

Bridging the Gap

Dear Friends of BOHCM

As we start a New Year, we wish to express our sincere thanks to you all. Despite the many challenges facing people today you have faithfully supported BOHCM with your prayers, financial support and encouragement.

Bridge of Hope School

It is hard to believe that it is 10 years ago that we stood and stared at an empty plot of land wondering if we could possibly build a simple two classroom nursery school in order to offer good quality Early Years Education to the local children. This vision was realised in 2012 and two members of teaching Staff were duly

appointed. The success of this programme, the requests from the local community and promptings from God led us to step out in faith and build more classrooms each year until we have finally established a fully working Nursery & Primary School, consisting of ten classrooms and twenty members of staff.

In November 2022 we were delighted to participate in the "10 year celebration" of the founding of the school. The day started early with much excitement as 350 Primary age children met two kilometres



from the school ready to march behind a brass band along the main road back to the school accompanied by a police escort. It was such a colourful, enjoyable and very special occasion and the local community cheered us on from the side of the road as they watched the wonderful parade.

As we drew nearer to the school we were joined by the nursery children to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to join in the fun. Once back at the school the

children enjoyed netball and football matches followed by their wonderful singing and dancing and the opportunity for each class to give a presentation. All 460 children attended the event as did most of their guardians or parents. Many of these children would never have been able to attend school without our provision of bursaries for the neediest children.

Speeches and thanksgiving from our Head teacher, Local Mayor and many other welcome guests rounded off the day which was brought to a Grand Finale with the distribution of sodas and buns to over 900 people. It was such a God given privilege to be present and despite heavy rains all week not one drop fell to spoil this very special day.



Child Sponsorship

It was with great pleasure that we arranged to distribute the gifts and letters from the UK to 148 children. Two meeting points were arranged on

consecutive days to enable every child and their guardian the opportunity to send a message back to their sponsor. Our teachers joined us to translate letters and help record the messages in English, although some of the older children are now able to write their own letters. It was so heart-warming to hear the testimonies of the guardians who recount story after story of how hopeless they used to feel trying to care for the children without the means to do this well. Now they can confidently describe how sponsorship has improved their ability to feed and

educate the children and they feel secure knowing support and advice is on hand through the BOHCM Staff.



One mother said in her own words, "I was running mad and felt like killing myself, our house had collapsed and we had no shelter or food. Now today as I speak I am feeling well and caring for my family. My children can eat and they go to school because of Bridge of Hope and our dear sponsor." Please never doubt the importance of your sponsorship, it is making an incredible difference.

We also visited more homes to assess and register children for sponsorship, this was not an easy task as it had rained most days and the rural roads looked more like muddy, rocky river beds. Several times our vehicle slid off the track and we needed help to get moving again. However, all these journeys were fruitful and we managed to register seven more children two of whom have disabilities and a young orphan girl with only one eye.

If you have been thinking about sponsoring a child it costs just £15 per month and this helps the whole family. Please do contact us for more information; we would love to hear from you as we have children waiting for sponsors.

Children's Village

It is always such a joyful occasion to arrive at the Children's Village and be greeted with such large smiles and hugs from the children followed by their presentations of vibrant singing and dancing. We met Catherine the House Mother for the first time, she joined the village in July last year and has settled in well and is building good relationships with the children. We quickly set about planning some renovations to Hallelujah one of our two homes, and both bathrooms are now tiled to protect the floors and walls and all the other rooms



were painted throughout. We hope that later this year we can plan to do the same in Genesis the other home as it is also in need of these improvements.



As always the children enjoyed our attention and spent a happy time learning to cut, colour and make snowflakes which they were very proud of. Lots of fun was had with bubble wands and of course football and volleyball in the grounds. Elijah the newest member of the family has recovered from his fractured leg and much to our relief was running around chasing bubbles and getting into mischief. The children celebrated Christmas with special meals and a large cake and sodas.



They also enjoy attending church where several of the older children present the readings. It is so good to see them growing into confident and healthy young people.

We are often asked if we need anything for the Children's Village and we would love to take them some LEGO. If you have any you could donate to BOHCM please contact us. We will take it to Uganda once we have collected enough. The children also need some school shoes and trainers that are still in good condition.

Clean Water Saves Lives

Water is a basic need for health and sanitation and yet many families in Uganda are still using dirty ponds for their daily water supply. This contaminated water can transmit diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, typhoid and polio and affects the ability of families to care for their children. Children are frequently sick and guardians are unable to work or afford frequent medical support for their families.



In November we commissioned our 46th Protected Spring and are pleased to say it is now providing clean water to a whole community.

Date for your diary

Saturday 25th March – 10.30^{am} to 12.30^{pm}

Spring Fayre & Clothing Collection. Donations of new gifts would be welcome, please bring them along to the event. *More information to follow soon.*

News

Youth Sports – It is so encouraging to see the children from the local area attending our “Youth Sports” session on a Sunday afternoon.

Hillary the supervisor of this programme is still so enthusiastic and encourages



many children to come and participate in the fun and to learn new skills. He was also delighted with the footballs, boots and other play items that were donated to this project.

Vocational Training – We have more students completing their Vocational Training at the end of January and will be assessing for more students to join their chosen course.

BOHCM School – Sadly we have recently heard that two of our teachers have moved away and we now urgently need to recruit for more staff to join the school.

Finally we would like to thank you for taking time to read this Newsletter. It is great to have the opportunity to show you what we do with your invaluable support. We also look back over the past year and give thanks to God for his many blessings and the lives that are being transformed in Uganda.

Prayer points

- Give thanks for the healing of Elijah's leg
- Give thanks for our new House Mother
- Pray that more people will sponsor a child
- Pray that more teachers will be appointed

Psalm 9:9-10

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord have never forsaken those who seek you.

