

Dear All,

Greetings from Sierra Leone. We just wanted to give you guys an update on our progress with Project Peanut Butter (PPB) and what's new regarding nutrition in Salone.

We hope everyone is having a wonderful summer and getting the chance to enjoy the outdoors! Raining season started a little early here, around late May, but only until now has it been raining pretty persistently. Compared to the average rainfall of Kentucky or Tennessee (around 1.5-2ft annually), Sierra Leone has monsoon-like rain for a good three or four months with an average of 14-16ft annually! So preventing leakages and keeping dry is a real challenge!

PPB is moving right along. Chelsea recently came back from France where she completed a quality control training program through Nutriset. This is the company that is the world expert in making ready-to-use therapeutic foods. There is a franchise network of about ten local producers in Africa and Asia. Nutriset provides us and the other local producers with the technical support we need to be able to produce high quality RUFs for aid organizations and/or government and non-governmental agencies. While there, Chelsea was trained in the management of a quality control system, microbiology, and other critical points involved in making RUTF. This is a major step for PPB in making high quality RUFs! There are many steps to come but we are almost there!

We have been in Sierra Leone together for two years now. Sometimes the progress is slow when dealing with multiple layers of corruption in this country. At the same time, it is cool to look back at where we were two years ago with nothing. Now we have a factory that produces food, and we are working with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF to provide this food on a national scale to every single severely malnourished child in this country. During our time here we have definitely struggled with seeing the harsh reality of people's lives. At the same time we have also seen some extreme miracles, for example one day not too long ago, we had three sets of twins graduate from our Kissy hospital clinic site! Twins are often born here premature and this increases their chance of death by quite a lot. Praise God, three sets, in the same clinic visit! We feel like we are still learning so much about living in this country, the culture, the way people think and work. We do believe we have developed a good basic knowledge of life here. We have developed friendships, meaningful and deep relationships with people of a completely different culture, background, and upbringing. In doing this we have learned the absolute truth that Jesus brought a kingdom-message that was good news for all the nations. God has created us all with so many unique personalities and abilities. It is overwhelming to think about God's creative power. It has made our perception of God more open. God is more real to us and present with us than we ever thought possible. This is an obvious thing for many believers we have spoken with. We have met people here that rely on God for much more than their daily needs. Honestly, daily needs are not always met, but God's peace, God's presence, and God's love are faithful. We do believe that God gives us these gifts and it is the community of believers whose job it is to be where the world is in pain, to provide for those who are in need. This is a lot of responsibility, but it is also an honor to have the opportunity to share in God's mission to renew his creation *for* us and somehow *through* us.

Ansumana Kamara



Ansumana is 2 years 6 months old who we met through our Home-based therapy clinic for severely malnourished children at Kissy Hospital. When he first came to the clinic he was about 65% of his ideal weight-for-height. In just 6 weeks he had increased in weight to almost 83% of his weight-for-height. Since this time, he has had reoccurring illnesses that have caused him to lose the weight he had gained.

Ansumana's medical history:

Ansumana became sick with tuberculosis when he was only two months old. As a result, he has severe neurological damage and some respiratory damage. His respiratory problem can be repaired through a surgery called an adenoidectomy. Dr. Wright, a Sierra Leonean surgeon, has agreed to perform the surgery. Before Ansumana can have the procedure done, he must gain weight, specifically 1.73 Kg or 3.8 pounds in order to be strong enough for the anesthesia.

Because of his sensitive physical state he needs to be admitted into the hospital for probably around 6 weeks for around-the-clock care in order to gain the weight and receive proper antibiotics. The odds seem against him, but the two doctors we are working with say he has a good chance! Right now Ansumana is suffering, he struggles to breathe, he cannot walk or sit on his own, and he is chronically ill.

We are asking for sponsors for the surgical procedure and his stay in the hospital. The total amount for the surgery is \$425, and this week we had someone commit to sponsoring his surgery. Praise God! The cost of the stay in the hospital will depend on how long it takes for him to gain the weight. We have estimated that it will cost \$350-\$450 for his in-stay hospital care. This is the only amount of money needed still to start his pre-surgery care.

Josephine (Jo Jo)

Josephine is a nurse at our Njala clinic who we have worked with for almost two years. She has never missed one of the PPB clinics. She is there every single day we need to screen and enroll kids and distribute food. Last week she told us she has a son who is starting college. He is studying business, and the cost of the 4-year education, including books is 4 million Leones (about \$1,000). She and her husband have already paid 3 million Leones, but they are short 1 million (\$250). Josephine, receiving a government wage nurses salary, and her husband, a village Lutheran preacher, do not have anyway of affording this amount. She says her son is very bright and intelligent and deserves the opportunity to go to college, but if they do not have this money by the end of the month he will be pulled out of the business school at the university.

Mariama Kamara

Fatmata is a woman about our age. We have gotten to know her because she comes by the factory almost every day to sell sandwiches to the factory employees and us. One day Mike was chatting with her while eating one of the sandwiches and she notified him of a major health problem with her mother, Mariama. Mariama has a kind of disease that is an infection inside the

stomach that causes her blood to be extracted. It causes her internal pain in the abdomen and has disabled her from walking. Fatmata has taken her mother to numerous hospitals in Freetown and up country in hopes of a treatment. She found out her mother needs a simple surgical procedure that will remove the material in her body that is causing the blood to be extracted. Fatmata bargained for the surgeon at a main hospital in town down to 1 million Leones (\$250). Yes, you can even bargain for your surgeries here, it's ridiculous! And in case Mariama needs to have a blood transfusion, Fatmata is eager to give blood for her mother.

Honestly people are always asking and needing money. It is something we deal with every single day. They see us, "the white man" as wealthy with a limitless supply of money. We explain to people who ask for money that we are here as volunteers. This means our living expenses are paid for, and the rest of the money we have is not ours to spend. It is donated through PPB, a charity in the United States. These PPB funds go to a specific purpose, which is to treat malnourished children, and it is not our right to use these funds in another way. After this explanation people usually understand. The needs we have listed above are specific situations where we have relationships with these people, and we feel responsible to try to help them. We have not promised them anything. We told them we will write home and see if anyone we know is able to help them, so that is the purpose for listing these three people and explaining their situations. We are asking that if you have anything extra, in any amount, could you please send it to us? We really do not prefer asking for money, and this will not be a regular thing we will do. There have just been some very specific, very serious needs brought to us lately. So thank you for understanding and know that there is no pressure whatsoever to give anything. If you are unable to give a monetary donation, there is the power of prayer. So we ask that you will pray for these people, that they are taken care of, and that other people in our world who are in need can find help in the ways they need it.

Blessings in Christ,

Mike and Chelsea