

THE SHONDA PROJECT – NEWS UPDATE DECEMBER 2010

“Helping young people in Shonda, Kenya get a better start in life”

Registered Charity No. 1075035

Firstly a BIG thankyou to everyone who has continued to support the charity especially during difficult financial times at home. Your contribution continues to make a real difference to the lives of the people in Shonda and now more than ever we need your support!



TEACHERS

Most of the funds raised make a significant contribution to the teacher’s salaries. Annually it costs about £1000 per teacher, and without the teachers there could be no school! We have been able to continue to send £1600 /month of your money to support the teachers’ salaries and additional school support staff. Locally the parents are raising several hundred pounds every month to assist with other needs. As always the local people continue to suffer with ill health and the fluctuating tourist market [local hotels are a key source of employment], so many parents are not able to afford the contributory school fees with regularity. Whatever they can contribute is often variable.

We are faced with a particular challenge currently as the Kenyan Government in May increased

teachers’ salaries in government schools by 40%. This unsettled our teachers who understandably were considering their positions, and over the summer, four teachers moved to new higher paid posts. Whilst not being able to afford the market rate, and believing that we offered a better teaching environment, we have nevertheless agreed with the school to provide a salary uplift to the teachers, with the UK raising 50% and Kenya raising the other 50%. This is one of the costs that we will need to cover through fundraising and donations in the coming year.

The Educational Consultant, Theo that we were funding to support moving developments forward in Shonda has moved to Nairobi with his work, and we now support his “ right hand man” Joseph who lives in Mombasa. Joseph visits the school regularly and provides hands on support to the Caretaker Board [The Governing body.] Theo remains in good contact with the Committee of Shonda UK and kindly continues to steer things along in terms of supporting policy, strategy and vision.

HEALTHCARE

The project remains committed to supporting the development of better local healthcare and we have some sponsors who are kindly willing to invest in a community nursing project. We are in discussion with the leaders on the ground there to develop this concept which will have a positive effect for the whole community not just the school. We know from experience that new initiatives can take a frustrating amount of time to progress from an idea to start-up but we remain hopeful that this will be put into action next year.

ELECTRICITY

You may remember that electricity was installed in the school earlier this year and it is making a huge difference. The cost of installation was coincidentally matched almost exactly by the donations from a Christian coffee shop in Marlborough last Christmas! The school day is now extended to allow after school sessions which are especially valuable in helping pupils to prepare for their exams. At home most would need to work by paraffin lamps and candles. The community are able to use the school buildings in the evenings for meetings too and of course the Parents Governing Body, called the Caretaker Board are able to meet in the school after hours now. The teachers are requesting support with computers for the school but at the moment we are not in a position to assist with this - unless of course any of you have contacts in the IT / business world that maybe able to help us? A laptop was donated and delivered on the February 2010 visit and is used by the Headteacher to aid administration and as a teaching resource with the access to the World Wide Web!

MUSIC FESTIVAL

This year we received a special request to send some money to support transport costs and entry fees for the school to send the choir to the National Schools Music Festival. The teachers and pupils could not have attended without project support and had a fun and educational time away from school and came fourth in one of the categories.



This is an amazing achievement for a school in such a deprived area. The feeling of success and joy in their thanks to us was powerful! However in view of the cost pressures around the teachers' salaries we have indicated to the school that we are unlikely to be able to support this venture in 2011 unless we have a specific donation for this purpose.

FUNDRAISING

As always throughout the year The Shonda Project is supported by a variety of your fundraising efforts with no donation ever too small. We can't mention here everyone who has been so kind, but included in this year's efforts were:

- African Supper at Redhill in May raising £425
- Another pre Christmas jewellery party with 15% of profits to the project - £90 donation
- A summer clothes sale of second-hand clothes raising £372
- Ongoing support from Churches, including St Luke's [Southpark, Reigate, Surrey] St Mary's church [Marlborough, Wiltshire], Christchurch [South End on Sea], Pewsey Methodist Church [nr. Marlborough]
- In February 2011 Angela Prentice who founded this project in 1993 with her husband Mick [now our Chairperson] is doing a personally organised sponsored trek on Mount Kenya where she will be trekking up to 5000 meters at the age of 70yrs with her daughter-in-law Beccy! Wow..what a great effort Angela!
- A special thankyou too to those of you who kindly send us a cheque! We have received some exceptional one off donations this year and we continue to receive unexpected donations just when they are needed!

GIFTCARDS FOR CHRISTMAS

We have not produced new images for 2010 but do have cards to sell if you are interested in giving a gift to Shonda on behalf of someone else. Last year our income from the cards disappointingly did not raise a significant profit and we felt that we should use up old stock first before launching a new series of images. The causes remain the same...

£5 – Classroom Essentials or Basic Medicines or School Meals

£10 – Train a teacher or Nursery Equipment or School Desks

Please use the order form at the end of this news update if you would like to purchase these alternative Christmas Gifts. We are reducing costs by not sending out a specific mail shot for these this year. Where possible we will hand-deliver this update and cards to you too.

VISITS TO SHONDA

A number of people are expressing interest in visiting this community. Once you have been you'll be committed forever! If you are interested in visiting in 2011 and funding your own travel and hotel costs [make a holiday of it too!] then please contact Sheila Mills on 01672 861632.



We would try to co-ordinate a visit with committee members. Whilst near Mombasa, the village is in a somewhat remote location and so

we would not recommend new-comers visiting alone on a first visit in terms of personal safety.

CLASS LINKS

Sandcross School in Reigate have been developing class "friendships" with a class at St. Johns School Shonda by sending out pictures and letters, and the pupils in a class of same aged children in Shonda sent ones back from the February 2010 visit. They have raised an amazing £790 to support this class teacher through dressing-up days and book and CD sales at school. What a great effort – well done everyone!

So although our messages remain the same in supporting the largely unchanging needs of the community, our need to increase our fundraising increases. Please do contact us if you have fundraising ideas or connections you think maybe helpful in supporting this community.



Morning porridge is given to some. Many come to school hungry

In This run up to Christmas, it's a busy time for us all. Please remember those living in the Shonda village in your thoughts and prayers and know that they hugely appreciate the help and support you provide.

Carolyn and Rob Gittins

The Shonda Project

The Shonda Project Gift Tokens: Order Form 2010

Your details

Name:

Address:.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone no.:

Email:

Your order

Gift	Amount	Number	Total
Basic medicines	£5		£
Classroom essentials	£5		£
School meals	£5		£
School desks	£10		£
Nursery equipment	£10		£
School books	£10		£
TOTAL			£

Payment details

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to **The Shonda Project**.

Gift Aid declaration

I want The Shonda Project charity to treat all donations I make after 6 April 2010, unless I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer.

Signature.....

Date.....

Thank you, your gift and support is appreciated.

Please return this order form to:

Mrs Carolyn Gittins
West End
West Overton
Marlborough,
Wilts, SN8 4ER

If you have any questions please contact Carolyn on 01672 861591