



Antokia Children's Charity

(Registered Charity. No. 1107138)

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2009

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support us in these financially difficult times. Without your generosity we could not give disadvantaged children in Uganda the opportunity to go to school, which we believe is the right of every child. It is only through education that they have a chance of improving the quality of their lives and securing future employment.

The personal touch is the hallmark of this charity. Ian and Barbara visited Uganda once again in February at the start of another school year. Lucy Clarke spent 6 months in 2008 as a volunteer working at the primary school, and at the moment one of our supporters is there visiting her own 2 secondary sponsees and meeting the ACC people in Mbarara.

PRIMARY CHILDREN IN MBARARA

The main focus of our support is the Bishop Stuart Primary School in Mbarara, S. W Uganda. Here we enable 49 orphaned and otherwise very disadvantaged children to attend school, by providing their school dues, scholastic requirements, hygiene items, uniforms and, crucially, their lunches. In 2008 ACC built a substantial brick kitchen with wood burning eco-stoves so that children in the school can have a simple cooked lunch every school day. The school has planted an orchard and is growing vegetables to supplement the basic lunch of posho (maize meal) and beans with fruit and spinach, and is now growing eucalyptus and other trees to provide the firewood. We would like to respond to the school's requests for a dining room, which will cost in the region of £15,000. We hope to make this a future project.

The children on the ACC programme are selected by the School Management Committee, which has insights into the local community and the needs of individual children. ACC works directly with the headmaster and staff and we are happy that Hope, the deputy headmistress, has recently agreed to be the ACC agent in Mbarara town, monitoring and supporting not only the primary children but also our individually sponsored students who have gone on to secondary school. The headmaster is a very progressive and creative educationalist and is keen to set up a partnership with a primary school in UK through the DFID Global School Partnership scheme run by the British Council. ACC would be delighted to hear from anyone reading this who has contacts with any school which might be interested. (information from www.globalgateway.org.uk)

In 2008 ACC donated £3,470 for the Primary education of 49 children. This does not include building works.



Old Kitchen 2008



New Kitchen 2008



Hope, new ACC agent

www.antokia.org.uk

VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

All the children of Kabarama Primary School in the hills 60 kms South West of Mbarara town are now able to go to school every day! In our last newsletter we reported that ACC had used donations from several sources, including St James' School in Tunbridge Wells, gradually to build a three classroom block. This means that the children at this underfunded village school no longer have to be taught in the church or in a separate house in the village. The iron sheeting roof has since been donated in memory of Julia Francis, a Kent teacher who worked in Uganda from 2003 – 2006 and who sadly died aged 48 in 2008. We recently received a grant from



Children using unfinished classrooms



3 classroom block with roof 2009

a Swiss-based foundation to complete the building and provide the furniture. This last stage of the work is at present underway, so in the next newsletter we will be able to show the children making FULL use of properly finished classrooms – with plastered walls, window frames, doorframes and doors, and other such “luxuries”. In the meantime, we are including photos of them making use of and greatly enjoying the unfinished, but now fully roofed, building!

In 2008 ACC donated £3,030 towards the construction of three new classrooms.

DISABLED PRIMARY CHILDREN

We continue to support a greatly under resourced residential school for primary children with a range of physical disabilities and learning difficulties. They are always delighted to see us when we visit and send us their letters and drawings. Some of the teachers themselves have physical disabilities and all work in extremely challenging conditions. The Ugandan government pays tuition fees and the teachers' salaries, but it does not cover the residential costs or any of the special requirements of disabled children. We admire the director, a founder member of the school, for his total commitment to the school and the children, and his constant endeavours to improve their living and learning conditions. In 2007 one of our supporters made a special donation to provide playground equipment where there was absolutely none. We would like to add to this now and also to provide some desperately needed, basic facilities for the dormitories. Please let us know if you would like to make a special donation towards these things or any of our other projects. *In 2008 ACC donated £1,250 towards the education of these children.*



Director Mbogo and students



Playground equipment

SECONDARY SPONSORSHIP

ACC has arranged the individual sponsorship of more than 30 children who did well in primary school but who would not have been able to continue to secondary school. They write to their UK sponsors and send their reports at the end of every term. It takes 4 years to study to O level in Uganda and, although this by no means guarantees employment, it makes it more attainable and opens doors to some skills courses. We sponsor children from both the town and village primary schools and this year took on 10 new secondaries from the town and 3 from the village. We are still looking for sponsors for 4 of the town students who started their secondary school in February!

It costs £20 per month to sponsor a secondary child to attend a recommended boarding school, which meets the needs of children from insecure backgrounds. Although the Ugandan government recently introduced Universal Secondary Education, only the basic tuition fees are covered, and the cost of other school dues, scholastic materials, uniform, boarding costs and admin fees still put a secondary education out of reach of children who are as poor as the ones we support.

