Romanian Surprise
by Joe Fornear

The Lord is full of surprises. Playing soccer was the last thing I thought I would be doing on my recent mission trip to Romania. Yet the Lord had some soccer-loving young friends for us to reach. So I gladly played several times, even though they laughed at my “skills.”

From June 29 to July 7, I accompanied a group from ServingHIM, a Dallas-based non-profit to Braila, Romania. Their dentists and hygienists provide free dental care and share the love and Word of Jesus. I met and prayed for several Romanians who are battling cancer and other diseases. I was given opportunities at two churches to share what the Lord has done for me by healing me of Stage IV metastatic melanoma.

We also delivered six goats to grateful families, visited a foster home, and had a July 4th party with adult Romanian orphans. We also talked to patients in the dental waiting rooms about Jesus’ love and salvation (see Joe’s Facebook page for more pics). We had more free gifts to offer than just dental work!

Our soccer games with the youth led to conversations about God and then Bible studies. The guys surprised us by coming to our Victory Service, our final event (pictured above). Several of these youths have begun reading God’s Word on their own. Seven have committed to go to a youth camp hosted by Holy Trinity Baptist Church, the church that sponsors ServingHIM in Romania. Please pray for these young men to make an impact in Romania for Christ.

Be ready for how the Lord may surprise you today!
A Heart that Beats for Burundi  

-By Brittany Hardy, Stronghold Ministry staff

Casey C. recognizes God’s stronghold on her life and she is teaching the women of Burundi to rest in His grip. In 2007 she was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, a common arrhythmia that is not life-threatening. Her brain occasionally sent misfires to her heart that caused the atria to quiver instead of beat, resulting in acute arrhythmia attacks.

The diagnosis was not the only way the Lord was working in Casey’s heart in 2007. Boldly responding to the Lord’s call to missions, Casey set up a meeting with her boss to discuss an academic leave of absence to teach the Bible in Burundi, Africa. However, instead of going to work that day, Casey went to the hospital and received the diagnosis of atrial fibrillation. Suddenly, the trip had more obstacles than the meeting with her boss. Her doctors advised her to stay in countries with advanced medical care. Casey was crushed with the news that the trip would be postponed for at least a year. She had been so certain of the Lord’s direction. She began asking questions: “Had I misheard?” and “What now?” Just a day before her future seemed certain — now it seemed uncharted and terrifying.

A year went by and Casey adjusted well to her medication and was even able to lower her dosage. She praised the Lord for His faithfulness and was antsy to fulfill His call in the previous year. In November of 2008 she landed in Bujumbura, Burundi for a two-week stay that would change the course of her life. Recovering from a 12-year Civil War, Burundi is a unique country with half of the population under the age of 15. With children everywhere, there is a desperate need for love. Casey worked with children at the only two schools for the deaf and blind in the entire county.

One day Casey came across a government sponsored polio clinic. She watched as hundreds of children lined up to receive a vaccine from a nurse. As she looked at the line of tiny faces, she thought; “Boy, I should be a nurse, because you could offer a lot as a nurse on the mission field.” The thought surprised her because she had no training in nursing. Casey admits to being grossed out by running the garbage disposal, had some hesitation about becoming a nurse, but felt the Lord leading her in that direction.

In May 2011 Casey graduated from nursing school, passed the boards in July, resigned from her job in December, and began full-time ministry in January 2012. Casey now works with womens’ groups in Burundi.

Casey wrote to Joe recently: “Here’s where your story really helped me. I don’t have to work tirelessly to hold on to His hand because He has a strong grip on me. I don’t have to hold on with white knuckle strength. His grip is strong enough for the both of us.”

Casey is able to communicate this grace-filled message to the women she encounters in Burundi. She teaches the stronghold metaphor in Joe’s book through a handshake or a wristshake to illustrate that He holds on to us when we are too weak to hang on to Him!

Please pray for Casey’s work in Burundi. Contact: casey@handsfeet.org.
Stronghold Prayer Wall

Please join us in prayer for these warriors.

Stronghold is reaching out to these individuals who are fighting cancer, or are survivors, and a few have other serious illness. We believe in the centrality of prayer for healing and strength. Will you take a moment to pray?

We try to maintain a balance of privacy and personalization. If your name or a loved one’s name appears here and you do not wish to be listed for any reason, please write and we will remove - jfor@mystronghold.org.