



The Don McMath Foundation

## The Don McMath Foundation Newsletter – May 2016

Charity number: 1100164

76 Manor Road, Verwood, Dorset, BH31 6EA

Telephone: 01202 823317 Email: [info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org) Web site [www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org)

Hi All

It's been a while since we sent out the last newsletter but everything at the school is going well at the moment. As of January 2016 we have been running for 13 years. Since the opening of the first school building in 2005 we have built and opened two new classroom blocks and a school hall which means that we now take in children at the age of 5 and educate them until they are about 16 or 17 and take the equivalent of the UK GCSE exams. If they do well enough in these exams they are able to go on to senior education at NUSRAT, our preferred senior school, for 3 years. Our first children started senior school in September 2013. 11 out of 14 children in our highest class were accepted. In 2014 we had 8 out of 18 accepted, last year we did even better and got 12 children accepted. We currently have 356 children in the school of which 88 are in nursery, 170 in primary and 67 in upper basic. We also have 31 that we are paying for at NUSRAT.

One wonderful piece of news, hopefully most of you will be familiar with Hamsa and his disabilities, Anne phoned him in Germany on 22nd May. He said that he is walking well and one of his arms has been operated on. For the first time in his life he is able to write using his hand rather than with his foot! He is waiting for further funding (7 charities have paid for his operations so far) to enable him to have his other arm done. He is learning German and says that he is getting on well.

In April, Mick & Judy travelled up to Southport, just north of Liverpool to talk to the ladies of the Soroptimist International group about the school. They gave them a presentation covering how the school was first started through to the setting up of the Emergency Fund last year. This was followed by the presentation of a cheque for £1,000. Many thanks to the Soroptimists for this and the subsequent cheque for £166.



The Soroptimists have also held other fund raising events including a barbeque an African Lunch and "Dinner at the Opera" (with Opera Viva).

On 25th May Judy and Mick gave the same presentation to the Sisterhood of the Holtwood Methodists who also presented them with a cheque.

Many thanks to Ringwood school for their donation of £250 raised from their non school uniform day and to Onslow Infant school in Guildford for their donation of £303, this was the grand total of pennies raised during a recent "Maths Week".

Many thanks to Jasmine Kay-Moyle who once again shipped out teaching resources, clothes etc.



After long and careful deliberations we have decided that we will no longer be holding our annual garden parties. The amount of work involved is considerable and we are not getting any younger! We are looking for other ways of getting our sponsors together, we would welcome any suggestions from any of our supporters.

Having received several donations including one for £10,000 it was decided that we would purchase and ship out some new resources.

These included desks and chairs for Grade 5 & 6, who were still using the old second hand tables and chairs. We were also donated 3 very good condition filing cabinets, which Anne filled with library books and clothes that had been donated.

We also bought 7 new lap-tops for the computer room. We are going to run two training sessions for our teachers this year as a lot of them are not yet computer literate. This will then give us more teachers who can help our students. We give our NUSRAT and Upper Basic students access to the computer-room, but are hoping to extend classes to Lower Basic.

Anne has again been visiting homes to decide which children to take in September 2016. She had about 170 children register, so it is not an easy job to decide on the 33 she has enrolled. We have had twins before, but for the first time we have got triplets. As they all look very similar it might be very difficult for the teacher to tell them apart. We do have a policy that any siblings sit separately so they can develop their own personalities.

We set up a Hardship Fund in March last year, as it became obvious that some families were really suffering financially and several of our children were having a crisis in their life. We now have a Pastoral Care teacher (Mrs Jallow) who the children can go and talk to about any problems they may have. Sometimes it is something simple like falling out with a friend and she will mediate between them. She has also been asked by a boy to help find his father, who he had never met. His mother died a few years ago and he has been living with grandparents. She managed to find the father and they have now both met.

However we have had some things that needed financial help. We never give money to a family, but pay for things ourselves. A lot of these children are orphans and live with Grandparents or Aunts and Uncles, and money can be very tight. Some examples of the fund's use are paying for medical treatment and prescriptions for several children, paying the fares for several pupils who attend NUSRAT. Support for 2 children whose father died suddenly. Support for a girl living in appalling conditions, no water, electric or roof on house

We have bought bags of rice for a few families, when the children have not had enough to eat.

We have also dealt with some more very serious incidents, which have left us with quite a lot of expense. Several people have now contributed to the fund and we would like to thank them all.

Grade 9 had their practical assessment for Art National Exams. They had to produce three different pieces of work, the materials all sourced from natural materials in the Gambia. The pupils mainly did tie-dyeing, clay work, and pictures in wood. However one girl made a plane and another a door mat from recycled materials.

At the end of May our Grade 9 start their National Exams



(similar to GCSE's) and if they get high enough grades they can get a place at NUSRAT Senior School to do West African exams. (similar to A levels) If they get a place we pay their fees for the 3 years they are there.

It is quite an exciting time for the school as the first intake of children that went to NUSRAT (Grade 12) have just taken their final exams and we hope to get the results sometime in June or July. Many of Grade 12 children have

volunteered to help at the school while awaiting the results so the head (Mr Jeng) has assigned them different jobs. Some are working as teacher's assistants, some in the Library and some helping administration.

Thanks to the new sponsors who have signed up over the last few months we always need more! Over the last 12 months we have lost sponsors of 29 children and gained sponsors for 41 but still have about 40 unsponsored children. Please pass this on to anyone you think might like to sponsor a child, as Anne has mentioned in the past "£5 a month is only the cost of a bottle of wine!"

Please note the website address: [www.donmcmath.org](http://www.donmcmath.org) and the email address: [info@donmcmath.org](mailto:info@donmcmath.org). You can also reach Anne and Mick via: [anne@donmcmath.org](mailto:anne@donmcmath.org) and [mick@donmcmath.org](mailto:mick@donmcmath.org) .

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

Thank you all for your support.

Anne, Judy and Mick McMath – May 2016

