

Don McMath Foundation

Newsletter

www.donmcmath.org

info@donmcmath.org

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 22nd April 2007

Hello All



The main thing to report on is that the new school building is complete and the three nursery classes have moved in. Many thanks to Clare Rimmer for her help and to Liz who helped organize the move. The cost of the new building was just under £22,000, This was about £4,800 below the original estimate, Anne is becoming an expert in bargaining!

At the beginning of March Anne had her usual day of registration for the September intake of 30 children. She had plenty of help with two interpreters, Liz taking photos and three people on the gate. People started queuing at 5.00 in the morning & by the time registration started there were 100 children with their parents at the gate. Anne started to register the children but abandoned it before the end as it got too dangerous with everyone pushing & shoving & she was frightened that one of the children would be hurt. In future parents will go to the office during the year to register & then a notice will be posted on the gate to show who has been successful.

Liz Davies has completed a three month visit to the school where she has managed to implement many improvements to the day to day running of the school.



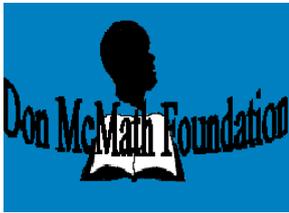
She has created a new school curriculum for us based on the recently published Gambian National Syllabus and set the exam papers for Grades 1 to 3 based on this. She reorganised the school timetable to ensure that the correct amount of time was spent on each subject, one of her innovations was to install clocks in each classroom to allow lessons to start and finish on time. Liz also taught the recorder to year three pupils to the extent that they now hold the recorders correctly and can play several tunes. We are exceptionally pleased with the work Liz did for us during her time at the school, she was respected and looked up to by the teachers and managed to achieve a fantastic rapport with the children.

One other thing that Liz did for us was to visit a few other Gambian schools and write a comparison between them and us, we are pleased to announce that the standards at our school are far ahead of the others.

Liz also managed to record the children singing several songs, if anyone on email would like me to send them one (the size is about 1.5mb each) then please let me know. If anyone would like the set (11 songs in all from all 6 classes) then I will write them to a CD and send them out in exchange for a donation to the school.

Carole & Ian Stanley held a fund raising tea, for DMF & Cancer Research. Danny Saunders & Paul McMath ran an auction & they managed to raise over £1,000 of which we received £550. Many thanks to all of them.

We have many fund raising events taking place this year:



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Charity Disco – Saturday 26th May 2007 at Elphinstone Sports & Social Club in Bexhill on Sea at 7.00 p.m. Tickets are £10.00 which includes £5 worth of raffle tickets. Anyone who would like tickets please contact Anne on 07817252103.

Bexhill Garden Party at Anne's house – Sunday 8th July.

Verwood Garden Party at Mick & Judy's house – Sunday 15th July.

Invitations to the garden parties will be sent out nearer the time. We tend to only send out invitations to sponsors living in easy distance to Verwood or Bexhill-on-sea, if you live outside these areas and would like to attend then please get in touch with Mick or Anne and we will make sure you get an invitation.

Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot (in conjunction with Verwood Rotary) – Sunday 29th July.

Mick and Judy will also have a stall at the Verwood Rustic Fayre on bank holiday Monday 27th August.

The main event of the year will be the official opening ceremony of the new school building which will take place on 12th or 13th November. We are expecting quite a few sponsors to attend. Anyone who is interested should get in touch with either Anne or Mick & Judy who can offer advice on flights and accommodation. Various companies offer package holidays (Thomas Cook, Airtours, Cosmos) their prices seem to be about £350 to £550 per person for 1 week bed and breakfast. For flights only expect to pay about £250, Flightline is a good Internet company to book flights and holidays on.



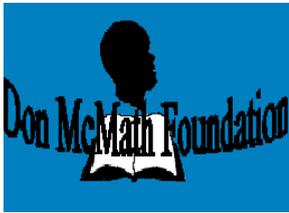
Mick, Judy, Graham and Di spent a week at the school in March and we were all really pleased with the progress made. The new building looks quite stunning and the children gave us a wonderful welcome. It was Mick's birthday on our last day there and the children presented him with a birthday card in which every class had created their own page, it was all very moving. While they were there Mick took photos of all the classes, which have been passed on to all sponsors of individual children. If you haven't received your copy then please get in touch with Mick. As we now have 180 children at the school the logistics of taking and distributing individual photos every year has just got too much for us so we will continue to just send class photos each year.



March also saw the graduation of Mr Gaye, our Grade 2 teacher. He joined the school in September & is well liked by both children & parents. This is his first teaching post since qualifying & has settled in well.



Therese the Nursery 3 teacher has now left the school, and has been replaced by Mrs Nannette Mendy. In September we have Mr Cooley a new headmaster starting. He will be responsible for the Primary School & Malen will continue as Head of the Nursery.



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Malen is on maternity leave at the moment and has just given birth to her second child, a baby boy on 19th April. As far as we know mother and child are both doing well.

We have now finished all our building projects for the time being (except for installing play equipment for the children, we already have a swing and have marked out a football pitch and provided goalposts) and are concentrating on getting more sponsors. We have 30 new children starting with us in September who will need sponsors!

Liz has created a list of equipment that the school will need over the next 12 months, I will gladly circulate it to anyone who feels they may be able to help with any items. Access to "The Consortium" catalogue would help.

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.

Please pass this newsletter on to anyone you think might be interested in supporting us, it's through these contacts that we continue to grow.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath

April 2007