

What You Dare to Dream Dare to Do

Tracie Mandreck

Dream #1: Trip to the South Pacific.

A 3 month contract at the newly opened YoWoChAs centre gave me financial freedom to purchase 2 tickets to NZ and Fiji. This life changing adventure opened the world to me.

We fell in love with the Fijians living on the island and knew it opened our hearts and soul to experience their culture. A tourist sees the scenery and a traveler experiences the people living within that scenery. Dream #2 arrived with the desire to live in a foreign country to appreciate other cultures.

We flew to Zimbabwe 3 years later for my husband's 2 year teaching contract with the Marist Br. Catholic Boys School called Nyanga in the Eastern Highlands. The countryside was mountainous with flat emerald green pasture land; stunningly beautiful just like the people.

I started an Aerobics class (thanks to the YWCA Edmonton course) popular with the local ladies with their breastfeeding infants and before I knew it I was head of the boys Dance Club. Throughout my stay I looked for skills within myself that could help others. Having been a pottery instructor in Stony Plain I started workshops in the local village but delivery to the market was too costly. I then found the connection when I was given a wonderful gift from my village friends that lived 3 km away. I received a bag of freshly ground wheat hand harvested with a scythe. Sunflower seeds were also cold pressed into oil at this same time. My love for cooking was a challenge without an oven and I realized this was the daily life at the hut level. I looked at the small cookbook I brought with me and a single sheet of paper fell out. I turned it over to see my Auntie Bert's donut recipe. What a welcome surprise. I made a batch that same day and had rave reviews.

Days later, I loaded up my mountain bike with fresh milk, yeast and a large pot from Canada and travelled to the village to show them my donut making operation. We took their newly harvested ingredients, and whipped up a batch filling the hut with 10 dozen donuts. Once the glaze was dipped on the fried donuts silent smiles smothered their faces and the million dollar lottery look enveloped their eyes. Mr. Majhadha's first bite was swallowed and he jumped up to embrace his wife and shake my hand. He exclaimed "Macotocoto!" Success was in the air.

3 years later I returned to Nyanga to volunteer at 2 training centres. Dream #3 shone thru when I learned that donut sales were still going strong. The Majhaha family was able to send 3 of their daughters to Business school beyond Grade 10. An opportunity rarely experienced due to the high cost of schooling in a low income situation. What a million dollar smile does for a person?

Author: *Tracie Mandreck*