

Brandell e-Scr@pbook

A MONTHLY UPDATE FROM THE BRANDELLS IN VANUATU

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✧ Happy Anniversary ✧

Our mission team arrived in Vanuatu on April 14, 2005. It's hard to believe that we've already been here six years! In some ways it feels like we've been here forever (we can hardly remember life outside of Vanuatu), and yet in some ways it feels like we arrived only a few weeks ago. I guess time flies when you're having fun :)

A NEW FOCUS

As best we can, we are going to try and focus on a specific work/area during each trip back to Efate. Being our first time back, we didn't plan too well as to what that focus would be, but we knew it would be in Vila. However, our first Sunday

with the Christians there solidified what we were going to focus on.

But first, let me mention that we're very pleased at how well the Vila congregation has done during our absence. 2011 was basically going



Team Update

The whole gang was back together in Vila for a week this month, as we celebrated the completion of our sixth year together in Vanuatu.

We adults enjoyed a lunch together (sans kids) at a local resort, where we reminisced about our experiences on the mission field. That night, we looked at old photos and played games.

The next day the whole team went on the Coongoola Cruise, a tourist outing that included sailing, holding sea turtles, snorkeling, and a tasty lunch on a beautiful beach.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our many supporters, most of whom have been with us every step of the way.



to be sink-or-swim for the congregation, and they have been swimming along quite nicely. The grounds & building have been well kept, the collection has been accounted for and overseen, attendance has been up, and the men have been meeting twice per month.

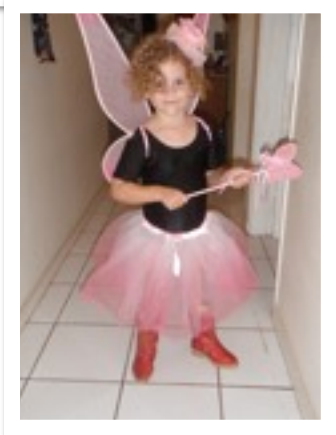
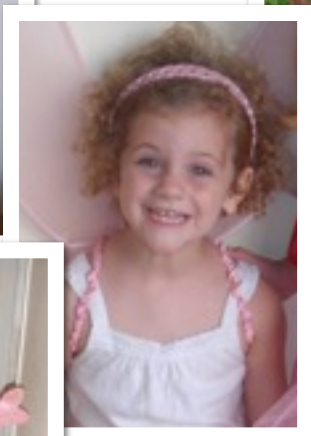
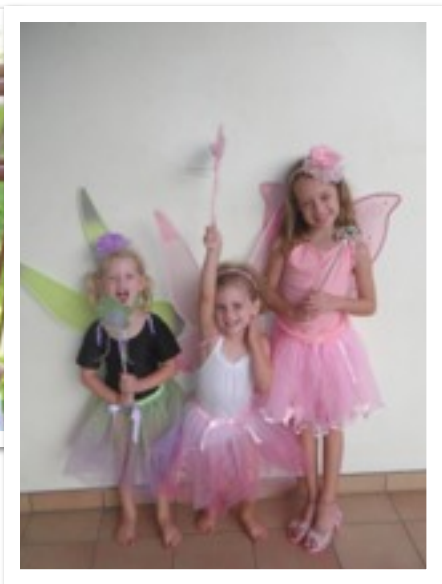
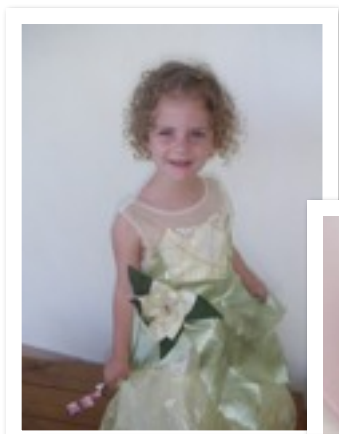
Included in that increased attendance was an encouraging number of young people. Kelly was converted back in 2010, Kal is a Christian from Eton Village who recently began a new job in town, Kathy is a Christian from Ambae who recently started school at the University in town, Juliana recently moved in with her cousin Fiona, and Atison (Flexon's nephew) recently moved to town from Malekula. Thus, some were Christians and some were not, but they were all showing interest by their presence. Knowing from prior experience that it can be difficult for singles to stay faithful long-term, we decided to try and facilitate friendship with and among these young people.

