

THE SHONDA PROJECT, KENYA

NEWS UPDATE DECEMBER 2012



Welcome!

As Christmas approaches, we are pleased once again to give you the latest news on the Shonda Project and the children's education we are supporting in Kenya.

2012 has been another exciting year and this has only been possible through the generosity of many individuals. Key changes this year include:

- Installation of an electric pump and tank to produce running water at the school
- Helping to support an ex pupil, Ronald, at Secondary school – and we are pleased to report that he is top of his class!
- Enhancements to the Feeding Programme, including the building of a new kitchen, to offer lunch to all the children.

In addition the Project continues to send over £1500 every month to pay teachers' and support staffs' salaries.

We also have high hopes that the pace of change will continue into 2013 with the following initiatives already under development:

- Using Skype to enable children in classes in UK schools to speak with children in Shonda
- Developing computer facilities to support learning, both for the teachers and children in the school, but also as a community resource.

Some highlights from the year ...

Running water in Shonda



The pump works!

It was about 10 years ago when the Project funded the sinking of a well for the school and whilst the 'rope and bucket' have served the school and community well, earlier this year it was suggested by the school that a pump could be installed to provide running water. This was enthusiastically picked up by Pinewood School in the UK who raised money to install a pump, build a tank and the associated piping and to bring water into the school.

The project was managed by Joseph, the school administrator, who provides the main link to Shonda UK and is accountable for financial and project management at the school. Before any work was undertaken, a survey was conducted to ensure the well could support a pump. Once the okay was given, construction got underway and by the end of June piped water reached the school for the first time.

You can see more pictures at www.shonda.org.uk

Secondary School sponsorship ...

The Project has always focused on providing solely primary education. The cost of educating children to secondary level is significantly greater and outside the capabilities of the Shonda Project at present.

However, one of our pupils, Ronald Mwasi, achieved over 400 out of a possible 500 marks in his final exams and as a result was invited to attend Kabarnet School, one of the National Schools, which is a day's bus journey away. This was a first for St John's and a great honour for Ronald and the teachers. The Shonda Project offered to provide some funding to enable Ronald to attend Kabarnet School. Ronald has excelled at school and has a school report that anybody would be proud of; a string of As and position 1 in his class and second in the whole year! Ronald's future is very much in his hands but isn't it wonderful that we can help him and many other children, to maximise their potential?



Ronald Mwasi proudly showing his first term report and certificate of merit.

Feeding Programme ...

Early in the year the founders of the Shonda Project, Angela and Mick Prentice, met with Aaron and Olivia who run Gastro Catering, a young couple with plenty of enthusiasm who have built a successful business, but who wanted to give something back. They visited the school in February, and gave advice to enable the further development of the Feeding Programme. They also donated money which has seen the building of a dedicated kitchen adjacent to the shelter. Eighteen months ago only the very young children were given food, but now it is possible for every child to have a main meal cooked at school.



The new kitchen to the right of the shelter

Visits to Shonda

The people of Shonda always extend a very warm welcome to any visitors and this year three groups visited the school.

The Nokes family visit

The Nokes family from Devizes visited Shonda, spending time at the school and also visiting the homes of some of the pupils.

They were able to take many things out with them and these included football kits kindly donated from The Raw Skills team in Oxted, Surrey for 2 teams and footballs which were put to good use straight away when they staged a football match the day after receiving them. They even suggested that the new kits actually improved their performance!

They also took a lot of childrens' clothes, all of which found new and very proud recipients. Winter jumpers were worn despite it being about 28°C!

Jill said that 'It was wonderful to see the children being able to help themselves to fresh water whenever they were thirsty, thanks to the new pump which was recently installed in the well'.

Visit by Aaron and Olivia from Gastro Catering

Aaron and Olivia visited the school in February and were able to work with Joseph and others at the school to see how they could help develop the

Feeding Programme. Not only was the knowledge that Olivia and Aaron brought invaluable but they also offered to fund the building of a new kitchen which was completed in October.



Olivia and Aaron discussing the Feeding Programme

Visit by teachers Lottie and Jo

Lottie and Jo visited St John's in August. Here's what they did in their own words ...

"We went to the school for three days where we went to visit each class and they all sang beautiful songs to us and with the older children we had some question



and answer sessions. We had two meetings with the whole staff, a meeting with the administration team and a meeting with three teachers who teach the young children. This was the most valuable meeting for them and for us as Jo teaches children aged 4-5yrs and I start teaching children aged 5-6yrs. The day before, Jo and I watched a maths sorting lesson which was quite chaotic so we were able to explain how they might improve their teaching, for example, by splitting the class up into groups of high ability, middle ability and low ability and having them doing the same task but making it suit their ability. As a result, Jo and I have been asked to send out some of our planning to help them."

School & Church links

Kennet Valley Church of England School

The children in the school council worked with Carolyn Gittins to plan and organise a second hand book sale and raised over £100 in 45 minutes! The

council worked really hard together to make this a success and baked cakes to sell too. They decided to do this to raise funds to buy more school books for St. John's in Shonda.

"Next year we plan to start to exchange information with the pupils and teachers at the school to help both groups of pupils learn more about each other's lives. We will also try and arrange for the school choir to sing to the children in Shonda and they will sing to us!"

