



The Don McMath Foundation

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – July 2017

Charity number: 1100164

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Hi All

From Anne:

"I cannot say that 2017 has been a good year, because it has been one of the hardest years so far. On the positive side pupils are doing well and we got excellent results from the inspectors on the way that the school was run."

The most serious matter in the history of the school so far occurred in April.

Just before Anne was due to return to the UK in April one of the students approached her and said that Gambia University said he had not paid his fees, so Anne gave him a copy of the receipt that the headmaster, Mr Jeng, had given to her. He went back to the University and they told him it was a counterfeit receipt. After the student reported the matter to the police it turned out that Mr Jeng had been misappropriating money not just from University fees but also for NUSRAT senior school fees. We expect the total amount to be about £1,200, the unpaid NUSRAT fees alone come to at least D30,000 (£500).

Mr Jeng has been arrested and admitted the charges and is currently on Bail.

Up until now Mr Jeng had seemed to us to be an excellent headmaster so trustees and staff are all very shocked by this.

Anne suspended Mr Jeng on the last day of term just before she was due to return to the UK. As the school could not be left rudderless she cancelled her flight home to sort things out. As a temporary measure she has now appointed two of our senior teachers to share the Head teachers responsibilities. All money is now being handled by Mr Ousman Sawo our School Administrator who has been with us from the beginning.

For the first time ever the charity is paying Anne for her cancelled flight, we are very proud of the fact that all trustees pay their own expenses when travelling to the Gambia but this is an extraordinary situation.



Some very sad news, Mr Touray, our Grade 3 teacher passed away in May. He had been on sick leave for some months with a chest infection. Apart from his salary the school was giving him financial aid for doctors and medicine. Unfortunately he had a stroke and was partially paralysed. Anne went to see him and he was slowly recovering but after she returned to the UK she received an email to say he had passed away. He was only 29 years old.

PASTORAL CARE

A pastoral care service has been set up, with two of our teachers. Mrs Boye and Mrs Jallow. The pupils were all given a letter informing them that this was a confidential service and they could come and discuss anything. The only time that confidentiality would be breached was if they or someone else was at risk.

A lot of the time it will be minor issues, but we have been forced to refer a few cases to the Child Protection Agency.

Since the change of Government we are able to tell the children what their human rights are, and discussions are held with each of the classes about this.

Any expenses of the Pastoral Care unit are paid by our Hardship fund. This fund also feeds a few pupils at break time and pays fares for some of our Nusrat students. We have many pupils who have lost their parents and are being brought up by Grandparents or other family members who have very limited income



On Friday 10th March 2017 the school held their 2nd biennial Graduation. Alan & Cathy King, two of our sponsors attended, as well as Heads from other schools and Mrs Cardos our Gambian trustee.

A poem written by Abdouraham Barry and read by Sonna Sanneh was a tribute to Mr John. They are both ex-pupils of DMF and graduates of Nusrat. The poem was read in both Local language and English. It was very moving and many of the students and parents were in tears.



We had several visits to the school in December and visitors have donated pens, pencils, posters etc. to the school.

Guy & Wendy Barry came with their friends Darren & Jo. Jo works for Tesco's and she brought many Tesco sport bags with her. These were given out to the pupils.

Helen & David Henderson also brought out school stationery and some French posters that came in useful.

Jasmine Kay-Moyle who works at Wood Ley Primary School Stowmarket sends a shipment each year to the school containing school resources and children's clothes and in January we received 6 boxes of such items.



Mick and Judy visited the school in February and were taken with the difference in peoples attitudes since the change of president. For the first time people were happy to talk about politics without continually looking over their shoulders to see if any of the security forces were listening. While they were there they visited The Swallow School with Anne and Ousman. We have had several of their Grade 6 pupils come to the school and take our exams and we have offered places in Upper Basic to three of them.

All schools now have to have to display their mission and vision statement



Many thanks are due to Debbie Caddy for sharing the proceeds of her fashion show between the school and St Michael's Church. £300 was donated to us.

We decided that this year instead of a large garden party we would hold a small gathering at 76 Manor Road to coincide with the Verwood Carnival. The event was limited to about 25 friends and we



managed to make over £800. Barclays Bank matched £750 of this bringing the total to £1600.

Clive Grove also handed over The Rotary Club of Verwood's cheque for their sponsorship of 7 children at the school.

We would also like to thank several local Verwoodians who donated items for the school, including 5 office chairs, DVD players and DVDs, mobile phones, craft books and other items. They all left Verwood on 20th June, many thanks to Baboucarr from the shipping company Money Pipe.



[We need more sponsors](#)

We currently have 63 children without sponsors. Please pass this newsletter on to all your friends to see if any are interested in **sponsoring. It's still just £60 a year (Just £5 per month per child).**

Please note the website address: www.donmcmath.org and the email address: info@donmcmath.org. You can also reach Anne and Mick via: anne@donmcmath.org and mick@donmcmath.org.

If anyone who currently receives this newsletter through the post is now on email could you please let us know your address so we can email you future newsletters as this will cut down on our costs. Thank you all for your support.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath –31st July 2017