

Dear Friends of St. Anthony's Nursery School, Malawi, Dec 2021

Another year seems to have raced by, I really hope this finds you well. Definitely a better year over in Malawi but that wouldn't be difficult after the events and school closures of last year!



When the news of the coronavirus pandemic broke nearly 2 years ago I don't think we thought we would still be battling with it this far on. Sadly, as I write this, the very real threat of the new variant Omicron is spreading through Southern Africa and of course this could have a devastating impact in Malawi. However, I am pleased to say the staff have now all received their first vaccine with their second jab due in January. Although they are far behind the UK vaccination programme, it is a very positive step to see vaccines becoming widely available in Malawi. The staff and children have all stayed well and thankfully we haven't lost anyone to this horrible virus but there have been cases and lives lost very close to the nursery school so we continue to take all the necessary steps to keep everyone safe.

The nursery school has remained open for the majority of the year which is a real improvement compared to 2020 when it was closed for nearly 7 months. This has meant all 160 children have received a free nursery education and will be better prepared for when they start at primary school. As the children enrol at the nursery, they receive a free mosquito net and their First Steps Workbook and during the school day we have continued to provide warm porridge for all the children. 80 children graduated last month and had a wonderful celebration with their parents and the staff outside school.

As you can imagine with the world as it is today the cost of living in Malawi has continued to increase so in September, I gave the staff a much-needed pay rise and I have just made funds available for an end of year bonus as they are keen to purchase fertilizer to apply to their maize crops. 4 blue drums (full of equipment, books, toys, clothes, shoes) are currently on their way to Malawi and I had hoped would arrive before Christmas. Sadly, they are now due in Namibia on 26th December so it will be the new year by the time they arrive at the school.



I can't quite believe it was 20 years ago that I first travelled out to Malawi to volunteer in a primary school and had my eyes opened and fell in love with the "warm heart of Africa". Christmas for me 20 years ago was a difficult one as I returned to the UK and could see the stark reality of life in Malawi compared to all the trimmings of a UK Christmas. It was also the start of my plans to return to build a nursery school for the village where I had stayed. May 2022 will mark 20 years since we started the build and then next October will be a very happy landmark as we can celebrate 20 years of St. Anthony's Nursery School opening its doors 😊



Closer to home all is well, the boys are growing fast, Sebastian is now 9 and Benji turns 6 in January. We had hoped to take the boys over to Malawi before too long but plans will go on hold as Malawi is now on the red list of destinations. Benji has just recovered from Covid, unfortunately it spread through his class but thankfully he bounced back quickly and the rest of us didn't catch it so we were lucky.

Thank you to all who have given in the last year, I am genuinely grateful for the support and donations that have allowed the nursery to survive during these difficult and quite challenging times.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and a very happy, safe start to 2022.

With my thanks & best wishes, Gina x

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Please send donations by cheque (The Nursery School) or by bank transfer to:
A/C Name: The Nursery School, A/c No: 32276976 Sort Code: 40 35 09**





Mosquito Nets



Graduation 2021



20 years ago, I travelled out to Malawi for the first time - little did I know how much it would change my life!