

HOW WAS THE TRIP?

That was one question I knew would be too hard to answer after just a few days in Zambia. In a word, it was GREAT, but so is a trip to the dentist. No words or pictures or video in any combination can capture and convey all that we learned there. But we are trying. A short collection of photos and captions can be viewed at

It was an adventure I can never forget. We were treated to an insider's view of Zambia that most people will never see, thanks to Elke, our friends at Tikondane, and our driver, Idine. They gave us a clearer understanding of what we can do to help. It is no surprise that education is at the top of their priorities. I was somewhat surprised by how much everyone valued education. They want to learn to help themselves, not just take what we think they need, or do what we do. They are trying to progress and maintain their culture—though it was evident that will also be difficult. I am still horrified by the thought of children who had no choice but to wear a Wisconsin Badger sweatshirt, day after day.

At first, you feel sorry for the people who must live in mud huts with thatch roofs. By the end, you wonder if we shouldn't feel sorry for ourselves and our view of what we need, what makes us "happy".

The trip also showed us how fortunate we are. Their level of access to medical and dental care was shocking, though St Francis is considered by many to be the best hospital in Zambia. There is one dentist in the district (250,000 people). He told us they occasionally do fillings, but he wasn't sure if they actually had any filling material at the moment.

And yes, I do plan to return. There is a lot of good we could all do there. Contact me if you are interested in helping.

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