

APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER

Hello everyone, We have been very busy since our last newsletter.

We are sorry to lose Sue Filby, who has resigned as trustee due to work commitments but very pleased to announce that we have taken on 4 more trustees. Jason Lang, who was out there supporting Joan while the Jeremy Kyle team were filming. Jason and his wife, Katherine are committed and generous supporters and Jason is in constant touch with Joan, so knows what is going on there on a daily basis. (Some of you may have read his blog on Trip Advisor). We also welcome Steve and Sarah Turner who have dedicated a lot of time and money in supporting the Home as well as Steve's visit to hasten the construction of the school (more on this later). Also we very much welcome Michelle Porter, who used to work with Save the Children and is highly experienced in corporate fundraising/sponsorship and grant applications. Her input will be invaluable. Although we all live at extreme ends of the country we shall be conducting some of our meetings through conference calls which will no doubt be rather challenging!

Some of you will by now have read Joan's recent report (brought back by Jason). She also sent us a quote for the construction of the second storey of the Home. The amount is within the region of £52,000. Joan has expressed a hope that, with more trustees on board, some of our corporate funders might help towards this cost, in the same way that the Italian Airlines have funded the construction of the school. We also hope that we may be fortunate in this respect. We shall certainly be doing our utmost to apply to corporate bodies to sponsor the Home, not only for the building, but for its maintenance and sustenance for the future. We already send £1000 out per month which pays the staff wages and utility bills. We have also recently sent out funds to pay for an industrial floor cleaner and top-loader washing machine, as well as an electric fence, as security is a top priority at the Home. As soon as the school is complete we shall be sending funds to buy desks and chairs, etc. The list, of course, is endless and we need the construction to be complete in order to furnish and maintain the buildings. At present there is very little storage space.

Elizabeth, the matron very kindly supplied us with a report on all the children and we are adding this to our newsletter. You will be pleased to read that 9 out of the 23 children are negative. People ask, if initially a child seems to be HIV positive, how can they then be negative? Apparently, simply put, if the mother has not breast fed the child, then they will make their own antibodies. (Baraka is an example here).

Joan informed me that a supporter has given them a generator and this can fuel the electric fence amongst other things. She also told us that, thanks to the Rotary in Mombasa and a matched funding from the Rotary in the UK it has been possible to purchase a blood screening unit. This will replace the need for a CD4 counter. All the children can be tested initially and should it prove that some of the children require a deeper screening, then this can be done by the CD4 counter at the hospital. The Rotary funds also includes air conditioning which will be installed in the laboratory.

Steve Turner, a landscape gardener, and a colleague of his David, a builder, visited the Home in March and spent two weeks organising the Kenyan building crew to hasten the construction of the school. Judging from his report (which he will share with any of you that are keen to find out more), they worked from dawn till dusk and achieved a tremendous amount of work. More than that, the construction crews were delighted to learn new skills and ways of doing things which will benefit them in the future. Steve and David funded themselves on this trip and our grateful thanks go out to him and David for their hard work and dedication. (picture). He hopes to get out there again later in the year, with possibly a small team. If anyone wants to come on board please email us and we'll pass on your details! (We warn you it won't be a holiday but you'll get a chance to make great friends with all the children and staff! as well as seeing a building rise magically with 30 or more busy Kenyans beavering away in the sweltering heat!)

Jason and Katherine took the children and all the staff on a 2-day safari in Tsavo West. The children were overwhelmed by it all, never having seen elephants and lions and other wild animals in their wonderful country. In some ways they are more privileged than their neighbours!

We get many queries about what to take out to the Home. Joan says that medical supplies are always required and in particular cough medicine, i.e. expectorant (with the recent news on cough medicine being dangerous for the under twos, be mindful of this when buying). Joan is fast running out of room for clothes, stationery and toys, so the money will be used to supply furnishings for the school and clinic. We have asked Joan for a new wish list and we can let people have this once it has been sent to us. Some people want to know what their funds are being used for. This is a difficult one for us, as we can not stipulate what money should be used for. We trust that Joan and her committee use the money for the top priority items.

Our supporters continue to amaze us with their creative ways of raising funds. During the past few months we have had money left in a will: sale of produce and plants: cake stalls: collection instead of wedding or special anniversary presents: funds raised and matched by employers: The Great North Run: Hawaiian Night at a local pub!: Open Days, raffles and donations: non-school uniform day: collections from an oil rig out in the north sea!: the list goes on and on. Thank you so much for your hard work. Joan phoned me the other day - she seems so overwhelmed by everyone's generosity and it moves her to keep going on, even when she is very tired.

Jason has asked if there is anyone out there who can get hold of a magnified computer monitor screen - Size 17" square, but do check this with Jason (via our email). Thank you. Jason is going out there again on 12th May and will bring back up to date news of the Home, the children and Joan. She has missed all the tourists but Monarch will start flying from 1st May, so things are getting back to normal again.

Again all our warm and grateful thanks for your continued support, time and money. Joan could not do this without all of your efforts. You also are truly blessed. Thank you.