Pinewood Prep School

The Pinewood School link, Liz Woods, writes:

"Following on from Pinewood's terrific support of the Woods' family visit to Shonda in August 2011, there was great interest in forming a link with St John's. The first step in this connection was to have a stall at the Pinewood Christmas Fair, selling Kenyan bracelets, earrings, baskets and bowls brought back from the Mills' trip in October, along with Gift Cards. Everything on the stall was snapped up very quickly! The response to a lecture about St John's given by Simon Mills was fantastic, and this enthusiasm continued through the school year.



A first for Shonda - water from a tap!

Collections made after the carol service, school plays and a charity day (in which the children ran all the stalls) raised enough money to provide the water pump, tank, piping and taps to bring running water to the school. The Pinewood children were amazed to see the photos from Shonda literally days after the tank was put in and water was available from taps in St John's. The immediate impact of fund raising = running water has inspired the children! Pinewood also aims to pay a St John's teacher's salary each year. We hope the next step will involve more direct communication between the pupils of each school, including Skype calls to exchange information about their Geography studies. Y5 Pinewood children sent out maps and postcards of Wiltshire to give St John's pupils an idea of our geographical area. Pinewood's first year of linking with St John's was very exciting for everyone, and we look forward to developing this link over time."

Sandcross School in Reigate

"The Year 4 Harvest Festival at Sandcross School this year once again supported the children of St John's school in Shonda. The events started off with a film night in the school hall and following that the whole school supported a book character day by dressing up. The school was filled with characters from Harry Potter, Dr Who, Star Wars and many other favourite books. Each child supported the fund with a small donation. The event culminated in a Harvest Festival celebration where parents were invited to share in our Harvest Celebration.

The children performed poems and prayers to a packed audience and compared Harvests in Reigate with expected harvests in Africa. However all the children in Sandcross will tell you that the best thing about the Harvest Celebration was when we made a Skype call to Africa and were able to share some time with the children. There was not a dry eye in the hall as all the way from Shonda, the children sang a song to join in our Harvest celebration.

Now we have created the link we intend to keep in touch with Albert and the children on a regular basis and find out about school life in both countries. The event raised over £1000 this year and we are proud to support Shonda again."

St John's School, Redhill

St John's has been part of the Shonda Project since the early days and the school continues to raise money for Shonda. A cake sales made enough money to buy a computer for the school.

Birstwith School

Birstwith School near Harrogate has supported the project for many years, through collections at harvest festival and at Christmas, for which we are very grateful.

St Luke's Church, Reigate

St Luke's supports Shonda in many ways – this year's Harvest Service was preceded by an African breakfast. Money given at the breakfast has enabled a classroom to be renovated for use as a computer lab.

St Mary's Church, Marlborough

Shonda has a long association with St Mary's and their support pays the annual salary for a teacher.

Fundraising

Throughout the year the Shonda Project is supported by a variety of fundraising efforts without which, as we've said many times before, the project would not be able to assist the community in Shonda as effectively as it has.

There are many of you out there who have been really generous in terms of time and money in making a difference in Shonda and for this we are truly grateful.

Closing remarks ...

From Shonda by John Mwero, Headmaster

John has been the Headmaster at St John's for nearly a year. Here are his reflections.....

Things that went well in 2012

- Completion of the construction of school kitchen which has greatly improved lunch program. More needy pupils have joined the program.
- School was equipped with good revision books funded by Shonda UK.
- Salary remuneration to all school workers.
- Completion of water project which is highly appreciated by the Shonda community.
- Visit by Charlotte Beale and Jo Ede from U.K who interacted with KG2 and the teachers in various activities.
- Good cooperation among members of staff, board members and parents.
- Ground breaking of Shonda UK and Shonda Kenya exchange programme through Skyping.
- On-going repairs of computer room
- Proper school fees collection to have zero fee balances by the end of the year.



The new kitchen has greatly improved the school lunch!

Our 2013 focus

- Strive to a better education standard
- Class Seven and Eight to have single-seater lockers and chairs.
- Introduction of computer classes from class 4-8.
- Repair some of the old buildings.
- Continue with exchange program through Skyping.
- Organise educational tours for the children and staff members.
- Organise inter-schools debates
- School to participate fully in games, sports and music.

From myself, Headmaster John Mwero, I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

From The Shonda Project UK

We, and the people of Shonda, are always humbled by the generosity of people in supporting St John's school and community. As John mentioned there have been many achievements in 2012 and these would not have been possible without your support.

We look forward to working with John, Joseph and the School's Caretaker Board to continue supporting them to educate the children of Shonda.

Many consider computers and access to all the resources available across the World Wide Web to be an essential part of their lives. So we are particularly excited about the opportunities that will develop from the creation and equipping of a Computer Lab. Once the Lab is operational in February it aims to provide a resource for the whole community.

Next year will mark the 20th anniversary of Angela and Mick's visit to Kenya, and the choice they made to help a local minister start a school. Little did they realise at the time what a marvellous venture they would be starting!

This year Eddie Warans, our treasurer since the start of the Project has decided to hang up his spreadsheet, and pass the baton to Derek Moss. Behind the scenes, Eddie has worked away to ensure that the charity is well run, established Gift Aid and for that and his all round wisdom we express our thanks.

Once again we will be selling gift cards as alternative Christmas gifts for a selection of special ongoing needs at the school. Last year this initiative raised £1000 with all the profits going to specific initiatives and we'd like to beat this amount this year!



The Key Stage 3 graduation party ... a great note to finish on!

If you have any questions or would like to get in touch we would love to hear from you, drop us an email at info@shonda.org.uk

Finally we thank you for your support and wish you and your family a very happy Christmas.

The Shonda Project Committee UK

