



# Don McMath Foundation

## Newsletter

[www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org)

[info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org)

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008

Hello All

Everything is going well at the school at the moment. The children have broken up for the summer holidays and will be back at school on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

Grade 3 took the Gambian National Exams this year. It is a new policy of the Government that all children will be tested at Grade 3 & 5. However the exams were suppose to take place in March, but did not actually happen until the end of May. We were supposed to get the results before school closed for the summer holidays, but we still have not received them. (Not unlike the exam results in this country)



54 pupils embarked on a educational visit to Kartong, on the last day of the Easter term for a weekend trip. Kartong is 36km from the capital Banjul & sits on the border of Senegal.

The children were welcomed by the staff & pupils of St Martins Lower Basic School of Kartong, who provided the lodgings on their school campus. The classrooms which had solar lighting were allocated to our school. Food was cooked by the villagers at cost price.



The children's first trip was to the Alkalo (Headman of the village) to give greetings from our school. They also put on a small concert for the pupils & teachers of St Martins. Over the next two days they visited the famous crocodile pool at Kartong, the reptile farm & the hugh grave in which a giant is buried. They also went to the river crossing point between The Gambia & Senegal.



Our school challenged St Martins to a football match & much to the delight of our children DMF won. This visit enabled the children to understand some of the syllabus, to interact with each other & more so to understand the realities of the environment of The Gambia.

Mr Sang Colley (Headmaster)

**We think that the following is good news for the Upper Basic School!**

**Education Office at Banjul:**

**Them: Everything is in order; you can go ahead & build.**

**Anne: Can I have it in writing please?**

**Them: Oh no we can't do that, until we see the building & you have toilets etc.**

**Anne: I don't want to build this school & then you refuse to register it.**



# Don McMath Foundation

## Newsletter

[www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org)

[info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org)

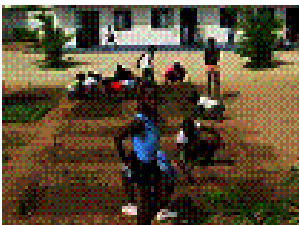
**Them: We won't do that. It is your land & you can build on it, anytime you want. We have visited your school & are very impressed with your school & will give you registration.**

**Anne: If I build the ground floor first, will you give me registration before I do the second floor?**

**Them: No problem.**



We get all the children to put their handprints in cement on a school wall. Their initials are put into the handprint & when dry we paint them. It is a permanent reminder of their time at the school. The photo shows Nursery 1 adding their prints to the wall.



Mr Colley, the headmaster thought it would be a good idea if the children started their own garden as most of them come from farming families. The project is run by Grade 4 & they have planted onions, cabbage, tomatoes & some local vegetables. The produce is going to be sold when harvested so that the garden is self-financing in the future.



Back in the UK everyone has been busy on fundraising for the Upper Basic School. By the end of the summer we expect to have raised more than half the money needed for the building.

Judy McMath celebrated her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in June for which we had a large party for about 60 people. For the first time ever we had outside caterers (Indigo Restaurant in Ringwood who we can really recommend) supplying the majority of the food which was delicious. Rather than have presents Judy asked for donations to the school's building fund instead. This raised over £600. Judy would like to thank everyone who made the day such a success.



The Verwood Garden Party took place on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July and was once again very successful. There were in excess of 70 people there and we raised a massive £1,037 towards the new building. Judy spent

much of the previous few weeks preparing food for the event. We then seemed to spend a lot of the afternoon topping up the serving dishes as the food disappeared as fast as we could put it on the table. We would like to thank Di Pomeroy for supplying the desserts. We would also like to thank Di for the £200 she raised at her "Birthday Bash" in May.

We would also like to thank Marion Strugnell for raising £779 as the proceeds of a raffle for a quilt she made, Lime Pictures in Liverpool (the makers of Hollyoaks) for their cheque for £305, St Michael's PCC for a donation of £280, St Michael's Youth club for £140 raised from their beetle drive and the Inland Revenue for a £2,108 tax rebate as a result of your gift aid!

Shirley Collier, one of the school's trustees is leaving us due to a change in her circumstances. We would all like to wish her well for the future and to thank her for all her efforts over the last 5 years.



