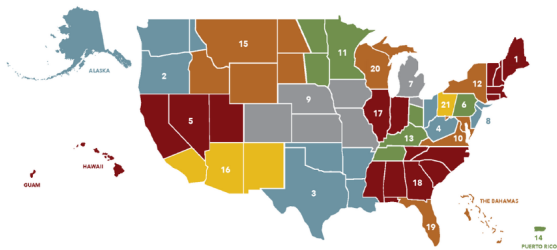


SENEGAL BOUND, ONE MILESTONE AT A TIME

Building up the Excitement

It's hard to believe the new year has come, all 54 days in January have come and gone, and spring is arriving after a very mild winter in Minnesota! I have been gearing up to make my mission trip to Senegal West Africa from August 9-20, 2024 a reality. Since it will be my first time traveling outside the country, my initial step was to submit my passport application and I'm grateful that I could accomplish this due to the financial support I have received this far! Since starting the LEAD program in July of 2022, each month I have met with my coach and other students who enrolled in my cohort. Every 4th Saturday I have been driving to either Menomonie or Wausau Wisconsin or tuned in virtually to meet with them. We discuss our monthly studies, what we are up to in each of our unique ministries, what God has been revealing to us personally, and more recently we have been discussing mission trip details. The reasoning for meeting in Wisconsin was particularly because when I launched into the program, there were no other students in the North Central district (MN, North & South Dakotas) launching so the closest cohort was the Western Great Lakes district (Wisconsin). I was advised by LEAD leadership that I had one of two options: wait until next launch (January 2023) or join the Wisconsin cohort. After prayerfully seeking guidance, God showed me that I wasn't in a waiting season to start this program!

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRICTS



The Christian & Missionary Alliance Districts outlined by color. #11 in green is North Central District and #20 in orange is Western Great Lakes district.

Why Senegal?

You may be wondering why we chose Senegal for our mission trip site. We have considered many Envision sites around the world but because there are several International Workers who are from the Wisconsin area, we prayerfully believe that this is the best site for our cohort. The envision site is brand new in the area and is still working out some of the exact ministries that will distinguish this site. However there are Access, CAMA, and Marketplace International Workers in the country who we will partner with. During our time there, we will have opportunities to provide manual labor, spend lots of time in prayer and Bible studies, minister to the children at Dakar International Christian School, and help with basic wound care for those who need it. More recently, I've looked into the different International Workers (listed above) to learn more about their mission and passion behind supporting Senegal communities. What I found is the common need and desire to share the good news and fulfill the call found in Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." That even across our world, entire nations, people groups, cities, towns, villages, refugee camps, and informal settlements all still have little opportunity of knowing Jesus.

"Teranga" = Good Hospitality

Senegal Culture

I have found great interest in learning a bit about Senegal's culture and how I can prepare for this trip. Senegal is often referred to as the "Land of Teranga," emphasizing the importance of hospitality in Senegalese culture. Visitors are typically welcomed warmly and sharing meals with guests is a common practice. Speaking of meals, the food there is flavorful and diverse with influences from West African, French, and Arab culinary traditions. Common ingredients include rice, millet, fish, seafood, vegetables, and various spices. Islam is the predominant religion in Senegal, with the majority of the population being Sunni Muslims.

Senegal Culture (cont'd)

Senegal is known for its vibrant music and dance scene. Traditional music genres like Mbalax influenced by various rhythms and instruments are popular. Traditional art, including wooden carvings, textiles, and jewelry can be found throughout the community.

Personal Efforts

In February, I had the chance to work alongside my mom as a floral vendor for Target. This is a relatively new part-time job my mom loves and the company sought additional assistance for their stores during the Valentine's rush. Together, my mom and I strategically arranged over 200 dozen rose bouquets throughout the store. The process involved unboxing and setting up cardboard stands for each bouquet, only to witness them swiftly disappear; almost every single one sold! The experience allowed for quality bonding time with my mom, and I also earned some extra income to contribute toward my upcoming mission trip. Following the Valentine's rush, the vendor manager approached me with potential opportunities within the company leading me to a fantastic and highly flexible part-time position as a float for nearby Target stores!

Lately, I've been dedicating a few hours on Saturdays to replenish the floral department shelves at both the Plymouth and Chaska Target locations. Additionally, I'm on call for potential evening shifts when extra assistance is required. This gig is not only enjoyable but also serves as a great avenue for me to make additional contributions to my fundraising efforts. On top of this part-time work, I am selling earrings and Aldi Quarter Keeper Keychains!



Here are just a few designs of the handmade earrings and quarter keepers. Feel free to inquire if you're interested in seeing more and to make a purchase.

Currently, As I write this letter, I am reaching close to 20% of my fundraising goal. The total costs and amount I am trying to reach to make this trip possible is 4,700.00. I am so grateful for the contributions this far and am hoping you will consider a monetary contribution. Your support would not only enable me to participate in this life-changing experience, but also help me develop valuable skills in leadership, cross-cultural communication, and service. I kindly ask for your prayers and financial contribution towards my mission trip to Senegal. Any amount you can give will be greatly appreciated and will go a long way in making this trip possible. You can support me today by scanning the QR code below or visit this website:

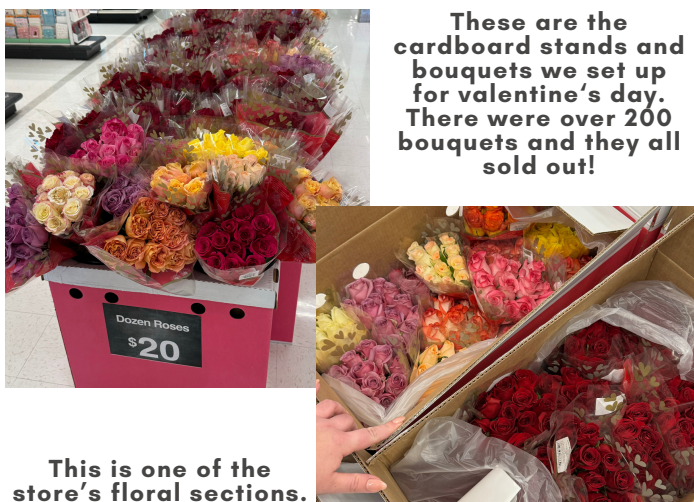
<https://lead.managedmissions.com/MyTrip/erikaemmings>



Thank you for your support and belief in what God's been calling me to do.

May God bless you abundantly,

Erika Emmings



These are the cardboard stands and bouquets we set up for valentine's day. There were over 200 bouquets and they all sold out!

This is one of the store's floral sections.

