



Ben and Katy Ray

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Contact details:

benandkaty@hotmail.co.uk



Location: Tanzania



What we do: Showing God's love and changing attitudes in the community through providing training and employment for disabled people

Dear friends,

Farewell Neema Crafts

Following tradition, my Monday morning notices began with a loud "Bwana Yesu asifiwe!", then greetings in as many local languages as I could remember. This was the last staff notices I'd be giving, however, and as I announced this to 90 familiar faces, the reality of leaving our joyful and inspiring colleagues suddenly hit home. Notices took a bit longer that morning as I tried my best to hold it together.

It's been an emotional time for us as we've come to terms with finishing our term serving as directors of the Neema Crafts Centre in the Diocese of Ruaha. Last month, we were able to get away with many of our team on a short retreat. We shared stories, played games and thanked God together for his faithfulness to us through the years. Canon Mgonella (our first chaplain at Neema) shared some joyful memories of his time with us including baptising Allen (our kitchen manager) in Little Ruaha River by which we were all sat.

After giving our own testimonies, we watched a hilarious sketch put together by our cafe team. William (Neema's greatly loved waiter) had fainted from the shock of losing "Bossi Benja na Bossi Ket". The rest of the skit was spent working out how to resuscitate him. The highlight of the day though was the wheelchair races. Filela, a tailor and double amputee from Neema, easily beat off all who challenged her to the 40m sprint. This included two very confident deaf men, one of whom started the race by flipping his wheelchair straight onto its back. The rest of us careered all over the track allowing Filela to win by at least half of the field length each time.

Farewell to Iringa

One of our anchors throughout our time at Neema Crafts has been the Iringa Christian Fellowship (ICF). It is a nondenominational fellowship that serves the community of English-speaking believers from many different walks of life. Its unique strength lies in not having a pastor, which forces the diverse members to contribute to all aspects of church life. To say farewell to this special group of friends, we spent a weekend at the Msosa campsite, just at the foot of the wild and beautiful Udzungwa National Park. It was a treat to be able to share this experience with the Cripps family, from our link church St Mary's Ealing, who had travelled out to see us and the project in our final weeks. Please pray for us that we'd be able to find or create a good community of believers near to where we are now living.

The handover

We've been really impressed with Hannah and Joseph Adams, who've now started their work at Neema. Their enthusiasm and ability to cope with all the changes, including language, living conditions and culture,



Farewell to the diocese

Support Ben and Katy:
churchmissionsociety.org/ray

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



has made the handover much easier. They've also proved to be particularly unflappable in the face of taking on a project the size and complexity of Neema Crafts. Please do remember to pray for them and Erick Moshi, Diana Nzagi and Enny Kikoti (HR manager) as they navigate the next few months.

Travelling to Arusha

Boxing up your house for a move is a brilliant way to see how much unnecessary junk you've accumulated. There's something fairly spiritual

about letting go and rationalising stuff that you've lived with for so long. How many things take up space in our hearts, simply because they've always been there and not because we've decided they're welcome? As you'll see from the picture, we've not been too ruthless(!), but we're praying that this time of uprooting and pruning might likewise free us up to be more fruitful for the Kingdom.

Katy's knee

As some of you will know, Katy ruptured her ACL playing sport back in February. After many weeks of discussion with the insurance company, Katy was able to get an operation in South Africa. It was quite a big thing for her to leave the family for three weeks and to go in and out of surgery alone. Praise God with us that she received first-class treatment in Cape Town and is making excellent progress – although she still has a few months of physio left before she can return to sport.

What lies ahead

Yesterday, Zachary, Alessia and Julia all started their new school here in Usa River, Arusha. When we asked them how they felt about going, Alessia told us that she was both excited and nervous. This perfectly summed up our own feelings about our move away from our lovely Iringa community, work and home. We're attempting to use this rare occasion – of having all the children at school and fewer demands on our time – to reflect on our 12 years at Neema Crafts and what we've learned. We're also seeking the Lord about what lies ahead with SAFi Tanzania – the new NGO through which we are working.

At the end of September, we'll be consulting with the Lutheran-run Usa River Rehabilitation Centre, which gives vocational training to people with a range of disabilities. We aim to help advise them on their product range and the administration of their services. Alongside and beyond this, we anticipate rolling out our plans for a hub that will enable people with disabilities to receive training in crafts, design and starting their own businesses. We'd like to combine this with creating a space for the local community and overseas visitors to engage with God's work with people on the edges of society. Please pray with us as we seek the Lord's guidance as to how best to step into the exciting new works that he has already planned for us here in Arusha and through SAFi Tanzania.

Love and blessings,

Ben and Katy X



Photos from top to bottom: Neema management team at Msosa; resuscitate William!; loading the removal truck Tanzanian-style; hello new school!



Going further with Church Mission Society

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

Please note that opinions expressed in link letters are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

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