



Conakry, GUINEA

UPDATE

In November, Djiba returned from Guinea where he oversaw the fulfillment of a promise and dream—delivering a container of donated items to the people in his home city. On **Saturday, Dec. 21 at 5:30 pm** Djiba hosted a thank you dinner in our church that included pictures and stories from his trip.

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The Langley Times www.langleytimes.com

PE teacher wants to bring breadmakers to Africa

THE SCOPE OF THE HUNGER IN DJIBA CAMARA'S HOME COUNTRY WAS DEVASTATING

MONIQUE TAMMINGA
Times Reporter

HD Stafford Middle School PE teacher Djiba Camara has been back for one month from his long-awaited trip home to Guinea, Africa. But what he saw there has been "life changing" for the FIFA soccer coach, who plans another trip in the summer.

As he suspected, nothing was going to be simple to get the donated contents of his shipping container to those most in need.

After days of waiting and worrying, he was told he could unload it in the dark of night using flashlights,

with police officers standing guard. The officers were there as much for his protection as they were to prevent all the Langley donations from being looted.

Poverty and crime is extremely high in Guinea, one of the poorest countries in the world. It is so corrupt and dangerous that no NGO will go to Guinea.

After some eye-opening experiences over his two weeks there, Camara went to return home to Langley.

But the plane wasn't there. In fact, all planes to Guinea were cancelled because it was deemed too dangerous

to land.

An Al Qaeda shooting and attacks in neighbouring Mali had cancelled all flights in both countries.

"I didn't know when I was going home," he said.

It would be a week later before the first plane would land in Guinea, but that didn't guarantee him a seat. Money did. And so he had to fork over new funds for a seat he had already paid for.

"My school worried and didn't know when I would be back."

But while there he was able to distribute shoes, clothing, books, school supplies and

soccer balls to a few schools.

"The students welcomed me with a soccer match," said Camara. "They were jumping for joy when they saw what I had brought."

He also managed to get eight soccer balls and jerseys to a school in Liberia as well.

But it was how hungry everyone was that broke his heart.

There were some days he didn't eat because there was no food.

A glass of water costs 1,500 Francs.

"What I saw in Africa changed me a lot," said Ca-

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Summer return trip planned

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mar, who is known for his cheery disposition. Some things he doesn't want to talk about because he wants to stay positive for the people of this impoverished country.

"I have to focus on the positive."

He wants to go back in the summer. This time he wants to bring bread makers and dry soups. Although there is the challenge of electricity for the bread makers, there is generators that can be run when there is gas.

"There is rice but they want bread and there is no bread," he said.

In a country predominantly Muslim, he was met with some resistance for his Christian faith. When they made soup at a church to distribute to people, he found Muslims lining up too, which was positive.

But it also showed the desper-

ation for food.

Because of the dangers there, he wasn't able to distribute all the donations, so some have been locked up at a home owned by a government official.

When he returns in summer, he will distribute the rest of those donations.

It was October 2012, when Camara came in front of the Board of Education making a plea to help his home of Conakry Guinea, Africa. (There are two Guineas in Africa, and they are differentiated by the names of their capital cities).

The children used rolled up plastic bags for a soccer ball, playing in a dusty back area of the school grounds.

For Camara, who coached the women's Whitecaps and is a certified FIFA coach, seeing this was heartbreaking and moved him to action.

He came back to Langley with a goal to fill a shipping container with needed items like soccer balls, uniforms,

cleats, clothes, food.

The Langley community came through, also donating bicycles, computers and school supplies. Some also donated money to help pay for the shipping container, which costs thousands.

If you have a bread maker or some dried soups that you would like to donate, contact the school.

They are holding a room for donations for Camara.

There is rice but they want bread and there is no bread.

DJIBA CAMARA



MIRANDA GATHERCOLE Langley Times file photo

H.D. Stafford teacher Djiba Camara recently returned from a humanitarian trip to his native Guinea. He plans to return in the summer and is asking for donations to take along.