

Helping the children of Africa



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Boo Charity Update

It's been some time since the last update, however as it happens we are now full on into the push to help Africa through the G8 and the mighty Bob Geldoff.

With these images so vigorously painted in our minds it could not be a better time to remind people of what we are doing in a small but effective way to help this beautiful continent.

It was Sarah who was first touched by Africa and the children as she helped save a young boy called Amos from near death, today he flourishes as a young in his education and enjoying football. It was Sarah who recognised that these children were poor and vulnerable beyond comprehension and whom Sarah wanted us to help in her memory.

I feel we are achieving Sarah's wishes as her spirit lives on through Boo. Still we need your help to encourage more people to join us in providing the children who so want to learn new ways and be given the opportunity for a brighter future.

Project Update 4/7/2005

Building the - Seed of Hope this is the name of our girl's college project, which is based in the village of Nyamache in the North West province of Kiisi, Kenya. The project is really starting to flourish and bear the fruits of the hard work which has been put in from the kind people here in the UK raising the funds to the labors both male and female in constructing the classrooms through to our partners at Vision Africa and full time Kenyan based team members Deborah, John and Vera Packard who created the strategy and have brought together a local community team to run our project. Our project has been modeled on that of the Nairobi City - Seed of Hope, which has been running for over 3 years.

The building work at the college is complete with a new block of flushing toilets, which was kindly completed thanks to the kind donations from the **Bournemouth (North) Rotary Club**. We also have a makeshift cooking area where the girls receive a daily meal; this will need to be improved once we have the additional girls join in September.

Currently 50 girls are attending full time education and are now in their third term of a two-year program. Deborah comments; on how amazing it is to see the girls develop through the three vital areas; life-skills, vocational skills & Micro- business skills. These are the skills that we hope will give the students the ability to be self-sufficient on graduation from the center.

It is also essential for the girls to improve on the basic elements such as Math's, English and their native language in order to improve communication ready for life after the Seed of Hope. Each week the girls learn life skills such as sewing, horticulture, cookery, art & crafts plus they learn about self-respect, respect for others and the environment.

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The Seeds are Growing

They are now growing a lot of their own food, which is very helpful as it allows some of the food budget to be reallocated to things such as class supplies. They have been growing green vegetables such as cabbage and kale and they are about to plant potatoes and onions. The land is very fertile, and this will really benefit the center.

The students all sat end-term exams in March/April, which were marked by the staff in Nairobi. The staff that marked the exam is the same staff who compiled the syllabus and who trained the teachers from Nyamache. The exam results showed that the students had improved since the training courses began in November, which was encouraging. However, there is room for improvement on both the side of the students and teachers.

We are currently implementing strategies to bring this improvement. There are still some students who are struggling with some of the academic work but we are continuing extra tuition, which is really assisting them. We are rewarding the two students with the highest grades with a trip to Seed of Hope Nairobi for one week. This is very exciting for them as they have never been to Nairobi. Also at Seed of Hope, Nairobi they will be able to observe and experience the standards that we are trying to implement at Nyamache. We hope that this will be a rewarding and motivational visit for them. The girls in Nairobi are also excited about meeting some of their fellow students, whom they have heard us talk about but have never met.

Results & community participation

Following the compilation of exam results, we were able to send each guardian a progress report. This reports informs the guardian of the students' performance, their behavior, their attitude and any other relevant information. It is very important that we maintain a good relationship with the guardians of our students. They are an important part of our team in that they are with the girls in the evenings and at the weekends, during the holidays and after they graduate. The guardians are really in a position to influence the girls and we have to encourage them to be a positive influence.

During Deborah Packard's last visit to Nyamache, a very productive meeting was held with all the local chiefs and councilors. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the enrolment process for the new intake. It is very important that we co-operate with the local authorities. A summary of the meeting and the new process for enrolment has been circulated to all local authorities. We hope that student interviews will take place on Monday 3rd October 2005 and classes will begin for the new students on Monday 10th October. The intake will be a further fifty girls.

Rewards & brighter futures

The reward systems that have been initiated in Nyamache over the past six months have proven to be very effective. We have seen that the girls like to work towards a goal, this not only motivates them to work harder but encourages them to work in teams.

On Deborah's last visit she was able to take new clothes for every student. They got so excited! It was lovely to watch their faces light up as they tried on new clothes! These girls have so little; clothes and shoes are a luxury. It is a privilege to be able to help them in this way.

The two-year training program as mentioned above involves learning theory as, they practice those skills and their training culminates in a two-month long work attachment. The majority of our students require in-depth and long-term counseling; all of them require constant encouragement. There are many different and vital aspects to our program. Through all of these elements we hope to prepare the students for a bright future. We hope to prepare their hearts so that a seed of hope may grow and

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flourish there. We hope to give them the tools and the character so that they may face challenges positively and with the ability to overcome. We hope to give them the tools and the character so that they can fight their own way out of poverty.

Their future is bright, but it is very challenging and also frightening. Most of them will go on to start their own business, a huge task but one, which they are willing to tackle.

