

Bridging the Gap

Dear Friends, it is with heartfelt and sincere thanks that we bring you this update on the work of Bridge of Hope Children's Ministry (BOHCM). Because of you, children are being released from poverty, the local Health Centre is now treating 50 patients a day and the District Officials in Rukungiri are praising God for the impact BOHCM is making in the local communities.

During the recent visit to Uganda our group of eleven were invited to attend the official opening ceremony of the Health Centre. On arrival a crowd of excited children known to BOHCM surrounded our mini bus to greet us, all of them lively, smiling and playful. Such a transformation – gone were the skin infections, the tired and fearful glances and worried frowns, all replaced with squeals of delight, laughter and hugs.

The ceremony commenced with speeches and thanksgiving, the children singing and their guardians dancing. The guest of honour duly cut the ribbon and we looked around inside the Health Centre, met the nurses and then shared lunch together.

During our time in Uganda we visited sixteen of the children in their homes and everyone met their sponsored child and the guardian who cares for them. They were all so welcoming and we received many comments such as, "I never thought such support would come" – "I can now feed the children and we have clothing" – "I can manage to pay the school fees". It was so apparent that the level of anxiety faced daily by these hard working guardians has been dramatically decreased due to the regular support they receive through BOHCM.

We are currently supporting fifty children, and on Friday May 28 all the children and guardians, the BOHCM volunteers and many District Officials gathered to see the monthly support distributed. The guardians also received additional groceries, soap, clothing and some toys for the children. It was a noisy, colourful and very enjoyable occasion. The new Income Generating Activity (IGA) was launched and seven families received a mature goat.

Once the goats produce kids they will be offered to another family.

Eight of the guardians happily received a Bible in the local language and the recently registered children all received a mattress and blanket.

Then came the highlight of the day when each child received the gift their sponsor had sent them. There was such excitement, such fun and it was a real blessing for us to witness this special time.

We have now received the final Bill of Quantities for the first two bungalows to be built and have agreed the work should go out to tender. Plans are underway for Ben, our current voluntary coordinator in Uganda, to receive a wage and work full time for BOHCM, as his dedicated attention is now required. The plans for the next "Protected Spring" are progressing well thanks to the fund raising events by energetic music students and lecturers at South Downs College in Southsea. The new web site is under construction courtesy of a wonderful company in Enfield (more details soon) and a link has been established with a local primary school in Uganda. Because of the commitment of each of you amazing people, many vulnerable children now have "Hope" for a secure and brighter future.

If you would like to become more involved in the work of BOHCM we would love to hear from you, simply send us an email with your ideas.

Finally we give thanks to God for all this progress and also for blessing Ben, our voluntary coordinator and his wife Hilda with their first child, a boy born in June 2010.

*I love the Lord, for he heard
my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear
to me,
I will call on him as long
as I live.*

Psalm 116: 1-2

