

Newsletter

*Harambee
For Kenya*



No 44 Dec 16

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

I am sure you are thinking that this is rather soon after the last Newsletter. Well you are not wrong! We were a little behind with the last one and so we are now catching up.

There has been excitement all round both here and in Kenya which started with an early Christmas for the Meru boys and ending with exam results in December. More of this through the newsletter. But for those that do not see what is happening on our facebook page we would just like to say a big thank you to all of you who have supported our little charity over the past few years.

In 2017 we celebrate 10 years on 1st February. It has been difficult but worthwhile; fun but heart wrenching on occasion. We have seen bigger boys move out finding work and a home to live as well as little boys being rescued from unscrupulous people including their own parents. We have shed emotions from crying to laughing both with and about the boys. But that is life isn't it? But one thing we can say is that the children we have in our homes are happy and grateful. We had a message from Dennis at Meru, who had asked the boys to write letters to us to tell them how they felt about where they lived. Dennis commented that they had said ***"this is one of the best places they found love and people who are willing to take care of them and share in their pain"***. This is all a credit to everyone involved in the charity which includes you. Isn't it nice to hear that they are happy!

We have a number of events we hope to attend in 2017 but if you know of any special shows you think we could attend, especially Scout activities, then kindly let us know as soon as possible. But the race night is the first event. If you cannot come, you could always support us by "buying" a horse for £5. If your horse wins the race you will receive £20. We also have 5 races left to sponsor. This costs £20. So if you wish to take part other than attending please contact us. By the same score if you want to book a seat for yourself or your whole family then contact us. It is a fun evening and children of all ages enjoy the event.

RACE NIGHT. 25TH FEBRUARY 2017. AT HEATHFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW. £10 ADULT, £7 CHILD UNDER 14YRS

PRICE INCLUDES PIE/FISH/SAUSAGE & CHIP SUPPER - BAR APPLIED FOR

H4KINFO@GMAIL.COM

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Project News Nyakoe

Exciting things have been happening in Nyakoe in the last week. We had two bigger boys, Carlos and Reuben who had taken their end of secondary school exams, known as KCSE. These exams are the gateway to University, or a good

college, also known as Institutes in Kenya. If a young person does not quite make the grade for Uni, they can go to an institute and study and gain a Diploma. Once passed they then progress to University if they so wish or just get a better job than they would get with just the KCSE.

Apparently, the average age for 1st year University students is 20yrs old. This is possibly partly due to the school system whereby, if the student does not pass end of year exams, they are not moved on to the next year group but have to remain where they were for another year. We have seen this happen with a few of our young people. HOWEVER, since they have settled in the house and the routines, we have not had this happen this year, which is really good.



Carlos is 21 yrs old and was on the streets for 4 years. He nearly died twice, once from a serious injury due to being beaten and the other when he slept in the wrong place and nearly drowned due to severe rain causing torrents of water. While he was on the streets he sniffed glue to take the pain away and ate food from the dustbins. His father died in a road accident and his mother turned to drink so was incapable of caring for him. He has been one of our boys since the charity started in 2007, when he was nearly 11yrs old. He said from the start that *"When I grow up, I would like to help those who come here"* (meaning the safe house). He said to us that if he

was given a chance, he promised he would work hard and become an Engineer. We made passing comments to him two years ago that we could really do with one of the boys becoming a lawyer so we can have help when needed. We thought no more of it and then last year he said he had changed his mind and would like to become a lawyer. Whatever he decides to do we will all be as proud as punch! He got the results of his exams and was ecstatic as were we all. Carlos grades were as follows:- Mean grade B- English C- Kiswahili C+ Maths C Biology B- Chemistry B- History B+ Religious studies B Business C. So by getting a Mean grade of B- means he automatically gets a scholarship to University, which is about 70% of the cost of his education.

Carlos received sponsorship for secondary school from students in Sackville School, East Grinstead headed up by their year head, Mr Latus. Carlos is totally grateful to them for this opportunity and wrote letters regularly saying exactly that. In his letter he says *"I have been in school for the last 4 years and my dream has come true for I made it to University. You've made my dream come true.....Without your support guys, I could have been nowhere but now I am somewhere with great opportunities in life"*. He explained how the boys in the safe house were singing Victory songs to him and Reuben. He went on to say *"Everybody in H4K is now aiming to reach higher education and keep safe house home to be and help more street children have a future"*.

We always need sponsors for secondary education. Next year we have four boys in need of sponsorship for secondary school for next year (they take exams Nov 2017) So if you would like to help them succeed, please contact us.



Meet Reuben. He is the other lad who should be going to University. He passed his exams this year with the following grades. Mean Grade C English D Kiswahili C Maths D Biology C Chemistry C- History A- Religious studies A- Agriculture B-. Although the automatic scholarships are given to those with Mean Grades A to C+ and Reuben managed C, Andrew (Kenyan trustee and retired teacher) says that because he got two A- grades he should get to University. The next question is whether he will get sponsorship? At the time of writing this we cannot be sure so please pray he is successful.

