

## Dear Friends of St. Anthony's Nursery School, Malawi December 2014



Another year seems to have flown by, I hope this finds you well and 2014 has been kind to you all.

It's been a year of change at the nursery school as we have a new Head Teacher! I am sorry to say the year didn't start well as I discovered Noel (the Head Teacher for the last 10 years) was stealing money from the petty cash – thankfully I was informed by another member of the team. After putting pressure on Noel (I had to tread carefully) he did the right thing and resigned and left quietly. I was very relieved to see him go as he had become very money orientated, he also wasn't spending much time in the classroom teaching the children so it was the best outcome all round.



So, after a rocky start to the year I am delighted to say that two of my teachers stepped up and the school is now in the very safe hands of Martha Gunde (the new Head) and Ghreycioum William (the new Deputy). Since Noel left, the staff seem much happier and I totally trust Martha and her team, I know we are in a better place. With Noel's departure we were one teacher short so Ousmane has been promoted from caretaker to teacher which is great to see as he has been a reserve teacher in recent years.

After the ringworm outbreak last year I am pleased to say all the children now have their own polo shirts, photos overleaf. I think you will agree they look very smart! I also arranged for another shipment of First Steps Nursery Books to be shipped from Macmillan here in the UK. I was slightly stung by Customs this time – at the Malawian end! After paying the ridiculous and frustrating import tax to release the books, they safely arrived at the school and all the children who started in September have their own book to work from throughout the school year - we also have a stock in the cupboards for another couple of years. Martha and Ghreycioum organised a batch of mosquito nets so all the new starters received a net. I also ensured all the staff were given two nets each to make sure their children are protected, a simple but lifesaving piece of equipment.

In July we received the exciting news that Ghreycioum had become a father, his fiancée, Mary, gave birth to a baby boy. I was given the honour of naming the little one - he is called Thomas (my Dad's middle name) James (Sebastian's middle name) – it is particularly special for me to see Ghreycioum become a father as he was one of my students when I first taught in Malawi in 2001 – I look forward to meeting Thomas and introducing him to Sebastian one day!

With all the staff changes, I have received wonderful support from Vincent at the Diocese Education Office in Zomba. We are now in regular touch by email which makes running the school from so far away much much easier and I know Vincent is keeping a watchful eye on the staff and children.

The staff received a bonus last month which paid for a bag of fertiliser to help their current maize crop. The school broke up for the Christmas holiday last week so the team are currently cleaning and doing a few repairs and repainting around the school. Next Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, Martha is preparing a Christmas lunch for all 80 children and the staff.

I am also pleased to tell you I have two volunteers spending a week at the school next July which will be a big help to get a few essential items out to the school and to hear first-hand how everything is going – I have every faith in the team we now have in place and I am pleased to say 2014 is finishing on a much more peaceful and settled note ☺

As always I really couldn't keep up the good work without your support and kindness, thank you so much. Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Best wishes, Gina x



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

