

Avanti Italia!

Onward Italy!

Let's Stay Connected!

Email: morgannash11@gmail.com

(school address)
Scuola Biblica di Firenze
Via Armando Spadini, 24
50018 Scandicci (Fi)
Italy

Many of you know that in October of this past year I began to consider working with the mission organization Avanti Italia, a language Bible school in Scandicci, Italy located just outside of Florence. By the start of the New Year, I had firmly decided to pursue this move with the blessing of my family, church, and friends. As I think ahead to the next few weeks with great anticipation, I am eager to update you on the events from this past summer that have helped prepare me as I transition into a new job, culture, and lifestyle. Most importantly, though, these events have reminded me of the Lord's faithfulness.

An Ending for a Beginning

Since deciding to move to Italy, these months have been filled with last bittersweet moments. One of these came at the end of May when I stopped my work at the language school. Having worked there since graduating in 2011, I was blessed to be in an environment that challenged me and taught me several lessons in career ethics and discipline. The Lord was faithful in placing me in the right school. I am most grateful for the people I was privileged to work with and the great friendships that came from our time together. Many of these colleagues became great sources of encouragement for me during my last months working, and they continue to be.



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Summer Tutoring



Blanca and I



Avanti Workers at Orientation

To make a donation, please send cash or check payable to Britton Road Church of Christ (sponsoring congregation)

Britton Road Church of Christ
2520 W Britton Rd
Oklahoma City, OK 73120

When the summer began, my highest priority was to spend quality time with family and friends. This priority led to my involvement with various events and responsibilities. Starting in May I began meeting with a young woman, Blanca, for English practice. One of my biggest responsibilities in Florence will be to tutor in English, however most of my language teaching experience since graduating has been classroom style in which I teach to a group of students. To help with the transition of teaching to one instead of many, I prayed that in the summer the Lord would give me some chance to practice one-on-one tutoring. His answer was Blanca. Blanca is originally from Mexico and has been living in Oklahoma for more than a year now. A very driven student, she is determined to learn English with a greater goal of someday teaching it. With the exception of a week or two, we met four hours a week for four months and worked out of a language workbook that I could use to facilitate practicing the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Early on, we discovered that we were both believers, and as the summer drew on, the nature of our sessions changed. Some sessions we would talk about God, or our present struggles, joys, and doubts. We began sharing scriptures and even started praying together. Our sessions became more than teaching English, it became a time of friendship.

Summer Orientation in Arkansas

A long awaited week for me came in mid-June in which I went to Searcy, AR to spend time with the rest of my teammates during a week's intensive orientation. During this time I trained with 5 other workers. Jodi arrived in Florence in July, David will be coming in January, Bethany will arrive in October, and Miles and Merideth, a married couple scheduled to arrive the day before I do. Our week of orientation was filled with dozens of lectures starting from 8am until about 8pm or 9pm, and our teachers had a variety of career and international backgrounds. The lectures covered language learning, cultural transitioning, Bible study, group dynamics, (*continued on pg.3*)

evangelism in Europe, Islam, and much more. While it was an intensive week of learning, it was also a time in which all of the workers could meet and get to know one another.

Global Reunion Summer Camp

In July, a few weeks after orientation, I was asked to help with the camp Global Reunion at Oklahoma Christian University. Global Reunion focuses on helping children and adults with transitioning and adapting into whatever culture they are living in. Referred to as Third Culture Kids (TCK), many of the participants come from backgrounds that include missionary or military work, or are expats of another nature. Global Reunion is dear to me in that I was a camper and participant near the beginning of its formation. It helped me as a teenager even though my family had moved back from Germany years earlier. I was very privileged to be a part, and also to see the Lord's faithfulness in the camp's growth. When I was a camper in 2006, Global Reunion included maybe a few dozen teenage campers and participants. This summer, Global Reunion occupied all of University House (a large dormitory at OC), and included sections for teenagers, as well as children and parents.

Departure and Financial Status

My departure is September 1st, and I am leaving on very good terms. I am surrounded by a wealth of support from my family and friends. Additionally, I have been taken care of very well financially. Some supporters have given one-time donations, and others have made monthly pledges. In the spring, I sent fundraising letters asking for one-time support to meet a goal of \$4,675 to help with start-up costs once I get to Italy. I am very happy to say that that amount has been met and exceeded. In the same letter, I asked supporters to consider making monthly pledges to help me with monthly



Campers and Counselors at Global Reunion



Time with Friends

rent and everyday living expenses. My set monthly budget is \$1,500. Currently, supporters have pledged to meet \$1,395 of the \$1,500. Words cannot express how important these sponsors have been in this mission effort, and I am incredibly thankful for those who found the means to support me financially.

Transitions and Next Steps

The end of summer seems to be met with melancholy. The days become shorter, students and teachers go back to school, and the overall ease in routine ends. This summer has been wonderful, and though I am excited and eager to begin the work in Florence, it is not without sadness that I am leaving. Yet, I try to think of the work that awaits me. Once I arrive in Florence, one of the initial things I will be doing is enrolling in Italian language school. Since my language learning will be for half a day for a few months, I will be tutoring part-time until my formal language learning ends. Beyond that, I look forward to informing all of you through this newsletter of the many things happening in Florence and of the many ways the Lord is displaying his faithfulness.

Prayers

- * For the safe arrival of the rest of the team
- * For the students enrolled in this term's English sessions
- * For my overall well-being (mental, emotional physical)
- * For the transition into a new language and culture

About Avanti Italia

The missions program I am a part of is called Avanti Italia (A.I.). This mission program has three primary goals: 1. to use our individual talents in sharing the Good News of Jesus the Christ with those who are seeking to have a more perfect relationship with Him, 2. to learn to share Christ with others more effectively, and 3. to participate in mutual encouragement and edification with the Italian churches of Christ. Their method for achieving these goals is mainly through outreach in teaching private Bible lessons in English. As a part of A.I., I would be expected to teach an average of 10-15 Bible lessons a week. Much of the work A.I. encourages would be described as friendship evangelism, making relationships with people and sharing God's saving message with them. Each team member is not only expected to fulfill their obligations, but also to find ways of using his or her individual talents to make more contacts with people. Most of the work is centered at the Florence Bible School in Scandicci, a suburb on the southwest side of Florence. A.I. has had an extensive outreach since its beginning in 1986. Every year, A.I. forms teams of 3-7 members to send to work at the school for a two-year commitment. Team members are required to fundraise, acquire a student visa, and go through intensive training before leaving the United States. Once arriving in Florence, team members live together at the Florence Bible School and immediately begin Italian language studies while teaching English using the Bible. Teachers generally work in one-to-one or small group sessions.