Reuben is nearly 20yrs old. Both his parents died so is a complete orphan. He was on the streets for three years and in that time smoked Bhang (Cannabis) and sniffed glue. Harambee for Kenya was asked to take him in by the local chief because he had nowhere to go after he left a detention centre, where he had been placed because of stealing. He struggled for a long time with relationships and we wondered if he would ever settle. But once he realised that he could do well at school, he worked hard at primary and gained a place at a good secondary school.

In his first half term, two UK trustees visited him at his school and were staggered at the conditions he was expected to live in. The food was appalling, the classrooms were a disgrace and the library was awful. In fact both trustees probably had more books between them than the school did. He was sleeping in a dormitory which although was brick built had dirt floors, the boys did not have mosquito nets and as for the washrooms they were worse than using a pit latrine in a field. This we found amazing as the fees were higher than those of the school where Carlos was going. I must explain that he was allocated this school because he had such a good mark in his primary exams and it was supposed to be a better school. The decision was made that he should leave immediately and be transferred to Carlos' school. But he had to finish the half term as it was so close to the end. Once he moved, he never looked back and grew although his experience certainly set him back to start with.

When he first came into the house he wanted to be a driver but as he realised his potential he changed his choice to become a Doctor. However, very recently he has changed again and wants to be a lawyer - we will see! So we now await to see if he can realise his dream. His sponsors, Margaret, Derrick and their family, are delighted at his achievement and he wrote to them following the results saying "Surely, I would like to thank you for your effort you have made, and you have brought me such far. Now hopefully I will join a course and become a lawyer in future".

Just like all the boys who are sponsored through school, he is very grateful and throughout his schooling has encouraged other boys to do well, even helping them to understand their homework when he can. As with Carlos, the boys are looking up to him and wish to do as well. So we pray that Reuben will be able to continue his education to realise his dream.

PLEASE PRAY

For those that do, please pray for the national emergency that is happening at this time in Kenya. There is about the drought. It has been described by friends as the worst they have ever seen or experienced.

This of course affects everyone, including our projects because the prices of food are hiked up as food becomes more scarce. We have some supplies because our guys try to buy in bulk and grow some things for themselves. But it will hit us anyway because we cannot grow everything needed.

Of course if families are struggling too, then this can and probably will lead to more children running to the street and so it goes on.

The boys have had a lovely time over Christmas having had their long break from school. Andrew sent us photographs of them preparing for Christmas. They still put the Christmas tree up that we took them with one difference, they put it up outside! On top of that, how many would be vandalised? Anyway it is lovely to see that the boys are still decorating the tree and celebrating Christmas which is something that didn't use to happen.

All the boys have done well at school at the end of term with each and everyone progressing to the next year group. This is great to see as initially a fair few had to remain in their previous class for another school year. This shows us all how settled they are at home as well as at the school they are in, The teachers have been very understanding too which is a bonus. In the past we have had to remind them that some of their behaviours are from circumstances they had found themselves in and they had to be encouraged to think positively and see that if they try, they will have a future. Even in school they have experienced rejection because it takes quite a long time for people to realise that these children are a product of their circumstance and they may need time to accept and understand the discipline needed in school. We had one lad who is a mischief, there is no doubt about that, so sitting still can be difficult for him. When the teacher left the room, he got up to do something and she came in behind him and clipped him round the ear rather hard.

Before you jump up and down, it is an offence to hit children in Kenya, as it is here but it still happens out there unfortunately. We made quite sure that the Head knew what had happened and advised him accordingly that we would not tolerate this with our boys. He spoke to her to remind her of the children's situation, how patience is required and this was an assault that should not happen in school. We know it will happen again and again as it is a cultural thing, but we just have to try and keep on top of it.



Our Thanks go to the following for

their Support.

Mick & Mary Wilding

Trevor & Gillian Clark

Joe Bucht

Pam Aldis

Richard Bright & Bognaston Run.

Rob & Jan Kendall

Welcome Baptist Church.

Maresfield WI

GLSE Scouts.

And all our regular supporters



Picture sent from Kenya, sorry about the quality

Meru

We have heard that the boys are doing well although a number of them have had colds at the moment. All the boys are back at school and again, all have moved up a year group too which is really great. One of our boys who

ran to the street has returned which is great news although he is struggling with his emotions at the moment. I am not sure what is needed to help him at the moment but when we are out there we will speak with him and try and do some work with him to help him express his feelings. Then we may be able to find the right help for him. He has always been quite an insular lad and keeps himself to himself so it can be difficult to get out of him what he is thinking or feeling. Hopefully we can give you some positive news in the next newsletter.

Christmas was a joyous time in Meru according to the Kenyan Directors and Dennis, who looks after the boys. We had done Christmas in October in order to give them an idea of what we do in the UK, leaving the decorations and the tree behind too. We have received pictures that show how they decorated the room and were told they had fun playing games and celebrating this special day.



Pete and Josh made this stable for the nativity scene while in Kenya in October.



The boys were all registered as Scouts by Lewisham District, when they



were in Kenya in the summer. Dennis is doing regular meetings with them to teach them different skills. In Kenya they do a lot of marching both in Scouts and in school. Our boys have now been included in doing the flag break at school and whenever there is anything to do with Scouts they are asked to join in. They look smart in their uniform don't they?