

The first half of 2011 has definitely been a preparation time for my upcoming work in France with *The Bridge*! These preparations have included pursuing a 3 month cross-cultural training course, teaching English to refugees in Tucson, and continuing to develop a financial partnership team from both the US and Europe. Many thanks to all those partners who have already contributed financially toward my volunteer work! To find out more about my work with *The Bridge*, you can check out my website at [lorawiggans.wordpress.com](http://lorawiggans.wordpress.com)—also, previous updates & newsletters are there if you want to follow my journey from when I worked in Europe to where I am now. For some specifics about my journey over the past few months, please read on...

**Cross-Cultural Training** From January-April I focused on gaining cross-cultural skills through a course called “PathWays to Global Understanding”. I loved it!! It was a VERY rewarding course - and all the homework kept me busy with readings, weekly essay questions, exams, and a group project. Each speaker at the weekly class taught from their own experience as a missionary or from working in other cultures. I learned so much and enjoyed making friends with those who also love cross-cultural work! The training has already been put into practice in my work with refugees, and it will definitely apply to my work in the multicultural community of greater Paris. I especially enjoyed our group project because we learned about the Bambara people of Mali, Africa — which is where I translated English/French during a short-term missions trip in 2008.



**Language Adventures** In preparation for some of the work I'll pursue in France, God has opened the door for teaching both English and French! My TEFL training (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) has been put into practice as a volunteer English teacher with refugees. Some of my students have VERY limited English skills, which is both challenging & fun - we have some great laughs when we miscommunicate!!! You can read more about these refugees in the column to the right.

The opportunity for teaching experience also came my way when two former colleagues asked me to teach them French. My response, of course, was “Oui”! Not only am I earning some money, but I'm getting great practice speaking French—especially since I want to teach them correct grammar and pronunciation! I've also become friends with a couple in Tucson who come from the French-speaking region of Switzerland. I love speaking French when we get together, as well as having European-style meals - and that means some wonderful desserts because he's a professional pastry chef!!!



Amazing pastries & home made dessert crêpes— “ooh la-la”!



## Work with Refugees

In March I met some refugees from Eritrea, a small country north of Ethiopia. They're all beginning English speakers & I volunteered to



Some of my English students

teach them English twice a week. Here is the story of Hagos, one of my students who came to the U.S. 10 months ago. He fled Eritrea in 2006 and lived in a refugee camp in Ethiopia for more than 4 years. His hopes of building a new life finally came true when he was one of very few to receive permission to come to the U.S. He has no family in the U.S., but the other Eritrean refugees have “adopted” him and he has a roommate from the same refugee camp. Hagos started taking English classes after arriving in Tucson and he's making good progress. Six months ago he started working as a dishwasher at a new Ethiopian restaurant. His job options are limited by his current English skills, but he's very happy to just have a job right now! One of his next goals is to pass an English-proficiency exam so he can study at a local community college. Hagos spends many hours each day traveling by bus because he doesn't drive or ride a bike. He was excited to get a driver's permit a few weeks ago and he's saving his money to someday get a car! I recently helped Hagos get a donated computer through Tucson Refugee Ministry—he continues to thank me again & again, saying “I'm very happy!”. It's been fun to send some emails back & forth, and we're now friends on Facebook! While in the refugee camp, Hagos made a decision to follow Jesus, and he continues to put his trust in God for ALL things. When I ask how I can pray for him, his only request is to grow closer to Jesus—his relationship with God is truly his most valuable possession! How rewarding it is to help my Eritrean friends adjust to their new lives in a country vastly different from their own. They've opened my eyes, yet again, to how much I take for granted—and every week I'm reminded how to be thankful for even the smallest of things in life!

One of my students making traditional Eritrean coffee—yes, you only need a little bit in a tiny cup!

