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Roberts, Andrea

Slide show captures the adventure of a lifetime

A Mississauga couple has returned home after living the adventure of a lifetime.

Their global travels and the people they met were extraordinary, say Simon and Andrea Roberts, who lived in one the former Soviet Union's closed cities and ran a medical clinic in a tiny east African nation.

Other highlights marking their year long trek included sightseeing through Israel and Europe.

Dr. Simon Roberts was born in Uganda and raised in Kenya. It was his long-time dream to practice medicine in a Third World nation.

Andrea holds a Master's degree in information services and when the couple graduated and married they

decided to take a journey that would be both physical and spiritual.

In May 1992 they began their odyssey, flying into Moscow and heading east to the city of Chelyabinsk, closed during communist rule. People could neither enter nor leave the city with a population of about 4 million, where residents suffered the ravages of radiation poisoning caused by accidents in the 1950s.

The Roberts say there had been several Chernobyl-type nuclear reactor leaks in the city. People are still dying from the effects, they say.

People there, despite their hardships, were overwhelmingly friendly to the Canadian couple, who

were among the first foreigners to visit the city when it opened to the world in Feb. 1992.

After a month in Russia, the Roberts left, stopping in England before heading to several European countries, the middle east and, finally, Africa.

It was Roberts' intention to work

as a doctor in the rural areas of Africa where his skills would help people who might not otherwise receive medical attention. He found a place in tiny Swaziland.

While Andrea taught at a small school, Simon ran a country medical clinic at a place with the unlikely name of Pig's Peak.

Roberts can also say he gained a new perspective on medicine as he has traded back the rural African experience for the modern hospitals in Ontario where he trained.

The Roberts will present a slide show and lecture on their experiences at Forest Ave. School, 20 Forest Ave. Sept. 19 at 2 p.m.