



AUGUST 2026

SAUDADES: THE LONGING AND JOY OF HOME

Praises

- We praise God for His faithfulness in our transition back to the United States, including providing a home and vehicle.
- We are grateful for the opportunities God has provided for Monica and Olivia as they navigate re-entry, build relationships, and prepare for the next seasons of their lives.
- We praise God for the opportunity to reconnect with family, friends, and supporters who have been part of our journey. These times together have been a meaningful way to *matar saudades* and celebrate the relationships God has given us.

Prayer

- Continue to pray for our family as we navigate the reverse culture shock of being back in the United States. Pray especially for wisdom and grace as each family member processes this transition in their own way.
- Pray for Monica as she begins college at Calvin University and for Olivia as she begins her final year of high school. Pray that they would find community, would continue to grow in their faith, and can feel God's presence in the midst of this change.
- Pray for our upcoming travel schedule as we reconnect with supporters. Pray with us for meaningful conversations, wisdom, and clarity as we share what God is doing in Brazil, as well as strength as we balance travel, family, and ministry responsibilities.

The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

PSALM 121:8 (NIV)



Monica's high school graduation that took place June 3.

There is a Portuguese word that is difficult to translate into English: *saudades*. It is often described as deep longings for someone or something that is absent—a mixture of missing, remembering, and carrying a piece of that person or place with you. As we have returned to the United States for our second home assignment, this word describes some of what we are experiencing.

It has been four years since we last lived in the United States, and each one of us is experiencing a bit of reverse culture shock. It is hard to explain what it is like to switch



Joice has been a dear family friend. Her and Olivia have a special relationship, and this was a tearful goodbye. Joice's final words to Oliver were, "Remember to meditate on God's words day and night."

worlds. For the past four years, our day-to-day life has been immersed in a culture and language that were not originally our own, but somehow, after so much time, they started to feel so familiar. Coming back to the United States feels familiar but also unfamiliar at the same time. We recognize the places, understand the culture, and slip easily into conversations, yet there is a quiet realization that we have changed. After four years in Brazil, part of our hearts and lives now belong there as well. We are home, yet we are also visitors.

Part of our focus for re-entry has been to make sure that Monica and

Olivia transition well. Missionary kids face unique challenges as they navigate returning to a culture that was meant to be familiar yet feels so unfamiliar. The United States is their home country, but their memories, friendships, routines, and everyday experiences have been shaped by their developmental years in Brazil. In many



Monica and Olivia at their last church service in Brazil, saying goodbye to friends.



A final party with our seminary students. We had a "royal tea." We certainly miss them.

ways, they are learning for the first time about a culture that is supposed to be a part of who they are, but one that they do not fully remember.

Both girls have participated in a week-long re-entry camp through the ministry Transit Lounge. During this camp, they were surrounded by others who have experienced living in multiple cultures. They were given space to share their stories and were equipped with tools to help them better understand and navigate American culture. Both girls found the experience to be valuable and were grateful for what they learned and the connections they made.

In addition to the camp, Monica also participated in a scholars program at Calvin University called Entrada. This two-week program helps students explore college life, build relationships, and learn what it means to live in community with others. Monica especially valued being in a classroom where she could openly dialogue about God and her faith, asking deeper philosophical questions about human relationships with God and learning alongside others. It was a transformative experience that has made her excited for what the next four years at Calvin will bring.

Marci and Brandon have been busy setting up a home, helping the girls navigate their transitions, preparing their fall travel schedule, and making a few visits along the way. Marci is also excited for a continuing education opportunity beginning in September. She will be completing an extended unit of Clinical Pastoral Education through Mercy Hospital. This chaplaincy training program includes weekly classroom sessions, along with hands-on experience, providing spiritual care





to patients and families in a hospital setting. This opportunity will allow Marci to continue to grow in her calling to pastoral care.

As we continue walking through this season of home assignment, we are reminded that home is not always as simple as a place on a map. Our hearts carry pieces of the places and people God has given us to love. We carry *saudades* for Brazil, for the people we love there, and for the community God has allowed us to be a part of over the years.

At the same time, we are grateful for the opportunity this season provides to reconnect with many of you who have walked alongside us throughout this journey. While serving in Brazil, we have often felt *saudades* for our supporters and the relationships God has given us in North America. One of the joys of this year of home assignment will be the opportunity to *matar saudades*—a Brazilian expression that literally means to kill that longing by being together again. Think of it like “killing” hunger with a satisfying meal.

Brandon & Marci Jones

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Our family reunited at the airport. It was good to be with Daniel and my mom again.

We look forward to the moments we will have to reconnect, share stories, and celebrate the friendships that have carried us through the years. Thank you for continuing to pray for and partner with our family. We are grateful for the role you play in this journey and for the ways you continue to walk alongside us as we follow where God leads.

Blessings,

