

“Just a South African Girl Living in an Alabama World”

“Time is a Teacher.” – African Proverb

32 months, 142 weeks, 992 days...

Time. How does time go by so fast? 992 days have passed since I stepped foot on my first international flight, out of Africa, to the United States. So much has taken place during this time. Learning opportunities, failures, growth, adjustments, a new life in Christ.

Some, within the states and across the ocean, have asked me: “What do you do?” “Why are you here?” Often I freeze trying to find the answer. Why??? How do I communicate everything I’m a part of in all of 5 minutes? Today I delight in sharing...

What I do is not a “job,” it’s become a way of life. A lifestyle that had to be learned over time. A lot of adapting to change, culture and my own way of thinking. Today’s society would probably not define what I do as a “job.” When people say: “You don’t even work,” my heart hurts. You see, what I do may not be “deemed” as a “job,” to most, but what I do is not about me, so why does it matter? I didn’t leave my comforts of home for the travel experience or the American dream. I didn’t resign from my job in human resources, travel to another country, then another continent, choosing a life that seems abnormal to the world... just because I felt like it. I moved because God said so. I gave up my comforts in obedience to His call over my life. Some don’t understand my call, and that’s ok... it’s not theirs to understand. I fought a pretty good fight trying to keep my feet glued to South African soil. Making a life altering decision was not easy. When I found myself still sitting behind my desk at work, in my own office, with my fancy cup of coffee in hand, “everything” at my fingertips... and still felt *something* drawing me to let go... I could no longer resist. I live a life feeling misunderstood a lot of the time. And that’s ok. I think of those sweet faces in Zambia, our times together, God’s thoughts towards those children (and us,) and I know my place. My place is to act in obedience to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. I choose to trust Him in my every day, even though I fail... His grace is sufficient.

Initially, Father God called me to the states to create further awareness about one of Grace Klein Community’s global partner organizations, Kwathu Children’s Home, in Livingstone, Zambia. As I’m sure you’re aware, my original two months stay has turned into just short of 3 years, *thus far*. Over time the Lord has adjusted my focus, and continues to do so, seeing a little bit more of the bigger picture. Doors naturally opened to serve with Grace Klein Community as a whole, assisting in the general day-to-day runnings of the organization, growing our reach as a community, benefitting not only Kwathu Children’s Home, but every facet of Grace Klein Community. I realized that the specific place God has called me to has ability to go further than the United States, further than Zambia, further than my understanding. Did you know that Grace Klein Community serves seven different global partners in Belize, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia, India and Lesotho? I GET to be a part of that, and SO much more!

As I work behind the scenes of Grace Klein Community events through various social media promotions, volunteer coordination, door prize collections, event sponsorship, participation, attendance, email after email... I have the joy of seeing more than just what is on the surface. Butterflies turn in my tummy as I receive emails from frazzled mamas sharing of their experience at No More Safety Pins and being able to build relationship through those moments of vulnerability and joy. When new friends are made through our annual drum circles and people find their place in this world, in community, in Jesus... every hard moment is so worth it!

Late nights often turn into early mornings as event coordination can often become overwhelming, but I can only smile when I hear what the Lord has done in and through the hearts of attendees, volunteers and even event sponsors.

Hearing the desires of forever families, their struggles and joys, as I gather information to share on social media and assisting in their adoption journey through Grace Klein Community, only deepens my understanding of adoption in Christ and His heart for His people. Often I find myself feeling like I'm about to meet my new little brother or sister as the Lord allows me to share in the joy of children received into their forever families. Being able to share my God given gifting of guitar and vocals at worship nights, ladies brunches, and even in those quiet moments with a few friends, is a joy, knowing that the Lord uses this "ever so normal girl," for His Glory, to encourage the body.

Many will turn our "street friends" (the homeless - for those not familiar with our GKC terminology) away in our own fear, but when God brings 4 strangers to live with you while camping, for a full week, and you have the honor of hearing their stories, battles with addiction and fight for survival, it only "wrecks" you to want more of the Father's Heart of compassion to love friends even deeper. Today I heard that one of our street friends has been clean for 120 days! Only by the grace of God!

Often I wondered why the Lord never laid a specific area of studies on my heart to pursue after school, but today I see the Lord use me in ways I least expected. I'm open to learn anything, try anything, fail until I figure it out, make a point of helping wherever the biggest need, filling the gaps, and providing support where needed most. Maintaining the Grace Klein Community website, Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram account has taught me a lot! Who knew I'd be learning HTML, website and graphic design, event coordination, and marketing while providing emotional and spiritual encouragement to forever families, other young ladies and children, fundraising assistance, media ministry, volunteer coordination and encouragement, assistance with the community garden, organization of food and clothing donations, food preparation and delivery, letters of encouragement to food recipients, designing the GKC monthly electronic newsletters, global travel coordination and orientation, hosting specific fundraising events for Kwathu Children's Home, all while maintaining relationship with our global ministries partners across the globe... and did I mention I'm studying Christian Leadership in my "free time?" Life is a joy when you understand your value in knowing you're created for the Glory of God!

I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made. – Isaiah 43:6-7

When we start to truly hear the TRUTH of His word, that we are created for His Glory, I believe our entire perspective of our lives change. What the world sees and what the Lord sees can be very different!

Friends, be encouraged. You are created for His Glory. Receive it. Claim it. Live it out! In our every day we have the choice to love well, give encouragement, and share in compassion toward a very broken world. No job, no education, intelligence level or understanding is insignificant for Father God to use for His Glory. Don't let the world tell you otherwise. Don't shy away. Get stuck in the Word, soak up His presence and know that you are SO treasured by our Mighty Creator... made for His Glory.

Will you get on your knees for me?

Continue to pray for the Directors, staff, volunteers and children at Kwathu Children's Home and their various outreach efforts to love on their surrounding community.

God used Kwathu Children's Home to impact my life greatly, changing the course of what I had "dreamed" life would look like... and I couldn't ask for anything better.

Life in Jesus is beautiful!

Thank you for your love and support!

