy to see and be a part of the activities of and the positive impact it has on these children.





We took a tour of a place called Apopo, a non-profit organization where they train these large rats, native to Tanzania, to detect land mines from past wars which really saves a lot of lives. They actually travel all over the world. These amazing rats can also detect TB in samples faster and more accurately than traditional testing. They are also being trained and for rescue in collapsed buildings. They have very long tails and are a lot cuter than I thought they would be!





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Of course I couldn't make a trip to Tanzania without going to Mikumi Game Park and seeing God's amazing creatures. I am always in awe by how imaginative God is to have created them all with each one so vastly different.







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It was incredible to see how much God has grown SON over the years. He has provided the resources, from all of you, to make a true impact, both physical and eternal, on lives in Tanzania. I had a wonderful vacation and spend some good quality time with my parents. We also enjoyed the sun on a beach, watching playful monkeys, and were able to see God's amazing painting with some beautiful sunsets. Our time went so very fast. It was a blessing to be able to see and experience, in-person and up close, the work SON is doing while building memories with the ones I love.





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## **ASANTENI SANA !**

I want to personally thank you for all you do for SON! We appreciate your prayers & donations.

You are making a huge difference in these children's lives as well as the families that SON serves.

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*The Spirit and the Bride say "Come!", And let him who hears say, "Come!", whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."*

*Revelation 22:17*