

*Rudi Tena (come back again!)*

After a five-year break from being part of a Giraffe project team in Nairobi it was exciting to be flying out once more to Kenya (with the help of air miles kindly donated by one of the projects supporters.)

It is always difficult to decide what the main focus will be on a trip like this and often the best-laid plans have to be changed to fit the circumstances. However, we did manage to successfully accomplish most of the planned tasks.

The majority of the team had a marathon of a journey to get to Nairobi. There was little time to recover before we had to choose which team we wanted to join. They were:

- a) Medical team – to assist Nurse Elizabeth from Kibera slum and Hannah, studying nursing in the UK, with the medical checks on sponsored students at Green Pastures and GEC. These included deworming, sight tests, temperature or any other health concerns (Tumaini students were checked by a team of doctors working in Mathare slum).
- b) Film crew – Jackie needed help in making sure that almost every student who is sponsored got a chance to send a filmed message to their sponsor.
- c) The Giraffe Education Centre (GEC) needed a classroom refurbished and some new trees planted.

Jackie also needed to distribute the many gifts that had kindly been sent out for the sponsored students. With so many students in different schools, this was a massive task, which was superbly done by Jackie and her team.

Our first Thursday was an example of needing to change the programme, it turned out to be a public holiday for Eid so our focus shifted entirely onto GEC. We organized, and joined in, a morning of sports, creative arts and a drama workshop. Later in the afternoon, the students of GEC entertained us with songs, drama and dance of an amazing quality. It was great to see how much talent they have outside the classroom with many of them being members of Art Attack, a club run by the students on Fridays after school. Our students responded with an excellent rendition of Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now"...a fun way to end a fun day.

The following week we organized another sports day, this time at Green Pastures school, where we introduced some new sports such as dodge ball and a form of British bulldog!!

We also presented and ran a motivation session aimed at getting the older students at GEC to think about life beyond school. We introduced them to the A B C model = Ambition, Self Belief and Commitment. At the end of the session our students mentored GEC students in 'one on one' sessions which gave them the opportunity to share their ambitions and any problems they were facing in achieving them. Our mentors did a great job of listening and supporting and we hope this will be the first of many such sessions to help the GEC students fulfill their potential. Other activities included running a study skills session, team building and mentoring sessions and planting trees and bushes around the GEC compound.

One of our team, Tony, arranged for some of the GEC students to visit a community project who, along with overseas engineers, are building toilets and schools in Kibera slum. Finally we were lucky enough to visit the UN buildings in Nairobi for a tour and some excellent talks.

At the end of the 2 weeks it was great to get away from the crowds, the dirt and the noise of Nairobi and enjoy the other side of Kenya, the stunning countryside and beautiful Lake Naivasha. Although we saw a huge hippo out of the water I was disappointed not to see the famous python that is usually lying in wait there! An early morning safari at Lake Nakuru gave us a chance to see giraffe together with lions, hyena, buffalo and both white and black rhino! During our lunch break we even fitted in a great game of football with a local school overlooked by baboons!

It was a really worthwhile trip and satisfying to see how GEC, in particular, has developed since I last came to Kenya with motivated teachers and positive students working together to provide a safe haven and place to study and grow for many vulnerable students. It was very sad to say 'Kwaheri' to

many new friends but there is a plan to 'rudi tena' in two years' time to see even more progress and developments in this worthwhile charity.

Great team, great trip! Thanks to Ian and Jackie for putting it together.