We invited them all over to our house for a meal that Wednesday night. While taking a walk with Titus, I saw another young lady, Elivsen from Ambae, who had been

regular in attendance in the past, but hadn't been in a while. I told her that we were having some young people over and encouraged her to come.

Everyone showed up that first night, and Juliana even brought three friends. We enjoyed introducing them all to a real American meal - tacos! (haha). We also played Win-Lose-or-Draw and visited. Since that first night was a success, we decided to make it an open invitation to come over and "hang out" every Wednesday night.

The conversation, Wii-playing, snacking, and movie watching paid off in a couple of ways. First, Elivsen (who had previously taken a number of PIBC and TBS courses with us) ended up in an impromptu Bible study with Shawnda and was baptized into Christ one Wednesday night. Second, it has been a delight to see these youth continue to attend worship services, and to see genuine friendships grow before our eyes (whereas before they would arrive and sit quietly by themselves, now they are visibly excited to see one another each Sunday morning). Shawnda is even hoping to play match-maker with a few of them ;)



Dressed up:

Lexi had lots of fun dressing up in her new outfits from BB and JJ (and it's always more fun to share!).



Together again:

Titus, Alexis, Kaela and Melia really enjoyed being back together for a couple of weeks in Vila. They practically spent every waking hour together.



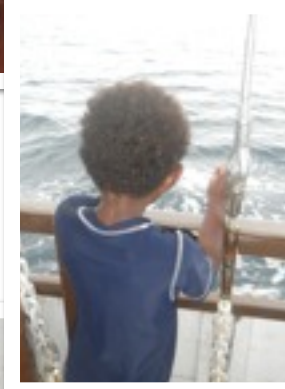
Talk about fun:

Titus and Alexis love hide-and-seek as well as candy - so put them together in an Easter egg hunt, and they are all in!

Sold!:

Since we will be spending progressively more and more time away from Vila, we made the tough decision to sell our 4x4. We will probably replace it with a small 4-door car (for about half the price), which should work well since the road around the island is now paved. It will also help us cut done on gas costs (still above \$6 per gallon). Two of it's final acts were to drive us to the lagoon to baptize Eliksen, and to take one more shipment of "Malekula stuff" [photo] to the wharf. The truck was a blessing, and we will miss having it.





Team fun: Celebrating six years together in Vanuatu

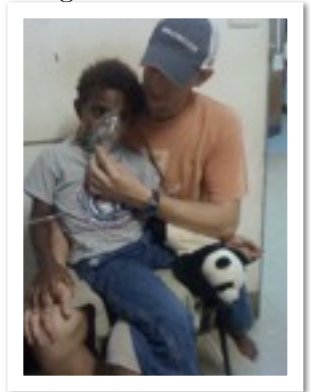
Just helping out:

Shawnda and Cindy enjoyed “just helping out” with Pikinini Baebol Klab in Etas Village this month. All the planning, setup, and teaching were done entirely by the local Christian ladies, and the missionaries only showed up to assist as needed.



Annual asthma episode:

Titus’ asthma doesn’t bother him very often, but when it does, it comes on really strong. With the change in seasons (from really hot to not quite so hot), he developed a bad cough that led to an asthma flare up. His normal inhaler wasn’t doing the job, so we ended up having to spend a couple of hours in the hospital to get a breathing treatment and a shot. Within an hour, he was back to 100%.



APRIL BLOG-POST

Hallelujah for baby steps

We received two calls in one day from Malekula, both of which presented some very encouraging news.

[4/14/11]

Coming up next

We presented an overview of our plans for our upcoming trip to the village.

[4/26/11]

*click on a title to view the full blog post