

End of Year Report

As the year comes to an end, I wanted to share our updates from Education Cures with you so that you can see what we have accomplished.

Early in 2021 we hired a Master Trainer to run the Brainjogging programs. The Master Trainer ensures our instructors are trained, oversees the day-to-day on site instruction and helps to develop our certified student mentor program. This sustainable model allows us to serve more students without increasing our overhead.

In May we switched our machines from Windows based laptops to Chromebooks, which are less expensive and lighter. We delivered 25 new Chromebooks to Sierra Leone on our trip in June. Previously we had been carrying each laptop upstairs to a secure room. It was a lot of work for our team members and a lot of wear and tear on the laptops. In late May we began construction on a "Store Room", which has 18 outlets to charge the Chromebooks at night, lockers to keep them safe and a workstation for our instructors. We also updated the lab, added steel doors, painted the walls white, hung new banners and made sure it shined like a diamond for all that entered!

In June we finished the construction on the lab and worked towards efficiency in scheduling. Our new schedule allows a new class to be served every 20 minutes in the lab, which means our 25 machines have the potential to serve 375 students per day. During the month of August we paid SLIMS teachers and principals to integrate the Sierra Leone National Curriculum into our Brainjogging word lists. In addition to helping with literacy and cognitive skills, Brainjogging now helps to improve their knowledge of the Sierra Leone curriculum and in turn drastically increase test scores.

The students started back to school in September and our team soared as a result of the changes. By October our biggest issue was not having enough computers to serve all of the students the teachers wanted to send. We did a big push to get 25 additional Chromebooks and other supplies for our upcoming trip in November.

On the night of November 5th, five days prior to our scheduled trip to Sierra Leone, I received a phone call that Mohamed's older brother, Thaimu, had been severely injured in a fire. Over the next hours and days the extent of this tragedy

was revealed and we realized that fire had been an explosion of a fuel tanker truck and over 200 lives were lost only 700 feet from our school. The most devastating outcome for me was Thaimu passing nine hours later. Just three months prior William, my husband, had given Thaimu “the talk”, or the one that a dad might give to his son as he becomes a man. We wanted Thaimu to know we believed in him, considered him a part of our family and would always support his goals. Losing this young man was unbelievably hard on us both.

Our friends and family honored Thaimu’s life by donating to a Memorial Fund that we set up. Some of the donations from this fund went towards funeral and burial expenses, healthcare for his parents, food for the months to come, and ensuring Mohamed’s needs are met. It is our goal that Thaimu’s legacy will be remembered for years to come and we will do this by ensuring we provide the best possible education to our students in Wellington.

Even though our November trip was different than we anticipated, we still accomplished our goal of setting up the Brainjogging lab with 51 Chromebooks to serve 800 students daily on 51 laptops. The US Ambassador and his wife visited our school and were so impressed by our Brainjogging program. They also visited Mohamed and Thaimu’s parents’ house to express their condolences.

Looking forward to 2022, we are hopeful that this will be the year we can make the greatest impact. Now is the best time to expand our Brainjogging program to serve 2000+ students on the SLIMS campus. We have already secured the building for this expansion, but to accomplish this goal, we will need to outfit the entire lab with Chromebooks, electricity, internet, furniture, air conditioning, etc. Another goal we have for 2022 is to create a program to help teenage moms return to school and receive the benefit of our Brainjogging programs. Our inspiration for this came from Thaimu’s sister, a teenage mother, who is currently not enrolled in school. We are also looking towards a partnership to bring Brainjogging to a new school in Makeni, Sierra Leone that was founded by Atlanta friends.

I am so grateful for the tremendous response that we received for Thaimu’s Memorial fund and to all of you for being an integral part of this year’s accomplishments. It is my absolute greatest joy to be able to serve through the work of Education Cures.