

Don McMath Foundation

Newsletter

www.donmcmath.org

info@donmcmath.org

The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – 12th December 2008

Hello All

Well all the fund raising activities for 2008 are now complete and we have ended up with a bumper year. The BEXHILL GARDEN PARTY on 17th AUGUST raised about £1,000 this year it was held at Bexhill Cricket Club. Thanks to all who helped, special thanks to Belinda Beeching, Mark Gale, Dave Hanley, Paula and Derek Lee, Fran and Daisy Mather and Judy McMath.

At the VERWOOD RUSTIC FAYRE on 25TH AUGUST Mick and Judy managed to raise £146 by running a children's games stall. Many thanks to Gary and Claire of the Monmouth Ash for providing a prize of a meal for 2 at the pub.

The VERWOOD CHARITY CLAY PIGEON SHOOT on 31ST AUGUST was the best yet, we managed to raise a total of £1,000 from the day. Many thanks to Judy, Di and Maggie for cooking the bacon and hot dogs and to all at the Manor Gun Club for their help on the day.



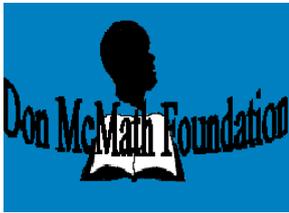
Everything is going well at the school at the moment. The children returned from their summer holidays on 15th September. We now have 240 children at the school in 3 nursery classes and 5 primary classes. We will have the 6th and final year primary in September 2009. September 2010 will see the 1st Upper Basic class in the new building.



Some excellent news is that we have the exam results for Grade 3 and against the national results look really good. The Gambian averages for the 2008 national exams were 20% of grade-three students passed English and 18% Maths according to a Gambian Department of Education strategy published in August 2008. Our results were 65% for English and 89% for Maths, which exceeded our expectations by a long way. Many thanks go to Mr John, Grade 3 teacher for all his hard work in accomplishing these results.



We have decided to alter the plans for the new Upper Basic School from a two-story building to a one story one. The building costs for two stories were working out to be too prohibitive as the materials to give the building enough strength to carry a second floor were far more expensive than



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we expected. The plan now is to build a six room structure similar to the primary school. The work is well in hand, when Judy and Mick left on 5th December the foundations were complete, the walls were being started and the two new cesspits were halfway there. We expect to complete the shell of the building early next year and complete it early in 2010.



Many thanks to the Rotary club of Verwood which has managed to get us a grant of £2,000 to kit out the newest classroom for the Grade 5 class. This has covered the desks, chairs, textbooks, and exercise books and has enabled us to get two second hand computers and printers.

We have a new trustee, Nick Marshall. Nick lives in Hastings and is married with two daughters. He started his teaching career at the same time as Don and was instrumental in introducing Don to Anne. Last year he arranged a sponsored bike ride for the school which raised £2000 and came over to Gambia with the Sussex over 50s cricket team on tour. While he was here, he attended the British High Commission with Anne to officially hand over the cheque from the bike ride. We think he will be a great asset to the charity as he will be able to spread the word to new potential sponsors. Welcome Nick.

In the last newsletter we had an update on the teachers at the Nursery school and other staff, for this newsletter we have included details of the primary teachers.

Nenetta Mendy (Grade 1)

I was born on 10th September 1969 & I am married with four children, who are all boys. I am a Gambian & graduated from the Gambian College with a Primary Teachers Certificate & taught in Roman Catholic Schools for four years, before coming to this school. I like teaching children & I am very proud being a teacher at the Don McMath Foundation School.



Sait Gaye (Grade 2)

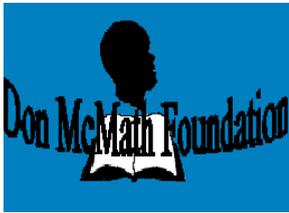
I am a single Gambian man aged 26. I live in Abuko village & have two brothers & one sister. I qualified as a Primary School teacher in 2006 & started working at this school on the 18th September 2006. I am very pleased with my work as a classroom teacher.

Segismund John (Grade 3)

I am a Sierra Leonean & a single parent of a boy who lives with me. I have a diploma in English & have been teaching in Sierra Leone & Gambia for 15 years. A lot of my free time is taken up with caring for my son, but I also like to read, listen to music & I am involved in Community activities.



Unfortunately one of our teachers, Mr Saidu has left. He has got a job with Africel in their Publicity Department. They have agreed to sponsor him for a distance learning degree at Leicester University. When he left the school had an assembly for him, both Mr Saidu and the children were in tears. Mr Dembajang is the new teacher for Grade 5 & is teaching Maths to G4



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& G5 and Science to G5. Mr Secka has taken over from Mr Saidy (G4) on a trial period. He is teaching G4 & G5 English, Grade 4 Integrated Studies and G5 Social & Environment Studies.(S.E.S)



Congratulations to Fatou Damba (ne Jallow) on her wedding on 30th November. She has married Lamin S Damba, Lamin is a project manager for the U.N. They are living at Yumdum with Fatou's two children from a previous marriage. Anne joined them for the Tobaski meal & says they are very happy together.

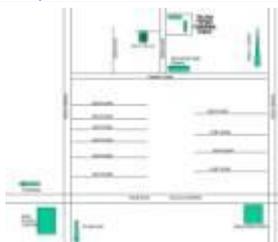
Mick and Judy had a week in The Gambia at the beginning of December and managed to get all the class photos taken. If you sponsor an individual child you should receive the class photo with this newsletter, if you haven't then please contact Mick.



There are two vehicles travelling out to The Gambia in January 2009 one of which will be donated to the school. Many thanks in advance to The Artful Bodgers (Roger Bruton & Richard Freeman) and Tim Mowat for their efforts. More about them in the next newsletter.

Their website is:

<http://www.bruton.fr/banjul/index.htm>



For anyone visiting the school in the future we now have a map to help you find it. Apologies for omitting the following from the last newsletter. Thank you to Graham Cook for providing and cooking the salmon at the Verwood Garden Party and an extra big thank you to Di Pomeroy who once again provided all the deserts for both the garden party and Judy's 60th.

34 children joined the school in September & we URGENTLY need new sponsors. If you can spread the word among your family & friends we would be very grateful. They can pay monthly - £5.00 or annually - £60.

If anyone who currently receives this newsletter through the post is now on email could you please email us at the above email address so we can email you future newsletters as this will cut down considerably on our costs.

We would like to wish all our sponsors a very Merry Christmas & a Happy new Year. Many thanks for all your support during 2008.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath

December 2008