

Hi everyone, after a busy start to July with the Youth Rally the remainder has sailed by in a blink. Read on to hear what we have been up to.

One of the less obvious facets of living in such a remote area of Australia is the limited access to theological college for people who wish to pursue detailed study of the Bible. The closest college happens to be Nungalinga College in Darwin (<http://www.nungalinga.edu.au/>). For many years it has been empowering indigenous Christians to explore for themselves what is in the Bible, extrapolating its teachings into their own communities and cultural settings. MAF regularly works together with Nungalinga to assist students getting from their remote communities to Darwin, whether it is by flying them to Elcho Island to catch the regular Air North flight to Darwin or taking a full load of students straight to Darwin from places such as Gapuwiyak or Ramingining. On return of the students to their home communities, we have opportunities to assist them with their homework and assignments. To see indigenous elders get up at the recent Youth Rally and be able to preach from the Bible is a testament not just to their own achievement in theological studies but also to the investment of Nungalinga and MAF in the indigenous church communities across Arnhem Land.

Beyond the Youth Rally



As we said in our newsletter last month – the youth rally was a big success in terms of attendance and fun had by all. However, as we also mentioned the true test would be what happened next.... Whilst we as a church have been slow to get back into big gatherings, we have found that interest for deep understanding and learning has broken out in town, with many small groups meeting in homes, lots of conversations and many requests for Bible studies and youth activities. Whilst the youth activities have yet to eventuate Bible studies have – with a core group of about 20 meeting one afternoon a week to go through a passage and pull it to pieces, gaining deeper understanding for all of us. This has been a really exciting outcome for us as we see people truly grappling with deep issues in life and reaching out to make their own informed choices.

Work, School and Tax!!!

July has seen both the start of Anna's work routine now that training has finished, and the return to school for the kids. We have so far juggled one full week of school on our own – and a juggle it is, with Anna working hard to make her workers as self-sufficient as possible and Scott taking on a much increased role in the classroom. It did lead to many a manic day.

Much to our relief we have, however, had the benefit of a MAF supplied home-school support teacher for a week – who managed to get through the boys' science curriculum for the term - and now the wonderful service of a volunteer teacher named Nola. Nola is with a not-for-profit called VISE (Volunteers for Isolated Students Education) that work alongside the many school's of the air to provide qualified teachers to families for periods of up to 6 weeks. We just picked up Nola last Saturday from Maningrida and she will be with us for August, taking over all of Anna's teaching



role with the kids – which provides a much needed respite for all of us plus frees us up to be involved in the community more.

In addition to Anna's work she has also become the unofficial tax helper for Ramingining. With most people here earning under the tax free threshold and with expenses high – many are extremely keen to submit tax returns as soon as possible to get a little extra income (often this goes to buying cars – which are constantly breaking here). In her efforts to help her workers complete their tax returns, by locating forms for a tax agent in Alice Springs who specialises in remote tax work, word quickly got around that there was someone willing to help. We still cannot see the end of the que of people who would like assistance in filling out the forms. For many, this form (asking for names and birthdays of immediate family, addresses, bank account details and Tax File numbers) is not something they feel confident to do on their own. Once again this experience has highlighted the enormous barriers faced by our friends and neighbours dealing with the dominant culture system – which makes us feel both overwhelmingly sad and motivates us to continue helping to connect those around us to the knowledge that we take for granted.

Oh, and if you or someone you know are ever interested in coming and teaching up here for a short time please do let us know – we would love to have you and it provides a much needed service to us!!



Becoming a bit more a part of the fabric of life

As we become more and more settled in Ramingining – after a hard 18 month slog we can actually say now Ramo does feel like home – and make deeper connections with people we are getting more opportunity to learn and experience Yolngu life and culture. This term we have asked a local family to help us with language learning a few times a week just by talking with us. This has now spread into us being included in much more of the comings and goings in town, including hunting trips and funerals, do's and don'ts and just general news. This is a big break through for us as with so many people coming and going the Yolngu tend to be quite closed on a deeper level, not telling people what causes offence or including them in activities.

This last weekend we were taken Nyangura (long neck turtle) hunting in the 'mostly' dried up swamps. Not only did we get to watch this terribly painstaking task but also had the opportunity to hear people's stories – both traditional and of their lives. These outings provide valuable opportunities for us to ask questions, gain understanding and build each other up in what is often a very harsh environment.

Birthdays

This month marks the end of birthday season in the Walmsley household (apart from Rachel who is out in November on her own) with Matthew and Anna celebrating birthdays. After such a busy start to the month we celebrated Matthew's birthday two weeks late with a 'Royal Show' themed party and Anna's with a week-long celebration of all thing's Anna – see lots of chocolate and foot massages – well done Scott!!



Prayer

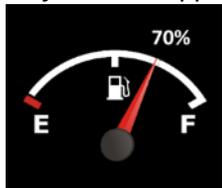
Please pray that Nola settles in well and is able to handle the kids' fairly busy schedule easily. Pray also for us as we adjust to this wonderful arrangement but that we can make good use of the time. Please pray for the Yolngu community here in Ramingining that they can continue to seek answers to questions and that this may spur them to act, not just of God but in their entire lives.

Reminder - HOME ASSIGNMENT 2015

Thankyou to all those who have been so kind as to invite us to share some of our journey with you already. Whilst we now have all our Sunday mornings (and a few evenings) booked to the brim we still have space available during the week if you would like to meet with us. Our dates in Victoria are from the 27 Sep till the 31 Oct 2015. **So if you have a mothers group, bible study, friends or family who you think might be interested in having a chat PLEASE do let us know**, as without your continued support this work is not possible.

Partner With Us

Our financial support levels are currently sitting at about 70% so a big Thanks to everyone who has helped get us to this stage!



We are still looking for more people to join with us on this journey so if you are interested in supporting us or just want to know more check out the MAF website– <http://www.maf.org.au/swalmsley> or hook into our blog and follow along with the adventure <http://walmsleyfam.wordpress.com/> or shoot us an email sawalms@bigpond.com

Spread the Word

Forward this email to friends and family, tell your churches, talk with your small groups – the more people who know about the great work MAF does the better!!