



"Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light"
-Helen Keller

Hope & Haiti

March 2016

Hello!

Recently I sat in a funeral for a thirty-four year old woman who was a mother, aunt, neighbor, and friend to so many. This wasn't my first funeral, so I really didn't expect to be surprised by anything. I was of course completely wrong and it wasn't until her brother-in-law got up and started talking that I realized just how important our life stories and choices truly are.

Her brother-in-law got up to tell what is usually the "facts" about the person who has died. Very specific details like date of birth, whom she married, how many children she had, and a list of the other surviving family members is usually what is shared with those attending the service. This time though after listing the basic facts he went on to say how he officiated the marriage for this woman years ago. He shared how he watched as that relationship struggled and as various choices were made. He talked about how those choices impacted the family and how deep that sin can run. He told this sweet woman's true life story which included everything from the good, bad, and really ugly. He also talked about how she shared her heart about where she was with the Lord during her last few days of life.

Listening to my friend's life story really got me to thinking about my own story. If you would have asked me years ago about living life in Haiti I would have simply laughed. If you would have told me that there was this group of kids that would eventually steal my heart and that I would in time learn so much more than just their names and that over time I would learn to speak another language, or that I would one day help run a malnutrition program, I just don't believe that deep down I would have believed you. I had a life already and yet the Lord had more for my story. The Lord needed me to say "yes" to His plan (I'm pretty sure I barely whispered it..). He didn't reveal it all to me that day in the spring of 2011 or really on any specific day. He knew I wasn't ready for all of that.



Prayer Requests

- The school year is almost finished- please pray that the students and teachers would finish strong.
- The summer months are always busy on campus with teams and interns. I like my routine and normal (if you can call it that) day to day life- please pray that I would be gracious to others when life is just more busy and life just feels different.
- For wisdom in providing care for the children and their parents that are in the malnutrition program.
- Haiti is in the midst of elections and with that comes a lot of violence and just turmoil. Please pray for safety and for wisdom in knowing when to simply stay home and when to venture out to the grocery etc.

(continued) Let's be honest, He knew that I would have been 100% fearful and would have more than likely bolted. The more I am on this faith journey the more I realize what the Lord has in store not just for me, but each person I meet.

One of my greatest work passions is running our malnutrition program. When I think back to the small "yes" in 2011, I never knew that this would be on the radar. I never imagined how much this one program would radically impact my faith and who I am. This program has given me the opportunity to meet mommas and their children at possibly one of the lowest points in their lives. I get to walk through that mud with them. Sometimes this "walk" isn't at all pretty. Mostly, it's filled with really hard conversations and hoping that the parent chooses to partner with me in fighting for the child. And sometimes this journey is filled with hugs and tears because of the progress that is being made. Watching mothers thrive once given the opportunity is something I don't know if I'll ever get tired of being a part of. Watching mommas fight SO hard to provide for their children even when everything else is saying they can't do it is humbling. I've found that sometimes these women just need someone to say they are worthy and that they are willing to help. Some of these women just need someone to partner with them on this journey and to love them as they figure out their life stories.

In 2011 if you would have told me that this would be my life I would have laughed, but deep down I would have been afraid. I wasn't ready to know what 2016 would hold and the Lord in His faithfulness has led and guided me over the last few years. This journey hasn't been easy and yet in so many ways my life story is more beautiful because of the "mud." Looking back it's easy to see just how much the Lord pursued my heart and how has He guided me on this journey. I think at some point we all want to be pursued and to be encouraged because life can just be difficult. The longer I live here the more weak I feel I become. The more I feel this need for His presence. I can't do life on my own and I need Him. I don't want to create my own life story. Instead, I have a desire to live out the story He has had for me all along. I love that the Lord is constantly revealing Himself to me through all different aspects of my life here. "Your best possible life will be found exclusively through surrendering to Jesus Christ and following Him the rest of your days." - Dave Rodriguez. Although it can be daunting, I encourage you to listen when He speaks and watch as He unfolds a truly remarkable story of your own.

Love, Brooke



Mailing address!

I am SO excited to announce that I can now receive MAIL! Below is my mailing address and more information about the costs on my end for receiving mail and packages.

Brooke Smalley
3170 Airmans Dr. #2230
NVMHT
Ft. Pierce, FL 34946

-Normal letter sized items and packages weighing less than 1# are free to receive.

-Packages weighing over 1# but less than 5# will cost me \$1.60/# to receive.

-Packages weighing over 5# will cost me on average (depending on value of the contents) \$3.50/# to receive because these items must go through customs.

-If you are sending me a package directly please write on the outside of the box what the basic contents are. If ordering from an online source (Amazon, etc) the flight agency will open the package and write the contents on it for you! This is all to help move things through customs more efficiently.

-The weight of a package is rounded up so a 1.2# package is processed as a 2# package.



traditions

If you have followed my journey and life in Haiti for longer than a week or so you probably already know that I absolutely love anything that involves all of my littlest friends. The kids, of course! Typically that means total chaos and in the moment me saying "never again", but totally knowing that we will try it again. I want my little friends to know that I love them and that my home is a safe space for them. I want them to feel celebrated and loved and one way of doing both of those things is by starting little traditions. For birthday's the rule is you get to pick the food we eat, the movie to watch, and the rest of the activities for the day. You also get to choose a piece of candy for each year of your age. Let me tell you this is a BIG favorite with my bigger kids because, hello, who doesn't like choosing fifteen pieces of candy=) In starting these traditions I've been able to watch as some of the "walls" that were formerly there have come down. My little friends want to be celebrated and when given the space to do it they thrive and literally go crazy. The menu's they come up with are hilarious and beyond long and yet I do everything I can to make sure that is exactly what they get. Some of the kids even start counting down for their birthday's eleven months in advance. Talk about determination! They don't ask for fancy gifts, but rather they value the time that they get to spend with me and the other kids too. Starting traditions hasn't been easy. It's actually been really hard and yet I've found that it's worth the "mess" and frustrations that happen in the beginning. The Lord has revealed so much of Himself to me through my little friends. He has used them to show me the hope He has for this nation and they truly do bring SO much laughter and joy to what can sometimes be really long days!