

## JULY 2022

### Dear Friends and Family,

July started with the tail end of summer vacation, I visited several amazing places in Indonesia and got engaged to my wonderful Anastasia, so as you can imagine for me it was one of the best summers ever.

The semester started with a surprise problem. We arrived back in the city of Jayapura, the largest city in Papua and homebase for us, and had 4 days to stock supplies and prepare for the semester, it would be busy but there was still enough time, or so we thought. The day after we arrived, our plan was dramatically derailed when we were asked to help one of our former students, Marlin, who had had a mental break down in Java and was on her way back to Bokondini. We had no knowledge beforehand, and what we thought would be a simple task turned into a two day ordeal. At the end Marlin was left at the mental hospital in the care of her relatives. Exhausted, we finished packing our things, tried to get some sleep, and the next day flew up to Wamena where we took a truck-taxi to Bokondini, arriving a few hours before the start of our week of training.

Each semester we start with a week of training, when all our staff from our three villages (Bokondini, Eragayam, and Dogobak) gather, have classes on material relevant to teaching and discipling, and spend time together building the unity of our team. It is always a good week, and the most time we get to spend with our friends from the other campuses. I handed out gifts I brought from America, I had filled almost my entire baggage weight limit with American chocolate, clothes, and garlic crushers (a huge hit). We also had as guests a team of four from Kilise, a new school started last year by our friend and former Ob Anggen teacher Jonas in his homevillage of Kirima.



*Beautiful Papua*



We had to say goodbye to a few of our friends who finished their contracts and were moving on to other adventures. My good friend and former roommate Roland finished 4 years at Ob Anggen and is now starting his own after school program in his hometown of Kupang on the island of Timor. It is sad to see our friends leave, but a joy to see how they are serving God, loving others, and building God's Kingdom in new ministries all around Indonesia. It is a blessing to be a part of their stories and for them to be a part of mine.

But as parting is part of life, so also is receiving the new. We welcomed 9 new staff from Petra University, TransFormNation and all over Indonesia to our team this semester. Our Junior and Senior High school team received three new faces, Wia, Ulan, and Andika. Fresh faces bring new enthusiasm and energy to our team, and I love getting to know them and learning their stories.



*Old photo from our trip to the village of Kurima: perched on the edge of a steep mountain valley, long hike, gorgeous view, cold and very windy*

This semester I am core teacher for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and I have 18 energetic and mostly well behaved kids in my care. It's very different from my previous experience with my 12<sup>th</sup> graders, these kids require a lot more of my time and attention, but they've grown on me quickly, and I love them a lot.

I am the science teacher for 9, 10, 11, and 12 grades, and this year we are trying the Indonesian practice of doing Physics, Chemistry, and Biology all at the same time. We have two class periods for each science in a week, so I have to be ready to teach three different sciences at once, something I'm still working out. We have a new math teacher now, so I no longer cover both math and science, which gives me more time to prepare for my chemistry and biology sections of science class...the bane of my science teaching career.



*Sunrise from one of our photography club students*

There are many victory stories from our students this semester. All my eighteen 9<sup>th</sup> graders paid their school fees on time and came to school on the first day of class. We sent Pirnus, one of our 11<sup>th</sup> graders, to a trade school in Java where his good character, hard working attitude, and leadership qualities have already earned him the role as leader of his class. We are really blessed with our new 12<sup>th</sup> graders, while many struggled academically, their class was always our strongest character-wise, and now they are filling many leadership positions, leading their younger classmates with excellence. We have had less of our usual beginning school year problems (a big blessing!) but we've also had a few unusual ones to make up for it. Marlin has since returned to Bokondini, but it seems her condition is only getting worse. We've had many challenges over the years, but this is one we've never faced before and we are still trying to figure out how to deal with this.

All in all it promises to be another good year full of challenges and blessings, good times and bad, there will certainly be difficulties but it will be full to overflowing with God's love, protection, mercy, and grace. We have a great God, and no problem is too big for Him.



*Anas and an impressive tree*

Please pray for our director and his wife, Scotty and Heidi Wisley, that they will have much quality rest this sabbatical year. For our friend Marlin, that God will bring healing to her mind and soul. For our Leadership team and Management teams, that God will guide them for the many decisions they will make. For our staff, that our unity will be strong, that God will continue to give us His strength and courage to love each other, love our students, love others, and most importantly to love God with all that we are. For our students, that they will keep growing in the character of Christ, that they will learn a lot, and that they will grow close to God. Pray for the people of Papua and all Indonesia, that the gospel will burn like fire through the islands, and there will be a great turning to God.

May God keep all of us in His all mighty hands,  
Blessings from Papua,  
Elijah Sheldon





*Our highschool office. From left: Mikah Leenhouts, Diana, Lia Leenhouts, Rira, Wia, Andika, Samuel, Lia Lestari, Priskila, Anas, Elijah, Alangga, Daniel, Ulan, Marmul*



*I never grow tired of this land of mountain and cloud*





*My class of 9th graders. Bottom left to right: Ronald, Epin, Nego, Niel, Weminus, Osep (Middle) Rabela, Ona, Ester, Pilince, Ina, Eta, Tiwi, Enjela (Back) Nius, Nias, Elijah, Oni, Acho As you can see, we couldn't come to a consensus for exactly how to pose...*