



December 22, 2010

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope that you are all well and that 2010 has been an enjoyable year for you. Wow! We can't believe that 2010 is nearly over. The year has certainly been exciting and busy for us while living in Harrogate, England.

We started our second year in England in mid-September. We love living here, but certainly miss our family! We have travelled to several local places, but have not left the country for any family trips. We hope to visit Scotland early next year. We also plan to go for a 2 week family vacation to Rome, Paris, and Barcelona once Isabel gets out of school in July.

We finally had our first visitors! Chris' Mum (English for Mom – yes, they really spell it and say it that way, see dictionary.com definition #4 if you don't believe it) and Dad came to visit in mid-October. Dad stayed one week and Mom two weeks. We went to many, many fairly local places including York Minster, Skipton Castle, Ripley's Castle, Whitby, Fountains Abbey, Bolsover's Castle, ... Our impression is that they had a good time and really thought that England was cool. ☺

Isabel is now four and is attending British school at a nearby village school called Darley Community Primary which has about 75 children. She is in what is called "Reception," which is kind of equivalent to a pre-K type class in the States. In her school, as in many village schools, one or more grades are combined. Her Reception (children aged 4-5) and Year-1 (children aged 5-6) classes are combined into one room. Isabel has made many friends and really loves going school. We have been very impressed with her two British teachers who have successfully taught Isabel to read small books within a few months of starting school. Isabel is also excited about school because she gets to take the big white coach (bus) from base to Darley Primary (and back) every day. Mommy/Daddy pick Isabel and Bethany up at the base CDC after work. In addition to going to school, Isabel has also been taking swimming lessons for over a year. It is amazing to see the growth in the kids' abilities after just a few lessons! In February 2011, Isabel and Bethany will both start dance lessons on base. Wow, will we be busy☺



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Bethany turned 3 at the beginning of November. It's been somewhat trying and more than a bit emotionally draining fighting with both the military and British health care systems to get Bethany better services for her speech delay. In October, Bethany qualified for speech and language services at Menwith Hill school (MHS) on base and is now attending the school 4 days a week with two hours of group speech therapy every session. She really loves attending the school! In less than two months, we have seen amazing improvement in her attention and her ability to repeat words. Her speech still isn't exactly spontaneous or exceedingly clear, but we are making great progress! Like her sister, the MHS school has provided her no shortage of fun activities, including making ginger bread cookies and a ginger bread house, attending a play in Harrogate, and participating in the MHS Christmas concert where she and her 2 classmates sang Jingle Bells while shaking their bells. She was sooooo adorable on stage!

Bethany wasn't the only one who got to perform on stage! Isabel and her Reception/Year-1 class performed a 20 minute "Wiggly Nativity" play on 15 December. Every student in the class





dressed up in a costume and danced/sang on stage. Isabel was a very cute chicken that got to be center stage with a few other animals – the sheep and donkey. It was very awesome to see 4 and 5 year olds performing a fairly lengthy play so well!



Chris and I are doing well at work. Our jobs are interesting and busy enough that we don't regret leaving our jobs in Maryland very often.☺ Seriously, we feel very blessed to have this opportunity to work and live in England! We were fortunate enough to have two business trips back to the States. In May, we returned to Maryland for 3+ weeks. We spent several days in Ohio visiting my family. We then returned to Maryland and Chris' parents and brother's family came up from Georgia for several days. We had a wonderful time swimming in the pool at their hotel! Chris had a couple of other trips to the States and a two other trips as well.

We truly hope that this letter finds you in good health and spirits. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Love,
Lisa, Chris, Isabel, and Bethany





Gratuitous, spontaneous Christmas Tree photo for the electronic .pdf distribution - Don't say you get less when you go paperless! ;-)

