
Conference, Conference, and more Conferences - Monday, March 14, 2005

Contributed by Oliver Hansen
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Hey Everyone,

Well, it's been a while since I had anything really "exciting" to talk about but I figured I should send some news anyways. Right now I'm in the middle of a weird time where I'm not at my job very much. The first week in March, I was at a Peer Counseling Workshop here in Kingston all week. It was pretty interesting, and I got free breakfast and lunch every day! It's basically to train a small group of us to counsel other volunteers when we run into

difficulty and stress and things. Last week, I left early from work on Thursday and Friday I went to another volunteer's school to work on computers. This week, I am in the Peace Corps Office right now about to leave for our Inter-Service Training which is up in Runaway Bay near Ocho Rios. I'll be there until Wednesday, then Thurs and Friday are the big GSAT exams for grade 6 so the rest of the school is closed. The week after that Easter break starts on Wed! So, I'm getting quite a few breaks.

I mentioned Thursday I left early. Well, I actually don't have any classes after lunch so it wasn't so bad but I decided to go check out this High School. Another volunteer has been working with a small group of students after school teaching them about computers. He will be leaving in July or August, so he asked if someone was interested in continuing the class when he leaves. I decided it would be good to experience some High School classes. The first class went pretty well. I mainly observed, but they are interested since it's a voluntary class and the size is small so we can get more hands on and stuff. I guess he's been working on fixing computers and teaching the basic parts, and now moving into networking. The goal is to get the computer lab networked and the students will get that experience. Next week the other volunteer will be late, so I said I would go ahead and start the class. We'll see how it goes! It's more fun to be able to teach advanced concepts instead of just the extreme basics like I do at the primary level, but they still have a difficulty retaining information.

I'm still working on getting my website updated. I haven't been taking that many pictures lately, but I do have some. Hopefully I'll be able to do some of that from work soon. The principal just decided that we could somehow afford DSL(broadband) so I think that is installed now. The installer came while I was gone last week, so next week I should be able to work on setting it up for the rest of the computers. It's not too fast, but better than dial-up and the connection will always be on. I think that will really help the students with access to more information.

Another good thing to happen at the school is the air conditioning unit was finally fixed in the lab! That makes it a lot more bearable to work with 10-15 computers running. Add to that that I got a small grant of about \$100 US that allowed us to get 11 more computer mice so we can use the computers we have! 3 of the computers have died for other reasons since, but it's still better than it was.

Well, I gotta cut this short now 'cause the bus is leaving!

Take care everyone,

Oliver