

KIGALI · RWANDA

Field Notes from Kigali

A season of teaching, presence, and restoration.

Dr. Laurie Bailey · May – June 2026

From 29 daily field notes · leadingsafely.org/rwanda/blog



MISSION OVERVIEW

Teach • Accompany • Restore



Teach

Trauma-informed care with teachers, staff, and mothers.



Accompany

Daily presence — chapel, meals, and hard conversations.



Restore

Programs taking root across the community.

From chapel to the patio



Morning

Chapel & worship



Midday

Teaching & planning



Afternoon

Conversation Corner



Evening

Games, stories, rest

“Both pouring out and being filled are necessary parts of the work.”

Building capacity that stays



Trained the trainers

Care that continues after departure.

Partnered with chaplains

Spiritual care woven into design.

Solved alongside staff

Working through real problems together.

Modeled presence

The quiet daily presence that earns trust.

KEY PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Child Malnutrition Program



Mothers

engaged & heard

Nursery

staff trained

Taking root

care continues

“He promised to never beat our children again...”

KEY PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Education, youth & the sewing program



Sewing Program



Conversation Corner



Cycling



National Exams



Health Outreach



Sponsorship

Moments that needed no translation



- Worship in two languages.
- A drumming, dancing welcome.
- Girl Guides singing.
- Memorial grounds — listen first.

ATN Culture Center



Fresh milk



Planting coffee trees



Grinding sorghum

It is one thing to hear about rural life in Rwanda. It is another to feel the cow's side under your hand, taste the fire-cooked meal, and realize how many steps stand between a tree and the coffee in your cup."

Stories of transformation over time



Fifteen-year arc

Photos from 2011 became a bridge.

A first group of boys became young men with families, work, and faith — visible evidence that early seeds were not wasted.

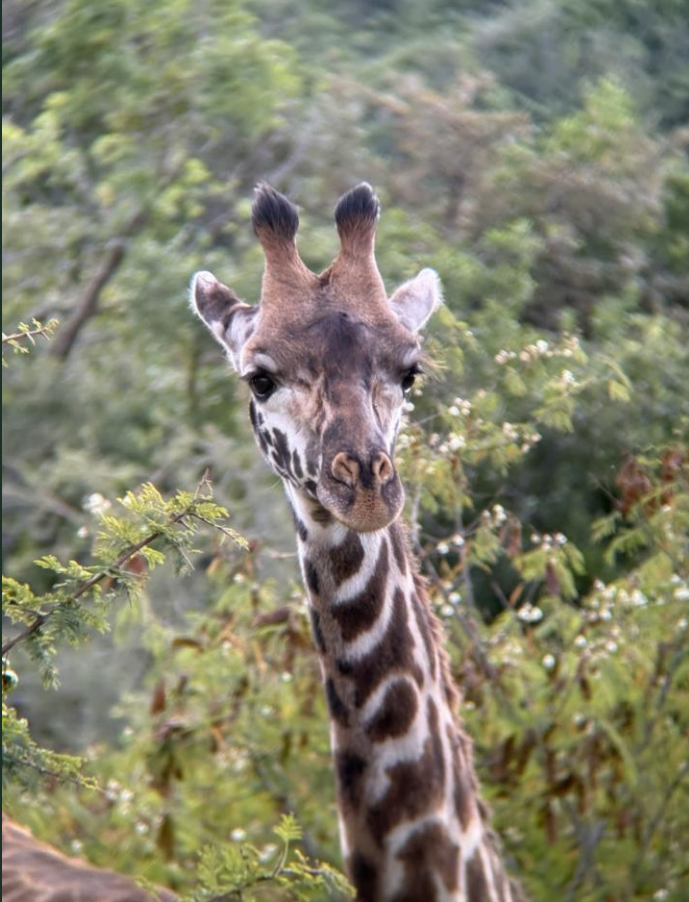
Prayers in two circles

The team prayed over Peace House graduates, then knelt while those graduates prayed over them.



“Watching Peter stand and share his testimony fifteen years later felt like a living reminder.”

The day that took our breath away



Giraffes at the horizon



Close enough to remember

Elephants moved toward the road, magnificent and unhurried.



Unexpected lions

A sighting none of the vehicles expected — and no one forgot.

Some moments you capture with a camera; others you simply let live in memory.

VISITORS

New faces, familiar connections



Visitors on Campus



A Friendly Basketball Game

Unexpected Conversations

- Ambassador of Israel
- Minister of Education
- Israeli Interventional Cardiologist
- Retired NBA Player



Ten years of stories



Wrapped in tradition

Garments, dances, drums, speeches, cake, and community marked a decade of faithfulness.

“Every photo, every display, every note felt like a testimony to God’s faithfulness over ten years.”

What the work taught about care



1. Listen before teaching

Begin by hearing mothers and students.

2. Safety in small moments

Trust grows conversation by conversation.

3. Room for hard questions

Honest questions are the point.

4. Meet people where they are

Embed care, don't import it.

Celebration and goodbye in one breath

“Present, witnessing holy moments, and holding the weight of both celebration and goodbye in the very same breath.”



Tender goodbyes

Endings that felt like beginnings.



The tired felt holy

Exhaustion turned to gratitude.



Grief and grace

A mango tree planted in Dad's honor.

What the season asked of me



Choosing rest

Being filled is part of the work.

Presence over plans

Impact came in unscheduled moments.

Receiving, not just giving

Slow down and receive first.

Faith in the ordinary

Small moments reshaped how I lead.

On the community, and on me



For the community

- Care embedded with staff.
- Mothers equipped & heard.
- Youth carried forward.
- Programs taking root.

For me

- Lead, then step back.
- Choose rest & receive.
- Grief & gratitude held together.
- An open door ahead.

A CLOSING CHAPTER AND AN OPENING DOOR

The work is taking root.

“Celebrate what has been done, say tender goodbyes, and quietly imagine what comes next.”

Dr. Laurie Bailey · Leading Safely

Daily posts: leadingsafely.org/rwanda/blog