

Don McMath Foundation

Newsletter

www.donmcmath.org

info@donmcmath.org

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 21st February 2007

Hello All

It has been a very busy few months with the new building and lots of visitors to the school. Some of the most notable have been Tim Mowat and Keith Dickson from the Missing Men team (VW Golf) and Roger Bruton and Richard Freeman from the Artful Bodgers team (Ford Fiesta) on the Plymouth to Banjul Challenge. Both teams donated their cars to the school, they have been sold with the money going towards the new building. Here is Tim's account of the trip (the shorter version), all the details of their trip can be found on their website <http://www.themissingmen.moonfruit.com>



What was the best moment of the trip? It has to be the welcome by the children at the Don McMath school. They sang to us, and danced for joy because they love their school and teachers.



I and my colleague Keith had driven 4,500 miles across 7 countries in slightly less than 3 weeks. The heat was fierce in the Sahara, the tracks poor, and for 100 km non-existent. We passed over the Atlas mountains reaching 7,000 ft above sea level, and we got stuck in sand at times. We ate goat, chewed camel, drank lots of mint tea, but the car behaved faultlessly, and I now have a kaleidoscope of memories and impressions.



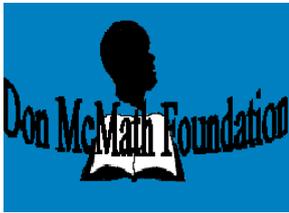
Our self appointed task was to raise £10,000 to be split between the Fishermen's Mission and the school. So far we have raised £7,000 – and we still have talks to give and sponsors to chase up. At the end of the trip we had a week of no worries, no hurries, good shade, good showers.



My wife Ruth and I have committed to school fees for an 18 year old prefect in a local Methodist mission school, school fees for 2 kids at the Don McMath school, and the man who bought the Golf wants us to return next year with cars that can be used as Taxis. Hmmm! We'll see. Thank you again, without your encouragement we could not have succeeded.

Tim Mowat

We have been lucky enough to have Liz Davies helping at the school for three months. Liz has written the following for us:



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My name is Liz Davies and I am a Primary School Teacher from Christchurch, New Zealand. On Friday January 12th I arrived in The Gambia to a beautifully hot 30-degree day. My first visit to the school was on Friday and I remember thinking how wonderful it looked. Heaps of desks, blackboards, windows, trees and lots of sand. On Monday I visited the school and then observed the teachers for the next few days. Then I taught for each Primary School teacher showing some different teaching methods. I have also been clearing out the storeroom sorting through all the wonderful resources the school has, placing them into the appropriate classrooms and teaching the teachers how to use them. I am currently teaching Primary 3 (that's the oldest class of 10-12 year olds) recorder at break times and working with the teachers in the Nursery school. During my spare time I have been to a number of lovely beaches, patted a crocodile at the crocodile park, crossed the ferry from Banjul to Barra to visit the local village people, been to Serekunda market and a batik factory. The Gambian people are very friendly and I have made heaps of friends at school. Thank you Anne and Mick for this opportunity!

Slave Auction:



We would like to thank Clare Rimmer for raising money towards the new school building. Clare went out to The Gambia last year and saw the school. She was so impressed that when she found out that we were still a couple of thousand pounds short of our target for the new building she organized a slave auction in which herself and 13 of her colleagues offered themselves as slaves for 6 hours to the highest bidders. The auction was held on 15th February in Birmingham and raised an unbelievable £3,310 towards the building, this will not only give us enough to finish off the building but will enable us to build an adventure playground for the children. Thanks to Clare and all the slaves and bidders

for their generosity.

Building:



Thanks to some large recent donations the new building is now complete. This gives us a capacity to take in 300 children. Over the next few weeks we will be moving the three nursery classes into the new building to allow the primary to take over all six classrooms in the old classroom block. We intend to hold the official opening ceremony on November 12th, 13th or 14th later this year. Any sponsors and supporters who wish to attend should get in touch with Mick or Anne who will be able to help with advice on flights and accommodation.



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Doreen Jacombs:

It is with great sadness that we have to report that Doreen Jacombs, who Anne, Mick and Judy had known for many years, died in December 2006. Doreen had always taken a real deep interest in the school and its progress and as a result of her husband Bill requesting donations to the Don McMath Foundation instead of flowers we have received a very large donation towards the school funds. We will be dedicating a classroom to Doreen at the opening ceremony of the new building.

New sponsors:

Many thanks to the seven new sponsors who have joined us since the last newsletter. Thanks to you we now have sponsors for nearly all the children in the school. We always need new sponsors as we are continually increasing the number of children at the school.



If anyone who currently receives this newsletter through the post is now on email could you please email us at the above email address so we can email you future newsletters as this will cut down considerably on our costs.

Mick, Judy, Graham Cook and Di Pomeroy are traveling to The Gambia at the end of March and will report on their trip with new pictures of the school and the children when they return. They are bringing out several suitcases full of clothes, pencils, rulers and other school equipment that Liz has asked for to bring the school up to an even higher standard.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath

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