

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 22nd December 2014

The Don McMath Foundation



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Hi All

Hopefully everyone who sponsors a named child has now received their child's class photo for the year 2014 to 2015. If you haven't then please email Mick. Note that we haven't got photos of the NUSRAT pupils yet, Anne should be getting them in the new year. The photos are also available on the web site at: <http://www.donmcmath.org/About-Us/class-photos.html> .

All recent donations to the school have gone towards purchasing new tables and chairs to replace the old wooden benches and tables that we have had for up to 11 years. These pictures show three of the primary school classes with the new furniture.



News from the school:

Mr Jeng, the headmaster has set up a PTA committee and at the first meeting we had 100% of the parents attend! The last three days of term are taken up by different activities.

Wednesday - Football matches between different classes and then the Peer Health Group preformed plays about health to the school. The Peer Health is a charity in The Gambia that train groups of teachers in schools about health issues. These include issues such as malaria prevention, early pregnancy and AIDS. The teachers then train groups of our older children who present them to the rest of the school. The Peer health group is led by three of our teachers, Mrs Boye, Mrs Sillah and Mr Touray. The pupils have chosen to do the presentations in the form of small plays to get the message across. Some of these plays are very funny but it is a good way to teach the children.



Thursday -We held a Christmas party. Due to donations we were able to cook a meal for all the children and staff. The female teachers, parents and Grade 9 pupils did the cooking on wood fires in the garden of Anne's compound. The children are allowed to wear their own clothes and the Nursery teachers had made paper hats for the Nursery and the teachers. We also had a disco so after the food the children could dance and drag Anne and the teachers to join them. During the year Anne collects any small toys and these are distributed to Nursery 2 and 3. Nursery 1 are given mosquito nets. A big thank-you to all that helped make this a very successful party.

Friday - This is open day for the parents. Certificates are awarded to children who have come first in a subject and first in the class. There is also a certificate for each class for the most improved student. The parents are then free to come and discuss their child with the teachers. After this we had been invited to attend a football match at S O S school, which the older children went to watch and I am pleased to report we won!

Hamsa (a disabled pupil in Primary 6.1) is brought to school each day by the Blind schools bus. Anne had been invited to go and visit the Blind School by the Head Teacher and went with Mr Jeng and Ousman our administrator. They have 45 pupils from G1 - G5. after which they try to get them into main stream education. The school has a lot of technology which can read a page of ordinary text and convert to Braille. We left having been very impressed with the resources and school.

During the holiday, some classrooms will be painted and the outside of Lower Basic school. The hall which had major work done to its roof will be plastered.

Dorothy Webster

Each year Dorothy a teacher from Glasgow comes to teach at the school. She has been at the school for the last four weeks and is a really valuable asset to the school. As well as teaching in the classroom herself, she advises the teachers on teaching strategies and gives support to the Headmaster and Anne. Anne especially would like to thank her for her continuing support and advice.

Sponsors

Due to the fear of Ebola in West Africa, tourism is down by 60%, and as a large part of this countries economy is from tourism the people are really suffering. We would like to reassure everyone that there is no Ebola in this country or the surrounding country and it is safe to travel here. This video is well worth watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMgvqJXnwSc> The school usually has a lot of visitors at this time of year, but has had a very few this time.

Helen and Andy Wray did make their yearly visit and donated pencils etc to the school. They also bought a lot of first-aid equipment, which we have now sorted and those that are not needed at the school we are going to donate to the Serra Kunda clinic.

On Mick and Judy's annual visit, they were joined by two of our sponsors, Graham Cook (a trustee) and Cath King. Mick and



Judy took all the class photos and Mick and Graham spent some time sorting out all our printer problems. Earlier in the year Cath had donated money for us for food for our Christmas Party which we held at the end of term.(see above)

From Cath King:

"This was my 3rd visit to the Gambia and 2nd visit to the school. The school were in the middle of exams when we arrived Judy and Mick were also there to take the end of year photos, hats off to Judy who was suffering from a nasty head cold, stood there in full sun checking and recounting students for Mick, as you can see from the photo still smiling!!!

Had the chance to have a real good look around, Loved the new chairs, brought colour and made the classrooms welcoming.

On the way to the airport made time to pop into the school, and as exams were over had the chance to interact with the younger children while they were at play. I would like to thank Judy and Mick for letting me tag along".

NUSRAT Senior School (similar to 6th form College)

This year we successfully had 8 children with high enough grades to get a place at this school. With last years intake this means we are sponsoring 19 pupils in further education. However the cost per pupil is £120, so double the cost of our school.

Anne hopes to visit at the beginning of next term and take photos of all the students, which Mick will send on to the sponsors.

DONATIONS

Thanks to the new sponsors who have signed up over the last few months we always need more! With the new intake in September and with a few sponsors dropping out we now have about 28 children needing sponsors. Please pass this on to anyone you think might like to sponsor a child, as Anne has mentioned in the past "£5 a month is only the cost of a bottle of wine!"

Please note the website address: www.donmcmath.org and the email address: info@donmcmath.org. You can also reach Anne and Mick via: anne@donmcmath.org and mick@donmcmath.org.

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

Thank you all for your support.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath – December 2014