They depend upon your support

We continue to depend on sponsorship for our survival. There are currently three ways in which individuals from all over the world assist us through sponsorship. These individuals are the ones who make our project possible. It is only through this vital support and generosity that we are able to feed, educate, shelter & care for our students.

Many of our sponsors choose to support an individual girl. This pays for their educational resources, toiletries, food, and electricity and makes a contribution towards staffing. Just £15 a month covers all of this.

Others choose to support a particular need. There are many costs in a center such as Seed of Hope that are neither constant nor predictable. For example healthcare and maintenance expenditure. Some make contributions to allow us to cope with these expenses. These contributions vary in amount but are all very valuable to us.

Some of our sponsors may choose to support the graduating girls as they set up in business. Just £150 is enough capital for five students to begin their own business. This is a very worthwhile donation; it really helps the girls as they make their first step to a brighter future. Some sponsor part of this capital cost and others contribute the entire amount. We have found that this is a very appealing way for businesses from other parts of the world to support us. £150 can be all that is required to compliment their skills as the foundation for the future.

There is never a quiet day at Seed of Hope, and every day is different. It is most certainly an exciting and challenging place to be. It is amazing to watch as seeds of hope are planted, nourished and encouraged to grow. Teachers and counselors plant these seeds, the girls plant these seeds for each other, sponsors plant these seeds, and donors and other partners plant these seeds. It is a wonderful privilege to both plant and to watch the seeds grow.

AGM

We held our first AGM on the 13th March, which was well attended. Report can be viewed on the Web site www.boo-charity.org

We are searching for a suitable candidate to help from the local area, ideally someone who has taken early retirement with a passion to help others and fully conversant with computers. This person will help maintain our updates and drive activities for fund raising.

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SPONSORS

Wessex PLC

Wessex PLC has adopted Boo, as it's main charity to support. To do this last year they provided all employees the opportunity to demonstrate why they should be considered the chance to go to Kenya through a series of presentations. Three likely candidates were finally selected who then presented in front of a panel including the MD, colleagues & myself. It was a very close run competition and finally Rachel Hadfield was selected to lead all Boo activities within Wessex and to participate in a trip to Kenya.

Rachel and Wessex had made huge progress raising £960 from a challenge called the 10/10. This is where Wessex handed all staff at a monthly review meeting a £10 note asking them to find ways in which to use this money to generate extra cash to donate to Boo.

The 10/10 resulted in all sorts of ideas from baking and selling cakes, raffling a jar of sweets and alcohol to the more bizarre Christmas party antics where a young lady received bets to eat a whole pot of mint sauce Crazzzzzzzzzy. Rumor also has it that the Wessex girls clubbed together to sponsor two lads to kiss, what ever turns you on girls!!! If it raises money then that's what counts.

Wessex have also gained 13 employees as regular child sponsors and the company is matching £1 / £1 each donation which now totals £360 per month.

Rachel Hadfield has now moved on from Wessex to a new life in the East of England and is remaining in contact with Boo Charity. I would like to thank Rachel for all her support and we wish Rachel all the best for her new venture. Wessex have now appointed Michele Harrison who also made a fantastic presentation at the same time and Michele will be visiting our project later this year.

Wessex have made an outstanding contribution and present a great model for other companies to follow, should you wish to get your company involved in the same way Gareth Sampson would be please to discuss further at: gsampson@wessex-group.co.uk

Child Sponsorship

We now have 35 of the current 50 children sponsored. We require a further 65 sponsors to include the new intake in October.

Events

Thames Boat Trip – 16th July

Rachel Hadfield and friend Liz have organised an evening boat trip on the Thames. The evening includes a live acoustic guitar duo, DJ, entertainer and buffet. All tickets are sold out we wish everyone a fun packed evening.

Vision Africa – The Kenya Experience - Sunday 14th August

Vision Africa Partners, John & Vera Packard are here in the UK for a short time and will be visiting the South Coast. We will be holding an afternoon tea with the Packard's at the Hicks household in Amberwood, Bistern Close, Burley. This will be a great afternoon to hear first hand all about life in Kenya battling daily to support children in the slums to helping educate teenagers in the colleges.

To book your afternoon tea please contact me at russell.hicks@higar.com or 07816 585469

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Boo Ball 05 - 12th November

This year's ball is taking place at the Highcliff Marriott Hotel in Bournemouth on Saturday 12th November. Tickets £45.00 each booking through carolinevanderwelle@hotmail.co.uk or vickywolfe583@hotmail.com

Finally

Thank you so much for listening and for all your support. I hope you can see the progress, which has been made and can encourage others to join.

Through Boo we have developed a fantastic network of supporters and friends and look forward to some very exciting fun events. It's fantastic to be achieving 98% of funds direct to the children and to see a sustainable education program building brighter futures.

Please if you have any ideas or comments contact myself, one of the contacts above or Ian Price (Chairman) at ian.price20@btinternet.com

Yours sincerely

Russell

Russell Hicks
Secretary - Boo Charity

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Charity registration Number: 1100519

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