

Don McMath Foundation

Newsletter

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January 2003

Dear All

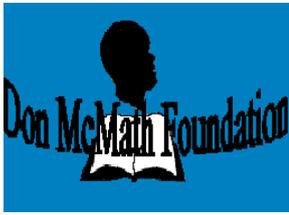
WE OPENED THE SCHOOL ON THE 6TH JANUARY 2003. SEE PICTURES ABOVE - Me outside the school & our first class with teacher.

I managed to get a teacher & assistant on the 2nd Jan & we spent the Friday going through everything at the school & then opened on the Monday, with 30 children. It was all a bit rushed but the children turned up in their best clothes on the Monday and we were under way. I could not believe how good these children were, no usual first day tears, they were just excited to be attending school.

You have to bear in mind that these children do not speak English, have never had toys & most of them do not know how to use a normal toilet. We are having to supervise them with the toys and show them how to play with them, if they get too excited they have 5 minutes time out to calm down and then they are allowed to play again. As most of these children use hole- in- the ground toilets, we realised that they had to be shown how to use it but we could have a problem with them keep pulling the handle. I would be paying for a plumber each week, because this would seem a good game, so they are not allowed to pull the handle, the assistant does that.

I am very proud of our new school, because all of you that sponsor a child have contributed to the making of this, and you should feel proud of your achievements too. The number of children that get a place is dependant on the number of sponsors we can get, so if you think any of your friends and/or family would be interested in sponsoring a child please tell them about the school. I already have a waiting list for the second class! We now have 38 paid up sponsors and would like to at least double this number.

Since the school has been opened we have had a few sponsors visit it. James Cook & Jules, Joyce, Christine & Bob Gale and Amanda & Sue from Lavender Lodge. (which I highly recommend if any of you are looking for accommodation in the Gambia). They all seemed impressed. We are having more sponsors and potential sponsors arriving over the next couple of months, Vera, Julie and Sylvia Davey, Mick and Judy McMath, Graham Cook, Frank and Rosemary Jones will all be visiting and I'm looking forward to showing them the school.



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This picture shows the new school uniform that I've had made for all 30 children, I thought it appropriate to have more African than western dress, the skirts aren't really as long as this but the uniforms only arrived an hour before I had to leave for England so I grabbed a couple of children from outside my house to model them! We bought white cotton material and had it tie-dyed so they are all slightly different. Sometime in the future we hope to have a badge of the school crest incorporated in the uniform.

I attended a meeting (The Tuesday Club) which is a collection of European women who are involved in various fund raising activities and I will be talking to them at their March meeting and any proceeds from the meeting (raffles etc.) will be given to the school.

I am at the moment at Mick and Judy McMath's house in Verwood where they are having a party this evening to enable sponsors and potential sponsors to talk to me and find out more about the school. Mick & Judy have taken over the administration of the fund raising, and have been working very hard at this end. I am so grateful to them for their sterling efforts as they have taken a weight off my shoulders, because trying to do the school in Gambia &

fund raising was quite a burden.

As you will have gathered I am in England at the moment and will be returning to The Gambia hopefully on 7th February for 8 weeks. I am hoping to see some of you while I am home but if I don't I'll see you in the summer.

Please pass this on to any acquaintances who you think may be interested. Send me an email if you want a copy of the sponsorship forms.

Best wishes

Anne McMath

25th January 2003