



The Mary Wood Trust Newsletter

Charity Number 1144311

June 2017

This newsletter is long overdue and we apologise for this. We are aware how important it is to keep all our donors and supporters up to date with what is happening with the charity. Hopefully, once you have read this, you will realise just how much we appreciate all the support that we receive, from individuals and a couple of trusts, and that with the money that you give us we are making a difference in the lives of those we help.

Oliver and Clare Ramsden visited Kanungu in March this year and much of this newsletter relates to their findings. I would like to remind you that all visits to Uganda, on behalf of the Trust, are paid for by the trustees themselves.

NYAKABUNGO GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL

MWT Sponsored Girls

It is always very rewarding to meet and get to know a little better the girls that we are supporting and these annual visits to Uganda allow us to do that. All the girls we sponsor come from very poor families and have sad stories to tell. Fathers who are drunkards, mothers who are sick, girls who have many siblings that are being looked after by an aged grandparent. Even one girl whose parents were both dead and who has been looking after her two young siblings by herself. All of them are trying hard to scrape a few shillings together, often by working on the land- either theirs or someone else's.

Good education is something that the majority of us in this country just take for granted. That everyone can go to school, that teachers will turn up to teach. However, in Uganda, despite Universal Secondary Education being available, it is often the teachers in the government schools who are discontent, waiting man months to get paid and therefore don't turn up to class. By sponsoring these girls at NGSS, which is a boarding school, and where the teachers are more incentivised, we are at least giving them a chance to learn and we are so grateful to those of you who have decided to help in this way.

Several of our Mary Wood girls are now studying at University and vocational colleges. (You can read about them further on).

Sports

NGSS now has a very keen sports coach, Musa, who also happens to be the Fine Arts Teacher.

Two years ago the school teams were playing barefoot. This changed due to the generosity of one of our supporters. However the trainers that were bought were certainly not the quality that you would expect to last. Despite this they have managed to achieve. It is obvious that the coach is eager to improve the status of sports at the school and he has requested help in buying a number of items that would help achieve this. The cost is about £800. If anyone would like to know more about this then please do get in touch.

Art

As mentioned above, Musa is also the Fine Arts teacher at the school. The MWT have set the girls a challenge to try and produce some artwork that would be suitable to be made into greetings cards or notelets. These would then be printed and sold in the UK. This would be to raise funds for the school and encourage them to see that they can help themselves.

There will be prizes for the creators of the ones that are chosen for printing.

We would be very pleased to hear of anyone who has connections with a printing company or who indeed might like to sponsor this project.

Mary Wood Day

This year it was agreed that Mary Wood Day would be held on the nearest Saturday to March 8th, to allow for Old Girls to attend if they were able. Unfortunately, it clashed with an important celebration at Bwindi Nursing School which meant that several diocesan staff could not come, including Bishop Dan. However, his wife, Mama Florah came instead, which was great.

We were blessed with dry weather which allowed all the sports and games to go ahead without interruption.

The day started with a Thanksgiving Service for Mary Wood- who was the inspiration for this charity. In remembering her we also remembered all strong women who strive to help those less fortunate than themselves and who realise how important education is, for girls especially.

During the offertory, it was very moving indeed to see the generous giving from people who have so very little. Chickens, pineapples, maize, cabbages, sweet potatoes, honey, sugar cane, and then finally a young calf. These were all then auctioned off and the proceeds used to benefit the school. An amazing example of generous giving, from the heart.



The various speeches on that day carried the same theme - the importance of education for girls and the need to encourage girls to stay on at school and not to drop out. Parents were also reminded of their responsibility to discourage early marriage. We have seen a couple of our girls recently who have not completed their education because of this.

The rest of the day was spent enjoying the girls singing and dancing, eating a good lunch, watching various races and playing a short football match. For once the rain did not stop play and it was obvious that football is a cause for much excitement, hilarity and seriousness! Bearing in mind just how needy all the girls at the school are, the MWT had managed to raise some funds to be able to provide some small necessities for everyone. And so the day was completed by a handing out of sanitary towels, hard backed exercise books, bath soap and a pen to everyone. Everyone was very happy indeed.

A perfect end to a perfect day.



Samaritan Fund

There are many girls who struggle each term to provide all the necessary items they need on returning to school each term. This can range from toilet paper, a bucket, nightdress, paper, sanitary towels. At the start of the first term in February 2017 these items cost in total approximately £25. This can be enough to delay a girl coming to school or sometimes be a reason why she doesn't turn up at all. Also during the school year there are some girls who need eye tests or glasses, an emergency trip to hospital, a new uniform skirt. Again, remembering the backgrounds of the girls, they often cannot afford these items. We decided about 9 months ago that we would start this special fund, to be able to provide items when absolutely necessary. The head teacher also has solicited support from some of the ladies in her church, who provide some small essential items. We have been blessed with support for this as you will see further on.

Dining Shelter News

The PTA along with the Mary Wood Trust have provided a shelter for the girls so that they no longer need to eat their food in the rain or take their food back to their dormitories. During our visit the floor was nearing completion. Parents have worked hard to share their skills and materials to make this happen. Well Done!



