

CHiNK Academy Newsletter 2022

January 2022 All was good on the out bound flight and all the paperwork was correct and we arrived on time reaching the place where we were staying at 10.00 am. As we were getting out of the car, we received telephone call from our administrator, Felister, asking if we were on our way to school, as the children were waiting to greet us. They were in school doing extra studies, as the exams are due to take place in March. We left immediately to pick up the van and have a talk about what wanted to be done over the next 2 weeks.

The first thing to organise was the school party to be held on the first Friday of our visit, 21st January. We had to order food and organise the entertainment and disco. The children had a brilliant time as did the teachers, staff and visitors. They all said it was the best party we have had.

The teachers of the upper school were consulted as to where to take the children on their educational visit. They came up with the idea of a visit to the new railway station outside Mombasa. The bus was ordered and as we wouldn't be back at school until late, for lunch, pop crisps and biscuits were bought as a snack treat for the children. Everyone said what a great time they'd had and learned such a lot. The children who went on this trip, were from classes 4 to 8 and were all going to write special essays about the educational trip.

A lot of repairs were done, new security lights which we brought from England, were installed. The boys' urinal was repaired yet again. A boy from baby class had climbed on the pipes and broke them. New electric fencing and batteries for the solar panels were bought and installed by an electrician.

We have had upsetting news about a set of twins from our school. Their father is very ill, so a visit to there home was arranged to find out what was wrong with him. For a start the house which was made from sticks and mud was falling down. The roof was none existent, so when it rained they would be wet through. When the father came out of the house to greet us, he could hardly walk. This is when we were told he was suffering from AIDS and had approximately 4 months to live. He wanted us to make sure that his twin girls would be looked after when he had died. This was a very upsetting, distressing and tearful experience. As he was unable to work being so ill, there was no money for food so we bought food and tin sheeting so the roof could be repaired. From now on we will arrange to get maize meal delivered once a month so they will have food to eat. All the family got together because he wanted to write down what he wanted us to do for Esther and Ruth. As the Aunties couldn't write their names, they made a thumb print on the bottom of the

document, which we took to the lawyers, ensuring that nobody could dispute what he had written down. So if anything happens to him, CHiNK have to see to their education until they are 18 years old. They will live in a safe house with a lady who will look after them during school time. In the holidays they will go to stay with the Aunties or the other Grandmother, so they will still have contact with their family and still be aware of their own culture.



The land we have purchased, next to the school consists of 2 small plots. On 1 plot we will have a safe house built and the other will be used as a playground area for the school. It was a rush to find a builder, so we could get the plans drawn up and passed in Kilifi. Hopefully the project will be started by the beginning of March. Once the safe house is built we can move the twins in, this will make such a difference to them as the mud hut they live in at the moment is so tiny with only a small piece of sponge for a bed for all 3 to sleep on, no furniture at all and cooking has to be done outside. On a happier note one of our students' family were so grateful to us, that they donated a goat for slaughter. After a lot of talking we asked if they would send the meat for the school party, it would be fine, but when it arrived on a motorbike taxi alive and had travelled halfway across Kenya, you could say the poor thing was exhausted and it lay outside the school gates. We couldn't kill it, so 3 nights in the school yard, poo all over, it was put out to graze around the school area. Then a man appeared with lots female goats, so we had a sex education lesson on mating. We couldn't believe it. On Tuesday we left school and went into Mombasa, to see the accountant and lawyer and pick up some things for school. We didn't get back to school until 2.30pm and the guard and some of his friends had slaughtered the goat and the school had it for dinner, but he went off a happy goat.

The school year is different now as class 8 have to do exams in March and class 7 will be doing theirs in December. So next year the top class will be class 6 and from then they will go on to high school. None of the private schools know how this will work, but that is Governments for you. The 2 weeks flew by and time had come to return home to the cold weather. Our next trip will be May 2022.

May 2022 - Our trip was to oversee our new build safehouse for vulnerable girls. It will be a halfway house for up to 6 girls at any one time until something more permanent can be organised for them. Their reason for staying might be that a parent is in hospital or that a guardian is ill or has died.

The build is going up very quickly now, but we need funds for the interior as the sponsor money and a lot of the shop money goes on food, wages, books, uniforms, and medical needs of all the children.

