



***Special Kid Missionary Edition***

a newsletter written in honor of Luke Rimmer:

The ELCA's Kid Missionaries are Super, but not for the reason that you might think. Don't be confused by what I'm wearing in this picture with my friend Djessou. I don't have Superpowers like Batman or Superman. I'm really a seven year old boy. My name is Luke, and I serve in Sénégal, West Africa with my big brother Paul Michael. My parents told us that as an ELCA Kid Missionary, I'm Super. That made me feel great, but I'm not sure if I'd call me Super.



*Luke and Djessou*

Sometimes being a missionary is not Super, especially at the beginning. I had to leave my family and friends in the US...and then Denmark...and then Scotland...and then France...and I only get to visit family in the US every two years. I also had to change my life to a new language so that I could do well in school and make new friends. And using a new language isn't a Super Power, it just takes lots of work. At first it was a little lonely because it was hard to learn about my friends, or for my friends to learn about me when we couldn't say much to each other. But after a while it was Super to be able to say what I was feeling, and learn what my new friends think and feel in their language. That helps me enjoy all kinds of things that are Super about being a Kid Missionary.



*Luke and Sheikh Soh*

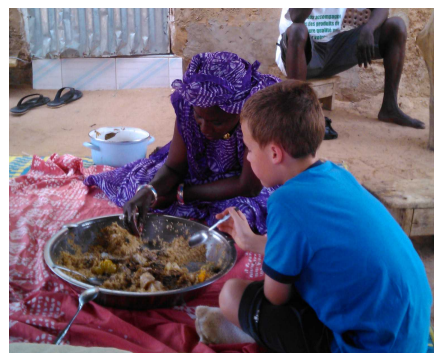
For instance, we do some Super singing, drumming and dancing in our Church. And in the villages I have lots of friends who are happy to play and wrestle with me. We call it Lutte in Sénégal. It's Super to live in a place with monkeys, giraffes, camels and palm trees, and I can wear my shorts and sandals all year long. I can take bucket showers and sleep in a net. Oh, and my TonTons and TaTas (my Senegalese Uncles and Aunts) – they are Super. My TaTas and TonTons teach me at Church, take me to markets, teach me to cook Senegalese food and how to eat it on the floor with my hands. They teach me how to greet in Wolof, how to harvest coconuts and drink from them. Out of all my TaTas and TonTons, my TaTa Néné and TonTon Babacar are the most Super because they take care of me and my family. They play with me, and have taught me so much about living in Sénégal.

That is Super, because there is a lot to learn in another country, especially when you're my age. I love it, but I don't always know what is going on, and sometimes I do feel a little out of place. While everybody is very nice to me, everybody knows I'm not Senegalese. But I only lived in the US until I was three months old. So I don't really feel like I belong there either, and I'm not sure all my family and friends understand what that's like. My parents told me it's because I'm a "third culture kid", and that's part of what makes me Super. But the thing is, I'm not really a "third culture kid". I'm just me – an American boy growing up in Senegal. So, I don't think about it being too Super, it's just who I am. I'm a Kid Missionary.

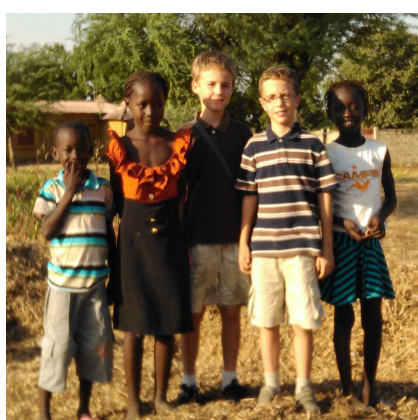


*Luke and Babacar "lutte"*

And it's all part of being a missionary. On weekends and vacations, we go to visit friends in lots of villages. My parents ask us to pile into the back of the truck on a long, hot, dusty journey through the bush with a car full of people we don't know yet, because we have a car to share with others. In the villages they ask us to sit in the sand sharing with everybody around a big bowl of fish on couscous. And it's hard to remember to use your right hand when the fish have eyes that are still looking at me! My parents tell us we can go off to play with kids that we don't really know yet. They ask us to greet everyone in another language that I don't completely understand. And sometimes when I don't understand, I can't really ask my parents because they are trying so hard to understand it, too. So I try to wait until later to ask. Sometimes, all that can make me kind of nervous at first, and that doesn't feel very Super.



*Eating around the bowl with TaTa Néné*



*New friends in the Mbettite Parish*

But here's a Super thing...we keep saying "yes". My brother and I don't always know what we're going to do all the time, but we say "yes". We keep going, and we keep trying everything new and amazing. And I think maybe that's why my parents told me Kid Missionaries are Super. Because along with our parents we are learning to trust God, who helps us learn to trust the people around us, because together we trust that God is doing something Super with all of us. And God keeps blessing us in Super ways. Even though I still have to learn something new every day, each day also feels more familiar. Now I know how to greet everyone, eat around the bowl, shop in the markets, clean our water and vegetables, make friends, share life and God's love in another language, and how to enjoy it all. Now Senegal feels like home and that does make me feel Super.

So I keep trusting God, and I keep going! And God keeps teaching me how I'm cared for in all the world, and that there are people all over creation who want to work together to take care of it. God has blessed us with lots of Christian and Muslim TaTas, TonTons and friends who show me what it's like to live in peace even if we have different languages, traditions, and sometimes different faiths in God. That is the most Super of all.



*Luke taking care of a friend*



*Luke and the Luther Rose*

So, yeh, maybe that's why my parents said Kid Missionaries are Super. Not because we are Superheroes. We are Super because we get to share what it's like to be in this part of the world serving a Super God in the Lutheran Church of Senegal! I might only be seven, and I might not really have Superpowers, but I have seen God doing some really Super things with some really Super people, in some really wonderful, strange, amazing, beautiful and Super ways. So while I'm not Senegalese, and I don't really know what it's like to live in America, I do know what it's like to be a little Lutheran who is growing up in West Africa. And I'm happy to share that Super message with you, our sponsors, partners and friends in ELCA Global Mission.

(From Pastor Chad in honor of your friend and Kid Missionary, Luke)