RUTH MEMORIAL NURSERY SCHOOL, KIHIIHI

It is very rewarding to visit RMNS as the children are so welcoming and loving, and eager for hugs or just to hold one's hand. The 4 teachers, under the directorship of Ephraim Tumwesigye, provide a happy and safe environment for the many orphans that attend this nursery school. Aged between 3 and 9 or 10, the 65 or so children learn the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. In fact, some of the maths lessons written up on the board looked very advanced to me! The double desks that we have provided in the past are still in use (although I think these will need upgrading in the next year or two, the children are now benefitting from porridge every day, occasional pancakes and recently milk twice a week. Although the teachers are not qualified as we might expect they certainly have love and enthusiasm and this shows when the children sing and dance for us. The stationary that we provide thanks to donations from a church in Chelmsford, allow Ephraim to set tests and provide exercise books and pencils as needed. Once again we were able to donate a couple of footballs to the school, much to the delight of the children, and also buy 3 mattresses so that the youngest children no longer have to nap on the hard floor. We are particularly grateful to St James Place Foundation for their recent grant which will allow two unfinished classrooms to be completed, will buy replacement kitchen equipment and mugs and plates and will also provide some outdoor play equipment for the children to enjoy. However, for the children to be able to play safely at the front of the school, the ground has had to be levelled and re-grassed and fenced in. We are so grateful to those who have responded positively and given so generously to allow these needy children to learn, play and be nourished in a safe and healthy environment.



NEWS OF PAST NGSS SPONSORED GIRLS

It would be misleading to say that all the girls we have sponsored at NGSS have gone on to do great things. Sometimes we have been disappointed when we have heard that one or two have dropped out before completing their secondary education, and become pregnant, got married or indeed just decided that they are not really sure what to do with their lives. Of course this is not just in Uganda that this happens and when one realises the very poor backgrounds the girls come from and the great pressures on the girls to provide for the family, it perhaps makes it more understandable. As mentioned above, the main message of the speeches at Mary Wood Day was to encourage both girls and their parents to realise the importance of education. However, we do believe that even with the girls who have dropped out early, they will have learnt more than their mothers and grandmothers before them. Education, at whatever stage reached, can never be taken away.

Florence is mother to Clare. Having been awarded a degree in Business Administration she is now studying to complete her Certified Public Accounting Training and also working full time with Uganda Wildlife Authority. She is a determined young woman and hopefully will achieve her goals.

Pheonah is married to Alex, who is soon to complete his theology training. They have two young sons Memory and Messiah. She works part time with Compassion and also does some small sewing projects. Hopefully by the end of this year they will be assigned a church to look after.

Mariet finishes her degree in Records and Information Management this year.

Agatha is just about to complete a degree in Library and information Science.

Pamela is studying for a degree in Business Administration.

Noredah completes her diploma in Social Work and Administration and plans to convert this to a degree with two years further study.

Doreen is in her third year studying at Kabale University.

Joan plans to start a business degree course in August.

Joan hopes to be accepted at Bishop Barham University this next semester.

Asia is in her second semester of Midwifery Training at Bwindi Nursing School.

Medius has just started a vocational course in Electric Installation.

We are understandably proud of what 'our' girls are achieving and it is a great encouragement to all.

We have been very fortunate indeed to have received help up to now with the university places, from a couple of private sponsors.

However, we are not always able to help all the girls that come to us after their time at NGSS.

We have set up a university/further education fund, well aware that vocational skills may be more suitable for some girls.

If you are interested at all in helping to support this then please do get in touch. University fees are approx. £1250 per year, Enrolled Midwife qualification approx. £2000 per course, and a 2 - year vocational course, leading to a certificate, approx. £800.

NYAKATARE HEALTH CENTRE AND DENTAL CLINIC

The Dental Clinic now has a new dentist, Peter Muhenda, appointed in March this year. He is a young dental officer who qualified from Mulago Hospital. Within 8 days of his arrival he was part of an outreach team that travelled to Myjere, a distant church of the Diocese. The church building was used as the community centre and many people came to benefit from the service being offered. Peter saw 24 patients, most of whom needed extractions. 80 people were tested for HIV and malaria. Some husbands and wives came together which was rather heartening. The results were given on the spot - there was only one positive result. For HIV but then even one is too many. The young woman was counselled as soon as she had the results. Mothers brought their babies to be weighed and immunised and those in need were given a mosquito net. Many baby clothes, donated by kind young mums in Wilmslow, were much appreciated by the many new mothers. This outreach was also a time for health education- teaching people how to brush their teeth properly, talking about contraception and family planning, and giving encouragement to the many who turned up on how to eat healthily.



Looking around Nyakatatare Health Centre itself, it was very encouraging to see that running water is now connected to the laboratory, making life so much easier and more practical for the technicians. We must thank MMN supporters for this. We have also been able to help provide a new latrine and washing area for the patients at the clinic although there is a shortfall of about £700 which the clinic will have to find.



MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER - DR PETER WOOD

OTHER NEWS

Ann Gover and Marcham church



Clare Ramsden and Inner Wheel

Clare was invited by the Inner Wheel Club of Alderley Edge and Bollin Valley to give a talk on the MWT at their International Service Dinner on Feb 14. It was a great evening with a delicious meal and a wonderful raffle. The proceeds of this raffle (£200) and a further £300 from an Inner Wheel organised Millinery Evening in May at Hoopers Department Store in Wilmslow, were all generously donated to the Samaritan Fund of the Mary Wood Trust - to help provide the various necessities that many of the poorest girls cannot afford at school.

We are very grateful to Liz Norris who arranged all this and who presented the cheque to Clare in April.



The Mary Wood Trust relies entirely on your support. Thanks to all who give so generously.

If you would like to know about setting up a standing order or taking advantage of Gift Aid then please do get in touch - through our website www.marywoodtrust4uganda.org

Or send an e-mail to info@marywoodtrust4uganda.org

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