We took the children on school trips. Classes 2,3 & 4 went to the Crocodile Park and PP1 & 2 classes went to Halla Park, they all had a wonderful time. The night before we made jam sandwiches in the hotel room for a picnic, but it rained so they all went back to school and had them in the dining room with pop and biscuits. The uniforms were measured up, and the 2 tailors said they would be ready in 3 weeks.

Our new children needed house checks, a 2-day job. A new computer was installed into Felisher's office as her laptop had broken (it was very old and slow), Patrick the manager also needed a new monitor. The internet wasn't working, the water heater was backed up and had to be descaled and the toilets, as usual, needed attention. The school van also needs some work doing to it, so that will be done after we return home.

We took the children out on their shopping trip with their sponsors money for birthdays, some still had Christmas money. They mostly bought food or a school tracksuit. Joyce came to see us as she is going to live in the safehouse to look after the children and share the work with Felisher and she will also help Patrick in the office for a few hours each week.

This mural was painted on the dining room wall and what a difference it made



Finally, the hotel where we stay were having a clear out of beds and chairs and kindly offered us 5 beds with mattresses for the safehouse. We loaded them into the school van with the help of the hotel staff. What a wonderful thing to do for us. 3 weeks flew by and now it's time to go home.

September 2022 - This visit was to check on the safe house being built. We are pleased to report that the shell is up, and the rendering has been started. The ground floor where the children will be staying has been plastered and Rachel and I were able to go out with the builder to pick paint, tiles, kitchen units and wood for the built-in wardrobes. The window company came out to measure up, but only for the ground floor at present, we will have to wait for the rest to be done when we have the funds. On the day of our arrival everyone at the school came out to greet us, we had a good discussion with Felister on what was to be done during our 2 week visit. After the meeting, Rachel and I decided to return to the apartment. On the way back however, I realised that the vans breaks weren't working! Kenya is not an easy place to drive at the best of times never mind without brakes. Luckily, we were fine, and I arranged for a friend to come to collect it the next day and take it to be fixed. When he brought it back later that afternoon, he told us there was no hand brake or brake fluid but that now it was all sorted and fixed. A trip was arranged to the garden park for the baby class for rides and a dinner of sausage and chips. They had such a lovely day, and on the way back they never stopped chattering which was lovely to hear.

At the school lots of things needed to be sorted out beginning with the internet which wasn't working. We organised a new supplier beginning on October 1st. The computers needed servicing and we arranged for someone to come in to look at the printer. Repairs need to be made to the desks, and we needed 2 new teacher's desks, termites had invaded to old ones. The plastic table and chairs will be replaced at Christmas, 4 wall cupboards are to be made, and 2 blackboards to be repaired. There is always something to maintain. Happily, the toilets were working fine which was a blessing as Roy hadn't come with us on the trip! On Thursday before they broke up for half-term the parents all came in for a meeting and children's presentation, which took place in the dining hall. It was a wonderful day, and I was presented with a gift from the mothers for Rachel, Roy, and myself. It was a real surprise and quite emotional.

Friends from Newcastle were also in Kenya with their charity 'Books and Bread' so they came over to see how the safe house building was going. Joyce, one of the ladies that is going to live in the house, also came along and all were amazed at how big it was. Later one of our old students Helen Albert came to see us as she needed advice. She said she wanted to change her job and go to work in one of the hotels. We were able to speak to the manager of the Bamburi Beach Hotel to find out what she would need to do. Helen got all the information she needed together and took it in for the manager to look at. To her surprise they interviewed her there and then and offered her a 3 month training contract which she started on the Monday before we left to come home. The trustees were over the moon at how well she had done.

CAN YOU HELP?

There are many new children in our school awaiting sponsorship. Pictured are just a few. They are all extremely poor and often orphaned, living with relatives or village elders. If you feel able to help and sponsor a child that would be fantastic, even if it's only for one year. It is £20 per month or £240 per year. We hope you can help.

Bakari Ali

Hassan Atherman

Joshur Momany



CHink 4 Newcastle Street, Tuxford, Newark, Notts. NG22 0LT

E-mail chink220@btinternet.com

☎ 07762245523 or 07939476676

www.chink.org.uk

Reg. Charity Number 1122874