

October 18, 2006

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings from Beira, Mozambique, where it is beginning to get HOT. Most of you who receive this already know that we moved to Mozambique in late July, to work again with MCC. After a comfortable first two months, we are entering the hot season. They say that it doesn't get a lot cooler when the heavier rains start in December or January, but at least it is refreshing while it is raining. I (Cheryl) am generally known for liking steaming hot showers, but I am finding that it can be just as hard to turn off an all-cold-water shower, after a hot day.



Steven & Cheryl Hochstetler-Shirk  
with Peter and Katherine  
serving in Mozambique

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Mennonite Central Committee [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)

Peter and Katie have now finished their first month of school, and seem to be adapting fairly well. Peter was quite philosophical about it all, and just ploughed right in, eager to get this hard part over with. It bugs him that he can't do everything as quickly as everyone else, but he seems to be doing well. Katie has had a harder time wanting to be there, but by now is going fairly willingly, and tells us that she has several friends by now. Just now they're beginning to talk about words they are hearing (in Portuguese), and asking what this or that word means.

Peter and Katie have played very well together during this extended time of transition, for which we are very grateful. We have rarely heard those words, "I am bored." Every day they continue their imaginative play, which they call either "the game" or "baby legos," referring to the fact that they use a combination of dolls, stuffed animals, and legos in a complex world of their imagination. Each room of our house is a continent, and their characters move from place to place by plane, boat, or "jet feet," all to visit their friends and relatives, and all the while negotiating customs, passport control, security checks, jet lag, and other facts of daily life. When they visit their cousins, they talk about the different time of day it is where they come from, and why they are now tired, or hungry, or awake, or whatever.

We live in a section of town made up of mid to large size masonry housing, much of which is crumbling to various degrees. Our home is one story, but fairly large with 3 bedrooms- room to host MCCers and other guests in our guest room. The property is surrounded by a tall fence, like most others around, and we have a mango tree, a cashew tree, and a papaya tree, as well as many other bushes and plants. We also have inherited a black German Shepherd named Beauty. She is more than a year old now, and has settled down some, but is still lively

enough to keep Peter and Katie from playing outside much.

Currently we have one MCC service worker in the country, and are expecting 3 more in early November. Sara lives in a town about a 2.5 hour drive from us, in the cooler hills towards Zimbabwe, and is involved with some church-based pre-schools across the central part of the country. Jenny and Joel, and Tony, will be here in Beira for the first few months of language study before going on to their assignment locations. We are also recruiting a couple of others. In addition, Joao, a Mozambican who spent a year in PA with the MCC IVEP program, works with us on the many tasks of the central office.

At home, Aziza (Mozambican) helps out with cleaning and cooking lunch, since we are all gone in the morning but come home for lunch which is the main meal of the day; and William (Zimbabwean) keeps the 3 MCC vehicles plus the Chinese bicycles running, plus doing general maintenance and repair.

**Items for prayer:**

We have much to do to in preparation for our new workers' arrival in early November. Please pray for Jenny and Joel, and for Tony, as they finish preparations to leave, go through orientation in Akron, and travel to Mozambique.

We are very thankful for the good start of school for Peter and Katie, and our good adaptation in general. However keep us in your prayers as we continue to adjust and work to become connected here.

We find that there are too many areas of work to tackle all at once, as we recruit and orient staff, build up program, revive an advisory council, and continue to establish MCC's autonomous legal status in the country. Please pray for discernment and focus for Steve first in sorting out priorities, then in following them to a reasonable degree.

We have encountered continual problems with one or the other of two vehicles since the day we arrived, but we are also thankful for a mechanic who likes working on cars perhaps as much as he loves his wife! (or so he once said). Please pray for patience, attention, and humor, and that we can have them all running reliably by the time new staff actually need them.

We'll stop with that for now, but will write more, with varying focus each time. God's grace and peace to each of you. May you keep well, do good work, and grow in love and faith.

*Cheryl and Steve*

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