



The Giraffe Project Spring 2016 Newsletter

www.giraffeproject.org



Welcome to our Spring newsletter!

The new year started well in Kenya with our sponsored primary children beginning a new academic year at Green Pastures and Tumaini schools and six students starting new college courses, ranging from Psychology to Accounting to Engineering, increasing their opportunities for future employment and a better life for them and their wider families.

We also took 30 very deprived new students into our secondary school, GEC. The need is huge and once word got out that we had spaces, we were inundated with applications. New students include Silphanus, who was abandoned in the slums by her mother when she was only five, Martin, whose parents were bankrupted by hospital bills following a road accident, and Mary, forced by her grandmother to work in a bar – an occupation often leading to prostitution. Silphanus, Martin and Mary, and their 27 classmates, are now safe in our school and receiving an education thanks to you, the sponsor. As Mary told us, this opportunity is 'my Morning Star'.

New classrooms under construction at the Giraffe Education Centre

Bricks are being laid, concrete is setting and soon we'll have a brand-new classroom building on the campus of The Giraffe Education Centre, helping us deliver a better education to our students. The new building is also being built with the future in mind: with design input from structural engineers at The University of Manchester, we have the option of adding another storey in the future.

Once the new classrooms are completed, we will remove one more interior wall from the existing classroom building, giving us spacious, bright and airy rooms for four classes (years) of up to thirty students per class. Other improvements currently being made to the site include the provision of modern desks – built on site by our multi-talented caretaker John – and extra latrines and washing facilities for the boys.

These developments are part of our long-term and ambitious plan for continuous improvement of the site, seeking to identify and remove each 'bottleneck' along the way. After increasing classroom capacity attention will turn to the boarding facilities for the girls and the seemingly ever-present need to improve the security of our water supply.

Continued fundraising – for example through sponsorship of members of our team running the Brussels 20km – is needed to turn these plans into reality. So a big 'thank you' to our sponsors and donors for the money raised so far – and 'thanks in advance' for all the money-raising efforts to come!



Form 1's starting at GEC in February – at last a chance of a secondary education

March, and the foundations for the new building are in place



Early April, and the walls are going up!

Please support our Brussels 20k team - our biggest fundraiser of the year! Go to our Giraffe Brussels 20k 'Just Giving' page to donate!



Introducing a New Trustee: Tony Sims

I am married to Ann with two adult children and one granddaughter. My early working life was spent in South Africa as a finance manager for several international corporations in Cape Town. I then spent 14 years as a school Bursar and 13 years as Vice Principal at a theological college in London. Ann and I moved to East Anglia in 2012 as I prepared for my retirement at the beginning of 2014.

I heard about 'Giraffe' through family living in Brussels. Initially I was involved in book-keeping before becoming a Trustee. It's a wonderful opportunity to assist children and young adults who come from incredibly deprived backgrounds. Having lived in Africa I have seen firsthand what a good education in the right environment can do for such needy and I'm delighted to be involved.



Meet new trustee,
Tony Sims

TEWODROS FISSEHA – the story of a 'Giraffe Child' by Idabel Chege

Here's an edited version of an interview of a 'Giraffe graduate', Tewodros, by Idabel, a former Giraffe student: you can read the full piece on our website.

Tewodros confidently introduces himself and I instantly wonder about the real story beyond the mature, bubbly personality. He is 25 and studying Economics at the University of Manchester, so it seems like he has always had it all together, but this is certainly not the case.

His story starts when he comes to Kenya over 10 years ago with his mother and siblings as Ethiopian Refugees. To make ends meet, his mother begins a business selling a popular Ethiopian delicacy called 'anjera' in the slums where they live. Life goes on and he sits his Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education, scoring 399 points – a score good enough to ensure him a slot in any of the national schools.

He is accepted at Dagoretti High School and works in a restaurant to pay for his school equipment. His first year goes by and his mother struggles to pay his fees. By year two he has arrears to an extent that the Principal wants him out. Giraffe Project contact at Dagoretti, the late Mrs. Wanji, learns of his predicament, contacts Giraffe founder Denise Baines and secures an interview. This bought him time, as he puts it, "Principal akatulia", which translates as 'Principal, let me be'. Denise tells him that a wonderful German lady will sponsor his education. I want to know his reaction when the news came. "Oh that was...I was so glad...", he says, smiling.

You might think the story ends there, but you are wrong. In Oct 2012, through a UN and UK government scheme called 'Gateway Protection', his whole family is relocated to the UK. Now in his third year at Manchester Uni, Tewodros's journey is just beginning. He is taking a semester at the University of Massachusetts and expects to graduate in July 2017. His brother and sister hope to go to University next year. This is the ripple effect of a person taking the time to take up a child from a far-away land and pay for their education. It opens possibilities that were only a dream until a stranger stepped in and made them a reality.

Tewodros is okay now because someone made a choice to stand with him. His last words? "Acha sasa nikunywe chai", or "Let me now have some tea. Your contribution, as little as it is, can make a huge difference in a person's life. Because all they want is an opportunity."



Meet Eric, one of the teenagers who started at GEC in Feb. His stepmother's family drove him away when his father died and, unable to afford school fees, he worked on a building site. He is now safe in GEC but needs your help to keep him there.



Tewodros in
Massachusetts

STOP PRESS!
Congratulations to Liz, our Kenyan sponsorship coordinator on the birth of a beautiful daughter, Mercy Fortune, on 14 April

Please note my new email address:
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I can also be contacted at:
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Jackie Newbold
Sponsorship coordinator