



Heather Johnstone

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Location: Tanzania



What I do: Helping to empower the most disadvantaged women and children in Mara through the Rehema Project.

Dear friends,

We hit the ground running at the start of the year and have been busy not only with customers, but also getting essential maintenance and repair work done, as well as some renovations, as three years of not doing any upkeep had taken its toll on our outdoor cafe.

2023 is looking brighter and the cafe is doing considerably better than we were doing a year ago, or indeed since way before the global pandemic began, which is a real blessing, although we're not out of the woods just yet.

Currently we work when we have customers which is usually Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, but if there's a demand we'll open when it suits our customers as we can be completely flexible.

We've had many visitors from all over the world and it has been a delight to welcome them, but I would love to share with you the visits of two sets of Rehema friends who also have very big prayer requests.

The founders and inspiration behind the Rehema Project are Jono and Amy Vink. Their eldest daughter, Lili, is now 22 years old and recently got married. She and her husband visited Musoma so he could see where she spent 12 years of her life up until the age of 15.

The Rehema women were delighted to see her again and of course, a second wedding celebration was planned and hosted by the ladies. The food was paid for by Amy and Jono. A wonderful day was had by all.

We have more recently, however, had bad news from Australia. Amy's health has deteriorated. She was first diagnosed with cancer 14 years ago and she has just learned that it has spread to the liver. We had a prayer meeting for her last week which 20 people attended and we will continue to hold prayer meetings at my house every week, praying for Amy and anyone else who is struggling with illness at this time. If you'd like us to pray for you, just let me know.

Praise/prayer point: Give thanks that Lili and her husband Ethan were able to visit.

Please pray for Amy. She asks that we pray that a treatment option be found, and although she is deeply grateful to God for the time he has already given her, she asks for more time.

It was also wonderful to welcome the Stensland family to the cafe after an absence of six years. They were committed Rehema supporters and would regularly travel from their Lutheran mission 40 minutes away to have some relaxation time at the cafe with their four children.

Julian, their youngest son, is now 12 and he has been diagnosed with Batten disease, which has links to



Party for Lili

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



dementia – it has already taken so much from him (he is blind) and is diminishing him every day.

Praise/prayer point: Praise the Lord that Julian and his family were able to visit Tanzania recently, the country they love.

Pray for Julian and his life – he’s a brave young man and is very active, trying to live life to the fullest. Give thanks that he selflessly takes part in research into the disease in the hope that a cure or treatment might one day be found so future generations of children might benefit.

I was also blessed recently to have Cesi’s three young daughters pay me a visit at my home. They arranged and planned it, and although it was with the consent and oversight of a parent, they came on their own. They brought their schoolbooks so I could see how they were getting on. We had a tea party and lots of laughs and then went shopping for mosquito nets to cover their shared bed. At the end of the visit, they were whisked off on their motorbike taxi which is driven by my friend Edwin.

Praise/prayer point: Give thanks that Cesi and her girls now have medical insurance.

Our cafe manager, Grace, had a baby girl almost two months ago. She’s back at work, and the baby sleeps in the workshop (where I’m based) so as I type this missive, it is to the sweet sound of a baby sucking her fingers. Her name is Lightness.

I’ve said this often before, but living and working here I am reminded time and time again of what a great provider our Father is. Often there are circumstances that seem hopeless or problems that seem insurmountable, but we can take comfort in the knowledge that we can come to him with every need, concern, or worry we have, and no matter how small or large our issue, he knows what is going on in our lives and he provides for us. Sometimes there are situations that seem quite bleak, but the Lord God is a great, big God and he has a habit of making beautiful things happen and he delivers. He is always with us regardless of what we are going through, and he encourages us to share our physical, spiritual and emotional needs with him. Bwana asifiwe.

I am also extremely grateful for the numerous and wonderful Rehema cohorts who support our project and numerous women and children in so many ways.

We give thanks that:

- ▶ the Rehema team were able to receive an Easter hamper of 5kg rice, 1kg meat, 1kg vegetables and a small cash contribution;
- ▶ Maria and Christina, two young girls from difficult backgrounds, are being sponsored to attend a vocational sewing school, and Grace Salama, a young orphan, is being sponsored to attend boarding school;
- ▶ Grace Jonas, a young deaf girl, received a gift of a sewing machine so she can start her own small business at home;
- ▶ we received financial contributions towards the repairs and maintenance work at Rehema;
- ▶ mosquito nets have been provided for families, helping to protect them;

and so much more.

Mungu akuwabariki. May God bless you richly.



Photos from top to bottom: Norwegian visitors; my VIP visitors; the newest member of the Rehema family; Maria and Christina, who were sponsored to attend sewing school



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Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

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