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Continued from page 3 (What Have I learned...)

acapella song “To the New Jerusalem.” *I’m learning that imperfect circumstances often come hand-in-hand with unforeseen fun.*

* * *

Class is finished at Zara’s. Jen and I have drunk our tea and will soon rise to leave. The mother, daughter, and son are conferring in Pashto. Suddenly the son steps up to Jen with a request: “Excuse me, can you show us how to make coffee?” The two teachers glance at each other, each quite conscious of her limited coffee-making skills. “Uh, sure!” says Jen. “Do you have a coffee maker?” “No,” they say. But they do have coffee. And that’s the important part, right? So off we march to the kitchen to make coffee....and the end result is coffee! If you have a kettle, water, coffee, and strainer, why bother with a coffee maker? *I’m learning that there are different ways of doing things than the way I’ve always done them.*

* * *

Amina’s class is finished early—her twins are especially fussy and won’t be comforted by anyone other than their mother, and her other son is feeling sick. I figure we’ll chat a bit and move along, but.... “You, eating?” asks Salma. Sure, we say, we can eat. Soon she is unfolding the flowered floor cloth, and Alanna and I are catching on that more than nuts and sweets are coming our way. A half hour later, full of Afghan bread, potatoes, yogurt sauce, tomatoes, and onions, we leave the apartment and head Hive-ward. Thank you, Salma, for your example of *unselfish sharing despite demanding responsibilities.*

* * *

I’m learning a lot—maybe, as my grandpa predicted, more than my students.

MORE UPDATES?

Visit arcministry.org/updates for other update methods like email and telegram.



NEWSLETTER

**ANABAPTIST REFUGEE
COMMITTEE**

Equipping Anabaptists to engage with diverse cultures creating enduring relationships to express the love of Jesus.



DEC 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

— MN FOCUS —

- Pg.1** “Just” Another Class.
- Pg.2** Financial Report
- Pg.2** Service Opportunities
- Pg.3** What Have I Learned?



By Jen Witmer

“JUST” ANOTHER CLASS

ARC Life Report. Update from an ARC Team Member in Minneapolis.

What we call “ARC Life” has its normal days and its abnormal days, just like any other life we may live. I think the reason it feels different here is because the ratio of unusual events to usual events is much higher than it was when I worked an office job, for example. So high in fact that sometimes I wonder if I should even be surprised by hectic class times. However, the class time I am about to detail was unusually challenging.

We have class at our students’ home where two families live in a small apartment. When we arrive, we are greeted by our lady students and their four sons, ages three and under. Since both of us girls are having class with one of the ladies, this means that the little people have free range of the home while we are practicing things like saying, “Today is Tuesday.” We take toys along to entertain them and this works reasonably well for most classes.

Class commences. I sit on a cushion, my student beside me. To keep the learning interesting, I had decided to teach from a sheet of pictures depicting different emotions. I launched into showing the difference between surprised, frustrated, excited, bored, etc., and the three-year-old decided that today the English class sounded much more interesting than the prospect of playing with the little plastic animals. He came and seated himself in the three-year-old-sized space between his mother and me and joined the class by listening carefully and pointing to the different emotions.

About this time, the baby started fussing so his mother scooped him up to comfort him. We continued class and the middle son, who was feeling left out, tried to climb into my lap. So, with three little people between us, we attempted to go on with the class. I was able to put the little boy down and distract him with toys, then pull out my laptop to teach the online lesson I had been counting on. As I clicked through the slides,

Continued on page 2



**PRAYER
REQUESTS**

1. **TX:** The team as they relate daily to migrants.
2. **MN:** (1) The families that have just come to Minneapolis from Afghanistan this past year. They are glad to be here, but have many needs.
(2) The new house parents and volunteer teachers who are coming to Minneapolis after the new year.



SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Looking to Serve? Email volunteer@arcministry.org or call Peter Wadel at 763-358-3816 to get started!

CURRENT OPENINGS:

- MN: -Single man for March.
-Single lady for April.
- TX: -Two ladies immediately (Spanish and/or Haitian Kreyol speaking)
-Spanish speaking man by end of January 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT OCTOBER '24

INCOME

Donations	\$9,657.48
Donated Services	\$4,500.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$14,157.48

EXPENSE

Programs

- Minneapolis	\$19,014.25
- Mexico Border	\$17,393.83
- Resettlement	\$0

Administration \$771.93

Fundraising \$3,111.43

TOTAL EXPENSES \$40,291.44

BEGINNING BALANCE \$125,056.27

ENDING BALANCE \$98,922.31

Donations can be sent to ARC Ministry Arc Ministry at PO BOX 459 Seymour, MO, 65746 or online at arcministry.org.

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Continued from page 1

two little hands suddenly gripped the top of my screen as child #2 tried to use my computer to pull himself up. I paused to distract him with toys again, but it was a very temporary fix. In no time, he was back, but this round he grabbed my keyboard and very efficiently closed down the lesson I had been teaching. Since it was a Google slide which was not saved to my device, I needed the hotspot from my phone to be able to reopen the lesson. As I tried to keep his small hands away from my computer while simultaneously groping for my phone in my teacher bag, the oldest child realized what an excellent opportunity this was to also play with the keyboard on my computer. Neither my student nor I had enough of arms to keep all the little hands away while I tried to pull the lesson back up. And so, I laughed to myself at the irony of trying to have an effective English class when there are three little



people who need attention in the midst of it.

I did manage to get the slide open and distract the middle son with toys just long enough that I thought we could continue with class until we repeated the whole process. We soldiered on trying to have class. The little chap had gotten tired of toys once again and realized that my feet were resting just behind him, so he crawled over and tried to chew on my toes. He had yet to learn that socks are a very unsanitary snack choice. I

quickly moved my feet away and tried to keep focusing on the class, but he was not easily deterred and came after my toes again.

It was about this time that I decided we had made a valiant effort to have a class, and it was time to wrap it up. Thankfully, this was an unusual class and even though there are always distractions, we normally have better success in doing an English class together.



Minneapolis Team



Young lady showcasing her handwork to the author (Angela).

Angela Burkholder

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

Alanna and I are at the Shamrock apartments. Class is finished, and we are just about ready to say “goodbye” and head home. Suddenly Sarina* calls out from the kitchen, “One minute, teacher! Apple eating!” We look at each other, grin, and sit back down to enjoy our “apple eating.” *Time spent with Afghans is teaching me to hold schedules loosely and to value simple times spent in the company of friends.*

* * *

One of the men students can't remember “vacuum cleaner,” referring instead to an “electronic sucker.” *English class is teaching the teachers creative comprehension.*

* * *

Alanna and I are pulling into the parking lot at the Rolling Hills Apartments when the realization strikes. “I forgot the toys!” she blurts. We shrug and decide that babysitting will have to happen without toys today. We head inside to my student's apartment and settle down to wait until she finishes an in-house appointment. I open my backpack to finish reviewing my lesson plan when I'm gripped by a sudden sinking feeling. “I forgot my laptop!” I whisper to Alanna. We both laugh at the irony of our mutual forgetfulness and proceed to make the most of the situation. My favorite mental image from that class is of six-year-old Yasir spinning in circles, holding Alanna's flip phone aloft while dancing to the

**Name changed to protect identity*

Continued on page 4



REQUEST A PRESENTATION

Interested in a presentation for your church or school? Contact Peter Wadel (763) 358-3816 for additional details.