

Don McMath Foundation

Newsletter

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The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 14th December 2004

Hello All

This is just a brief update to let everyone know what has been happening over the last two months, we hope to send out a more detailed newsletter in the New Year.

Our prize draw was a great success we managed to raise over £1,600, thank you all for your support on this. We ended up with 16 prizes all donated by sponsors and local businesses. We hope to run another prize draw next summer.

All the goods that we have collected from yourselves over the last six months are now on their way to The Gambia and were due in Banjul docks on 11th December. Anne has been going from department to department to get a waiver on the duty on the goods, we expected that the fact that we were a charity would be enough but it turns out that we need lots more paperwork!



Judy, Mick and Graham have just returned from two weeks in The Gambia (staying at the very comfortable Sea Breeze apartments). They visited the school where they had a rousing welcome from the children and staff who sang a whole medley of songs they had learned. The progress of the children is excellent. They were also able to see the progress of the new school building, as you are

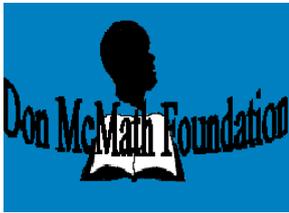
all aware by now in The Gambia everything moves much slower than in the UK so we have still not started the new building. Anne is spending most of her time going from one government office to another to try to get all the paperwork we need to start building, this is an example of the problems she is encountering!

I think our civil service is wonderful, read on to discover why.

Education - The paperwork for registration is at education, however they have a two year back-log, so they are letting the Regional Educational Office issue temporary Nursery registration. So I have also applied there (see below) however I am still continuing with the Nursery & Primary and I am seeing someone on Monday about this. I also had to submit the plans to Education Planning so they can look to see if the classes are big enough, if we have enough toilets etc. (what a joke when u see some of the state of schools. I guess they can't be registered. However the education Dept have the power to close u down!)

Regional Office - Piece of good luck here as I know the person who is doing temporary registration. I paid taxi fare for him to come and inspect the school on Thursday and went and saw him Friday. He is hoping to do this by Monday or Tuesday. - I am going to check each day. This registration is very important as we need it for several things.

Duty Waiver - To get this you have to submit a letter and various documents to Education (which I did while you where here) the Permanent Sec(P.S) signs then u take it to Finance & they sign. On Tuesday I went to see how are application was doing & the P.S said she wanted to see our Nursery Registration. So as soon as I get it I will take it there. Luckily the boat is not docking until 11th, and I have 7 days to get the stuff out or I have to start paying



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storage. However it is going to be tight - if I don't get the registration until Tuesday it will be at least Wed. before the P S signs & then I have to get it signed at Finance.

Land - Good news, now with the director of land, guess what all he wants is our registration and then he will pass it. It then goes to Mr Bojang (Physical Planning) who issues us the building permit. I saw Mr Bojang yesterday and the permit is already prepared, awaiting the letter of allocation from land. He said that the same day as we get the letter, we can start building. So hopefully this will be next week sometime.



In spite of these problems we are making good progress, the site has been cleared again as it turned into a jungle again during the hot wet summer. The men are making bricks, we think we need about 20,000 and should have these made within the next few days, they are managing to make about 1,500 per day and

have made about 10,000 already.

While we were all together we held a meeting of the board of the Gambian charity and elected a new chairman, her name is Therese Cardos and she is a lecturer at the Gambian College in Brikama, Therese also used to work for the Gambian Education authority and is a member of the Rotary Club in Banjul. Therese is already helping Anne sort out the paperwork and government departments.

We are planning to have school badges made for all the pupils and have decided that it would be a good idea to have a school motto. We would welcome suggestions from yourselves, the motto should be no more than about 15 letters and should encapsulate the values of the school. Please send any suggestions to Mick at the Don McMath Foundation address.

We are also asking for help in collecting about 100 pencil cases so each child can have their own. We are looking for soft plastic or material ones rather than wooden ones, if you can help with this please contact Mick.

Many thanks again to everyone who has contributed to make this a successful year for the Foundation and we hope you all have a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Anne, Mick and Judy McMath

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