

October 2008 ~ „between the countries“

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*Dear Friends,*

This time you don't get a full newsletter, just the short version, since we are with you!

The month of September brought the end of our almost never-ending-adoption: the German court approved the adoption and Josia Fanilo is German now; actually he has two passports, the Malagasy and the German, which the embassy handed out a couple days after we received the papers from the court in Berlin. We praise God for this victory. It has been a tough time and worst of all is, that you wonder, why those officials worried so much about this one child: there are plenty of kids living by themselves in the streets, so why did they spend all their energy and time fighting about our child who has been living in a loving family? On the other side, we are thankful, that we learned so much about Madagascar in this process, we got to know lots of people and got new future plans....

We will be in Grand Rapids till December 14<sup>th</sup>. We would love to see all of you, so please let's work it out! We are not as flexible as we used to be, due to a 2 year old in our family who needs naps, halfway regular sleeping times and sometimes his parents' attention☺. When we leave MI we'll visit Germany for about 3 months. After 3 years we want to see our family, friends and supporters and do some fundraising. We are scheduled for 6 months furlough, but will return to Madagascar after 5 months.

We would like to share a few words about our future in Madagascar: we will be starting a new project. God opened huge doors and we are willing to go through. It will be huge and we need your prayers more than ever before. Madagascar is one of the 10 poorest countries of the world and we can see it on a daily base. It is sad but true: some mothers are too poor and find no way to take care of their babies and throw them in the trash containers. We will work with a German foundation, **The Noah Foundation**, and start a growing project, where those lonely pregnant ladies will find a home; a place to stay, an ear to listen, a hand to help and a God to trust! We plan to help them get their feet back on the ground and teach them some skills so that they will be able to return to their villages one day. We plan to work with the mothers to fight the roots of the problem with babies in the trash. The project shall be self sustaining, so we will start a garden and have animals. That also gives us the chance to teach the ladies skills to survive and make some money. The population of Madagascar has doubled over the last thirty years, and is expected to double again over the next thirty. Although this poses a significant challenge, the island has enjoyed political stability since 2002 and is in the top five of the most peaceful countries in Africa. It is a joy to work with Malagasy people, not always, but often ;-)! Gerd has a chance to fly a rescue helicopter: the first and only one in Madagascar. He will be on stand-by so that we can run the project together. Gerd's job will be the technical part: solar, well, wind ... This new project will also be a very good place for you to come visit, help, see and touch. We would love to share our experiences with you, and we know that there will be a spot for everybody to be a part of and be a blessing!

We look back on 3 wonderful years: fruitful, teaching, encouraging and exhausting. ☺ We got settled in Madagascar, got to learn a lot about culture and needs in the country. As you can read in the above, we won't go back with Helimission. Perhaps one day, we will be back with them, but for now, we start this new project in the capital city Antananarivo, also known as Tana. We want to say Thank you for your support with emails, calls, encouragement and finances. We all together did a great job for the Malagasy people. We pray that you will be part of our new work, too. We need the same support, to serve the weakest in the country.

**God bless you.**

*Gerd, Tanja & Josia Fanilo*

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