

Dear Friends of St. Anthony's Nursery School, Malawi ☺ Nov 2005

I really can't believe it has been a year since my last newsletter... I am so sorry for not writing sooner but 2005 has been a very busy year! I am now settled in London working for a small environmental and human rights charity, the Environmental Justice Foundation (www.ejfoundation.org). I am really enjoying my role and learning so much. My background and work in Africa has been really helpful.

More importantly I have just been to Malawi for my annual visit to the nursery school. I travelled out on October 8th but unfortunately I had one disaster after another with two delayed flights and I finally arrived on October 10th – 37 hours late! The long journey was worth it though as the school is still doing very well and it was great to see the children.

The same team of hard working staff remain at the school and all continue to progress well – we even have two new additions to the team as Mariam (Deputy Head teacher) and Grace (Senior Teacher), both had baby girls earlier this year – they are called 'Comfort' and 'Fortunate'. Both ladies and babies are healthy and happy.

On a very sad note, Charles, our gardener, is suffering from skin cancer and has been quite poorly this year. Thankfully, after visiting his doctor at Zomba hospital, I discovered that he is responding to treatment and his condition is improving. I continue to pay Charles and we hope he may be able to return to part-time work next year.

The hardest challenge I had to face during my October visit was finding maize for the staff. Malawi is currently suffering from a severe food shortage (you may have seen the news reports) and it is extremely difficult to find sacks of maize for the staff. We finally managed to buy twenty 50kg bags of maize in a village south of Blantyre – approx. 90km from the school. The maize is being brought over the border from Mozambique at fairly high prices. Thankfully I left the staff with two bags of maize each and two bags of fertiliser. I also left maize with Mr Tupunya for the nursery school children – his wife will make porridge for the children up until the end of term.

Despite the food shortages, the school is going strong. I registered 30 new children for next year, purchased new equipment, held staff reviews, met the new village priest and unpacked toys that had been sent over earlier in the year in a container (thanks to Norwich City Council). I also spoke to Mr Tupunya about identifying a plot of land to buy or rent for next year so we can plant crops and teach the children about the environment and farming – this has been made possible through a kind donation.

The end of this year could be quite tough for the people of Malawi and I will keep a close eye on the situation. Thankfully through your support and donations the staff and children face a brighter outlook this Christmas. It was wonderful to be in Malawi seeing the school's success through my own eyes – I hope this success will continue for many years.

Thank you all.

With very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, Gina x

P.S. Please turn over for photos from this visit.....



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Please send any donations by cheque payable to 'The Nursery School'. Thank you 😊



← The team 2005 (with new Hawaiian shirts!)

A big thank you from the children →



← Learning a new game outside the nursery school



New balls cause huge excitement! →

