



February 2016

IN A NUTSHELL

Rick is now the Chaplain at the seminary. Alanna is getting more involved in many roles on the campus.

ALANNA WRITES:

Barca da sabon shekara – Happy New Year! I have been encouraged recently by seeing the blossoming of relationships with students and their families. Thank you so much for your prayers for us. We have felt so supported in prayer over the past four years and at every stage have seen God at work in how we have fitted in here. There's never been a time when I have felt out of things, but this academic year has felt like a whole new stage of integration, and much earlier experience is bearing fruit. Please pray for me in a number of roles that I have now taken on outside our home. I am much 'busier' than before, but am trying as much as possible to integrate service with family life. Sunday School and Girls' Brigade are two areas where I am able to serve and am motivated by wanting to have a positive influence on the lives of the students' kids, but also by helping my own children to integrate and grow.

Girls' Brigade

The Girls' Brigade has been started up by Nyella, a student who I know well. Girls' Brigade seems a great opportunity to encourage and support the girls on the campus in knowing and living for Christ. I have joined Nyella as an officer and we are hoping to encourage some other women to join us as leaders.



Reading Club

Reading Club for students' children continues this semester with a great team of three students. The kids are enthusiastic and the work is very rewarding. The students have been encouraged to see improvement in the kids' reading skills as a result of the simple model of telling a story and then giving the kids free access to pick out and read books that appeal to them. The children's parents seem to value our contribution to their educational development and to be encouraged by it. For me it has been great to be

able to share the material blessings that we enjoy via Reading Club. We have mostly used our kids own books. The issue of how to share our material goods with children who have very little has been a tricky one to work out. I don't want to promote envy, stealing, or materialism and finding the right ways to avoid these negative outcomes is complex. Reading Club has been a great opportunity to share joy more widely.

Single Girls' Hostel

I have been appointed 'Dormitory Mother' for the single girls' hostel. There are about 20 female single students. They live in cramped accommodation with four girls in each small room. Please pray for wisdom for me in supporting them. Living so close together encourages many problems in relationships (such as gossip and unkind attitudes). Restricted finances also often result in unapproved 'borrowing'. Add this to the familiar student complaints of not washing up the pots, jealousy over boy/girl relationships etc. and there is potential for a hard time. Please pray for them and that there might develop an overall atmosphere that honours Christ and allows them to build each other up in him.

Praise God for Asha, Conor and Jack. They are all doing well, healthy and happy and with good friendships. I find it a joy to teach them and be able to spend so much time with them. Conor and Asha have started speaking a form of 'Nigerian English', which is a lovely sign of integration. They have adapted well to our annual pattern of being here most of the year and then spending a couple of months in Britain and Ireland. They love to talk about their friends and family and look forward to seeing them while valuing the lifestyle and friends they have here too.

RICK WRITES:

My role at the seminary has changed considerably since our last prayer letter. Just before Christmas, the position of Chaplain became vacant, and I volunteered to be the new Chaplain. The role involves preaching each week in Chapel – I've been doing a series in the Psalms – along with lots of counselling and various other admin bits and pieces. This role is in addition to the teaching responsibilities I had last semester but so far it is manageable, because I have a few extra people helping me as teaching assistants. They take some classes for me, balancing out the extra Chaplain responsibilities.

This opportunity as Chaplain has come at a good time. Various things last year mean that at present there is a renewed openness among many of the students to deal with issues that have been kept buried for some time. I've had constructive 'counselling-type' conversations with over 50 students, often issues they had never openly discussed before. Time and again, people have been hugely relieved to bring the issues into the open. Happily, I am not having to follow all this up on my own. Often one or two conversations is enough to crack the issue open to the point where they can usefully carry on dealing with it themselves, or more likely, with the help of their peers (who are, after all trainee pastors!). With some of the more involved issues, I've been involving other lecturers, who can work with the person over a longer period.

There is a bit of a snow-ball effect too – some students are now bringing other students to me, already primed with a personal recommendation. So that's all keeping me busy, but in a productive and encouraging way.

Please contact your local Crosslinks office to change your contact details

Crosslinks, 251 Lewisham Way, London SE4 1XF Tel: 020 8691 6111 pletters@crosslinks.org
Crosslinks, 32 Montgomery Road, Belfast, Co. Antrim BT6 9HL Northern Ireland Tel: +44 (0) 28 9079 6028