

Maria Katkus



Happy New Year from Johannesburg South Africa,

I ask God that He will bring many blessings to you as a congregation. I know that He has been doing amazing things with VCOC, it's very encouraging to see what all is happening there. I'd like to share with you what He has been doing here in Africa for the past few months. I enjoy seeing His hand at work in so many ministries and in my life here.

I have missed you as a congregation during the Holidays, but God has filled that hole with exiting new experiences. Here is what all took place.

Thanksgiving: None of my team mates and I have ever been in a place where Thanks giving is not celebrated. The other AIM team from Port Elizabeth took the twelve hour drive to come join us and we decided to make our own meal and invite close friends that would join us during this great time. After a long day of cooking, we all gathered at the church building where a table was beautifully decorated and ready to seat thirty brothers and sisters. Even though we celebrated this occasion on a hot summer day, it was a blessing getting to be with people from different part of the planet. We had people from America come, missionaries from Tanzania and our close friends from South Africa. We all had plenty of laughs and an appetite that was met.





Christmas: Although it was over a hundred degrees and no Santa with a belly, God did amazing things.

On Christmas Eve He blessed this abused women's shelter with their first Christmas dinner. He made finances available to where I could make them a feast! Everything from roast beef, chicken, mashed potatoes, apple cider, salad and cinnamon rolls. I will never forget how happy and thankful these women with their children were. Some Christmas carols were sung with them, and they were just laughing with us girls for hours. I saw our Lord so clearly in that room that night. My girl team mates and I did not leave till late that night, and when we were headed to the car all twenty some women and their children followed us and waved goodbye while laughing and dancing to music across the street. Words like "Merry Christmas, we will miss you, see you soon, thank you, I love you" were said from women who had every right to be sad. We were all away from home and God used that situation in a wonderful way.

Christmas day: This was my relaxing day from cooking the whole day before and getting prepared to take a long road trip to Port Elizabeth. We had our usual morning service, and then headed to the orphanage to be

with some of the kids.



My team's Christmas picture

New Year's Eve- Can't believe that its 2012! God let us spend this occasion with our class mates in Port Elizabeth. We all had a Texan dinner, did a gift exchange and went along the beach to watch fireworks. I heard that you all went to a member's house to celebrate it and that it went well. It's encouraging to see and hear how close everyone in that congregation is. You uplift my spirit seeing that things are possible when times get hard here.

I hope that gave you a glimpse on how things went here. I look forward to making new memories with you all in fifteen months.

I want to remind you all that your prayers have been working; God is taking care of my team and me and is continuing to use us in big ways and small ways. Please continue to pray for me as I will for you. I hope that you get to see our Maker in every situation through the good and the bad. I thank you all for the financial support. I assure you that God and I are working as a team in the finance department. Without you I would not be able to make food for this women's shelter, feed the homeless on the street, live in a safe place, and have transport to go from place to place. Whether you support me with prayer or finances, know that you as in individual are evangelizing, taking care of orphans, the homeless and the sick; I am just the hands here. I don't do any more work than you are; we are just in different atmospheres but are a team for our Lord. Here are some pictures of the work that is being done here in Africa. Galatians 5:16-26

With our Fathers Love,

Maria Katkus



A man from the HIV/AIDS Hospital that my team mates have been studying with decided to join the Kingdom.



Teaching a 10 year old girl at the woman's shelter how to make home made pizza. I've been teaching her how to make some meals every Wednesday that I'm there.



I snuck a little orphan girl in my car and gave her a little snack and drink. She was abandoned by her teen mom. She loves kisses and cuddling 😊 get to see her four days a week.



At the orphanage having our usual Monday bible study with thirty teen girls.



In Port Elizabeth hanging out with vendors from different countries. I attempted to play the drums with my two Alaskan friends.