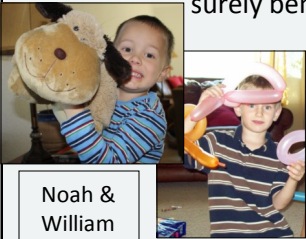


**Speech-Language Therapy & Work with Children** Even though I've provided some consultations & continue to be licensed as a speech-language pathologist, I'm not working directly in the speech-language therapy field right now. I love connecting with children I've worked with in the past, so here's an update about two children I worked with in the Netherlands. In May I was able to visit Mercy Anne and her family in North Carolina. She has a cochlear implant and continues to receive therapy at school. How rewarding it was to hear with my own ears her amazing articulation and language skills!!! Benjamin is doing well in school in Ireland, and I've recently been in touch with Genia, his oldest sister who just graduated from high school. She shared that my work with Benjamin really inspired her, and now she's planning to pursue a career in speech-language pathology - I know Genia will be a wonderful therapist, and our field will surely benefit from her work! I do miss working with children—so it's great that

Mercy Anne, now 8, with a school speech therapist



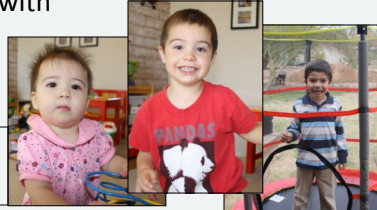
Mercy Anne 5 years ago



Noah & William

some of my friends help me get a "kid fix" with regular babysitting work. I love being "Aunt Lora", and the children love anticipating the crafts & books I bring along! Here are some of my young friends...

Danielle, Lucas & Gabriel



Benjamin & Genia in 2008



**Making Connections** My main focus is building relationships with individuals, organizations, and churches that are interested in my missionary work. It's been very encouraging to get connected with those who have a similar passion for other nations & cultures! When I'm in Tucson it's wonderful to be a part of Grace to the Nations— a church where people come from Africa & beyond, and where everything is in Spanish & English. I love it! I continue to make new friends & it's been fun helping with some children's events. I'm currently using space at the church office twice a week, and I'm so thankful to have a work space for making contacts & for follow-up as I develop my partnership team for working in Europe.

Some of my colleagues with *The Bridge* have connections with Victory Worship, another church in Tucson. Having these mutual connections from the other side of the world is exciting! Earlier in the year I participated in a craft fair sponsored by Victory Worship to raise money for missions. I had a booth with information about *The Bridge* and I was able to raise money toward my missions work by selling Paris & Africa themed bookmarks & photo cards. I've continued to sell these handmade items since then—and I really enjoy all the opportunities it creates to meet people interested in my work with *The Bridge*.



Missions Craft Fair

**Moving Forward** Working with *The Bridge* over the next 2 to 3 years is an amazing opportunity that combines my passion for cross-cultural work with internationals & teaching languages. Because I will be an international myself, there will be natural opportunities to connect with others who are also far from what's familiar. Teaching English is one such opportunity. Paris and its surrounding areas are teeming with immigrants and refugees trying to make new lives for themselves. Even those who already speak French are motivated to learn English because it's a skill that will improve their options for education & employment. I also plan to work with a food distribution program for refugees called "Nouvelle Espoir" (New Hope). My French language skills will be an extra bonus as many of these refugees are from French-speaking countries. Having previously lived in Europe for almost 5 years, I can relate to being an international. These refugees, however, are not internationals by choice but have fled political, ethnic or religious persecution—but God is at work in their lives protecting them, and making them aware of His love for them & their need for Him. It's into these lives that I have a passion to bring "Nouvelle Espoir"!

- Almost 2.5 million internationals live in the Paris metro area.
- Many of these internationals feel isolated and are seeking relationships with others and with God.

**Join Me** Before I can work with *The Bridge* I must meet financial goals to qualify for a long-stay visitor visa. Current immigration laws in Europe prevent me from having a teaching job, but I can work as a volunteer with funding from a team of financial partners. This is where you can join me! **I would be honored if you would consider partnering with me in my work with *The Bridge*.** I'm at 38% of my goal for monthly finances to cover my living expenses—so I really need monthly partners in order to start impacting lives in France beginning in 2012. Even the smallest monthly pledges will help me reach my goal—just like a Spanish saying I recently heard: "Muchos pocos hacen un mucho", or "Many little bits make a lot"! One-time donations are also welcome and will be applied toward moving and transportation costs. To learn how to make a tax-deductible contribution in the US or in Europe, check out the "Partnering - Giving & Support" page of my website or contact me directly at 520-425-3576 or lorawiggans@gmail.com. **Many, many thanks!!!** May God bless you in ALL you do :-)



Just a few of many flags at Grace to the Nations—a wonderful reminder of all the nations & cultures throughout the world!