# Don McMath Foundation

## Newsletter

[www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org)

[info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org)

We are now looking for someone to join the committee who would be willing to help with fund raising activities. Please contact Mick or Anne if you are interested.

For this newsletter we have included an update on the teachers at the Nursery school and other staff, we will include details of the primary teachers in the next newsletter:

Angelic Senghore (Nursery 1)



I am a Gambian of the Jola tribe. I am married with one son & a happy parent.

I am a qualified Early Childhood Development teacher & enjoying teaching & playing with the children in my class. I like to relax watching interesting videos.

Elizabeth Cardos (Nursery 1)



I am a teacher's assistant & like being with children & taking care of them. I am a Gambian citizen & a single mother of five children.

Fatou A. Jallow (Nursery 2)



I am a Gambian lady and 29 years of age. I am Fula by tribe & a single (divorced) mother of a boy & girl. I graduated at the Gambian College as an Early Childhood Development teacher & now work at this school. I have happy moments, both at school & at home because I like being together with children.

Aminata Koroma (Nursery 3)



I am a Sierra Leonean, aged 29 & a Christian. I am a single parent of a girl aged 8. I am a qualified teacher & this is my fourth academic year of teaching at the Don McMath Foundation School. I like my job, reading, music & interacting with children & adults.

Ousman Sawo (Library/Office Administrator)



I am single & aged 31. I am a village boy from the Northern part of the country called Baddibou. I am one of 9 children, but the only one to receive an education, because I was sponsored. After my Primary School in the village I travelled to the city & attended The Gambian High School, which I completed after 5 years of hard work. I then got into the wide world & met Anne in 1999. In September 2005 I got offered a job at the school & I thank God that I can work at a place that is giving children a chance of education

through sponsorship, because this is the reason I got an education. **Some of you are probably aware that Ous has been very ill over the last few months. When Anne went out to The Gambia in April Ous had lost several stone in weight, after Anne forced him to go to the hospital (against his will) it was discovered that he had a cyst on his liver. This has now been drained and Ous has had an operation to remove it. It looks like he is finally on the mend.**



# Don McMath Foundation

## Newsletter

[www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org)

[info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org)

Sisawo Conteh (Transport Manager)



I am Sisawo Conteh & a Gambian, born on the North Bank of Gambia in the year 1977.

My village is about 117 kilometres after crossing on the Banjul to Barre ferry.

I graduated at the Gambian Muslim High School & I am computer literate. I live in Kotu about 50 metres from the D.M.F school & am a driver. I do a lot of driving for the school & the sponsors. Driving safely saves lives. I like to read, but I LOVE music.

Big Thanx to tip of the arrow Mrs Anne McMath, Mother Africa.

We have a little girl in Nursery 1, who has what Anne thinks is called a lazy eye. It is when one eye points in one direction & the other in another direction. It became obvious that she could not see very well, so we took her to the eye clinic. They told us that they can do this operation in The Gambia but it cost about £100. Anne said at this present time we could not afford this so they suggested they give her glasses which would cost about £20. Anne went to the family to see if they could contribute to this. When she saw the conditions they live in she did not even ask. The father is dead, the mother suffers from asthma & lives with her 7 children & a couple of other families in 3 rooms, the house does not even have a front door so is open to the elements, rats etc. Altogether there are 17 people living in these 3 rooms. The only breadwinner in the girl's family is her older brother.

The charity has paid for her glasses but if anyone would like to sponsor her operation we & her family would be most grateful.

**We have 28 children joining the school in September & we URGENTLY need new sponsors. If you can spread the word among your family & friends we would be very grateful. They can pay monthly - £5.00 or annually - £60.**

**Important future dates:**

**BEXHILL GARDEN PARTY 17th AUGUST, this year it will be held at Bexhill Cricket Club.**

**VERWOOD RUSTIC FAYRE MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST (this year Mick and Judy will be running children's games instead of a bric-a-brac stall).**

**VERWOOD CHARITY CLAY PIGEON SHOOT SUNDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST.**

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.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath

July 2008