

Bethany Newsletter November 2015

Dear Supporter,

Firstly we are delighted to tell you that our new school was formally registered in July this year which means we can start registering our children for their exams etc.

The School development so far:

The school is reaching the end of its first academic year (Jan to Dec). The last few months since registration in July have been a trying time for our new school as our UK trained teachers have had to adjust to the Tanzanian syllabus and of course this was their first full time teaching job. It won't be until next year (Nov) that our school holds its own national exams on site. Fortunately our numbers are very low at 59 at our Primary school (with another 48 at the local State run Secondary school). However, in December we intend accepting 45-50 of the poorest children from our local village to start in pre-school, reception and std 1 to supplement our full time resident children. Unfortunately we are unable to take older children as we are an English Medium School and the older children would not have time to be able to learn the subjects in English. Our intention is to take one child per family to give that family a chance of having at least one child who might be able to go on to succeed at secondary school and then high school and receive enough education to obtain a job which will support the rest of the family. We will not charge fees as the children we choose will be from the very poorest families often being looked after by their grandparents or single mums but hope for a small contribution (for uniforms) whenever possible. Experience has shown that even if only a small contribution is made then the education offered will be better valued and the child will be encouraged by the guardian making the contribution. We hope to accept young children in the ratio of two girls to one boy, this is due to the greater vulnerability of girls and also the realisation that girls become the change makers in any society.

Secondary school children:

This year we have no students in form 4 so this year we have no school leavers. Sadly we have lost 3 of our girls through inappropriate behaviour and they have been returned to their extended families. In the new academic year (Jan 2016) we will have 48 students at secondary school

Students in the UK:

This year we have only 4 students who will all finish in June next year. Three of them; Nkamba, Elizabeth and Stella will finish their two year diploma course and Fatuma will finish her degree course. They will return to Bethany Tanzania to become teachers. Our thanks go to Blackburn College for giving our girls this opportunity.

Students at Colleges/Universities:

We have several students studying at various places. Elijah is now in his second year at the Dar-es-Salaam University. Daudi Wambura starts a 2 year teacher training course. Emmanuel Mtaki starts two years at High School, Emmanuel Shaban and Ntare are now in their second year at High school and hope to do well enough to go on to University.

Teachers accommodation block:

The new teacher's accommodation is now built complete with roof. Hopefully this will be finished early in the new year (2016) ready to provide for our ten UK trained teachers. The unit has 6 bedrooms each with a washbasin and each bedroom is big enough to hold 2 beds. There are also two WC's and two showers in the unit. There is a large lounge where teachers can do their lesson planning etc. We hope to install solar electricity in this unit enough to provide power for lights, laptops and printers so that work can continue even through the many power cuts suffered in Tanzania.

Further 4 Classrooms: We had hoped to have enough funds to complete the footings, foundations and concrete slabs for the next four classrooms however, at the moment we do not have enough funds.

Water provision: We still have problems with our water pumps. At the moment (Nov 2015) we are in the rainy season and the solar pump will not work on cloudy days and the mains power is off most of the day. If no one turns the mains pump on at night there is no water the following day!

Maintenance: The climate in Tanzania is harsh and the storms are often tropical with violent thunderstorms. This causes problems with soil erosion and we are constantly digging ditches and culverts to divert water so that it can flow to the lake without doing any damage to our buildings and roadways.

New site for older boys: We are looking at the possibility of renting a large house approx 60 kilometres from Bethany where we could accommodate our older secondary school boys.

A look back and to the future: From a vision in 1989 to the first small building in 1991 to the present we have travelled a road of set backs and disappointments with the occasional highlight. Some names of government officials we remember with sadness as the people responsible for making life very difficult for the children at Bethany denying them the opportunities of a better education by closing down our first attempt at educating on site and stopping some of our girls from coming to England for a better education. However we have weathered the obstacles and now have secured our land which covers over 30 acres and have 9 buildings on the Bethany site and 5 buildings on the schools site. Our short term vision is to complete the school (8 classrooms) which will have the capacity to hold between 160-320 children. Our long term vision is to build a secondary school and teacher training college. We would also hope to increase the capacity of our children's home over the next few years to accommodate up to 200 children.

FINANCE

We continue to rely on individuals monthly donations and various events to support our work and wanted to let you know of the progress being made. We felt it important to say thank you for all your faithful support over the years. Without you none of this would have been possible.