We donated £8,374, paid by individual sponsors, for secondary education in 2008.

POST SECONDARY SPONSORSHIP

Gift and Patience have been supported by individual sponsors through secondary school and are now studying at university.

Edith is just finishing her 2 year training as a nursery school teacher. She was supported through secondary school and college by Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District.

Gelverse is now approaching his third year of studying medicine at Mbarara University of Science and Technology. Several sponsors share the cost of his training to be a doctor, a greatly needed commodity in Uganda where the ratio of doctors to population is 0.1 to 1,000! (UK is 2.3 to 1,000.)

Evalyne is training to be an electrician and **Godwin** followed in her footsteps when he finished his O levels last year. These practical courses increase the opportunities for employment.

Emmanuel and Alice are 2 students who will finish their O level courses at the end of 2009. Emmanuel's sponsor has already agreed to sponsor him to do a motor mechanic's course. Alice is an exceptionally bright and diligent student - a real high flyer - but she has no family and no home background. Her UK sponsor is not able to sponsor her beyond O level so we are looking for someone who would be able to step in now and sponsor Alice either to stay at school for 2 years and take her A levels or to go on to do a skills course which could lead to employment for her. Please let us know if you could help.

FAMILY SUPPORT

ACC focuses closely on its main aim of providing education for children in Uganda who would otherwise not be able to go to school. However, we sometimes have to be able to respond to those cases where background support of the family is necessary in order to enable the children to go to school. We have previously reported in our newsletters on the situation of Mama Emmanuel's family, where the children were kept out of school to try to find food. She is the widowed mother of four children; she is almost blind, suffers from depression and has absolutely no income. A kind hairdresser in Tunbridge Wells donates all her tips to support Mama Emmanuel, providing an allowance to pay for food and medical costs. Over the last four years she has also financed the building of a new, brick built house and basic furniture, such as beds, mosquito nets, blankets and cooking pots and in February we were able to provide a few more of life's necessities. Once Emmanuel has completed his mechanic's training, he will be the breadwinner.

Two other widows, Josephine and Angela, both with HIV/AIDS are pictured here. ACC supports 4 of their children, and the mothers then manage to do small jobs, though life is extremely hard for them.

In 2008 we donated a total of £830 to family support.



Mama Emmanuel and Daphine



Josephine and Angela



Lucy Clarke 2008

VOLUNTEERS

Lucy Clarke worked in Mbarara for 6 months last year and found many projects to keep her busy. She focused on teaching students (in classes of 100) and doing development work with the teachers at Bishop Stuart Primary School. One of her many positive activities was a workshop she arranged with VSO workers, called *Guidance not Violence*, designed to discourage teachers from corporal punishment, still widespread in Uganda! Lucy also arranged funding from a UK company for an Art competition in secondary schools in Mbarara. The most magnificent work was produced; please see our website for a display. ACC thanks Lucy warmly for all her support. PLEASE tell us if you know of another Lucy out there!

Jason Atmatzidis, a fitness instructor from Tunbridge Wells, has been travelling the world for more than a year and plans to make his last stop in Uganda. If all goes to plan, he will divide his time between our two primary schools and do sport with the children at both. Well, he said he wanted to see the REAL Africa! Now he'll have to learn to play football with a ball made of banana leaves!

FUNDRAISING

We are looking for a volunteer experienced in fundraising. If you have ideas and energy and, having read this, you would like to help our work in Uganda, please get in touch.

2008

SPRING WALK in May raised £225. Our thanks to Sue Skomorowski for sorting out the most beautiful route and to Janet Rutherford and Julia Turnbull for the refreshments.

CHAMPAGNE TEA in December in the Camden Centre Tunbridge Wells raised £1,200. Our thanks to Pat Robson and the storytelling group for their inspirational entertainment.

LUCY CLARKE raised over £5,000 in a variety of ways.

ACC received donations totalling £1,500 **in memory of Julia Francis**, which was used to purchase the iron sheeting for the roofing of the new 3 classroom block at Kabarama Village School.

Additional funds have been received through standing orders and private donations; we are most grateful.

COULD YOU HOST AN EVENT IN 2009 or 2010?

Could you host a social evening, a lunch or a party of some kind – however small – in your own home to raise funds for our children and projects in Uganda? We will gladly support.

Have you thought about including Antokia Children's Charity in your will? Please do. Your money would go where it is so desperately needed and would live on in the education of children.

STANDING ORDER SCHEME

You can help us in our planning by joining our Standing Order Scheme. This is the easy, painless way to provide stability and education for disadvantaged children in Uganda.

We can claim Gift Aid.

If you are interested in this or our Individual Sponsorship Scheme, please get in touch.

We are always looking for mobile phones for Uganda.
Have you or someone you know upgraded recently?



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