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On the day we visited the school we left for an overland journey of about one-hour with a truck following shortly behind. Upon arrival at the school we were met by Laurence Bosire, the head teacher, together with the school chairman and a local government officer as well as over 300 children and parents. As the truck was a few minutes behind us I had time to tease Laurence. I commented on the very long list he had sent me of what the school needed. I teased him that it was very difficult to choose what to buy so we had bought everything. I told him we had 50 boxes and three cases on the truck. It was a very emotional moment.

In Nairobi we visited two bookshops from whom I had ordered the school supplies and to pay for the same. Governors Camp, where we stayed, arranged for the items we had bought to be put on a lorry for the seven hour drive (longer if there has been rain) to the Massai Mara. My son and I took the easy option and took a small plane for a one hour flight.

My second concern was that we would have problems with import duty at Nairobi. Again no problems as there was no-one there!

You will recall that the school is in the Massai Mara, Kenya and some 100 miles west of Nairobi. On 11 September 2003 my son Jamie and I left England for the school. We took together with us hundreds of pens and pencils that had been kindly donated and also footballs together with a pump and tennis balls. My initial concern was that as we had excess luggage we would have to pay extra at the airport. This was not to be because through a friend we were able to take all our luggage. As an added bonus we were given emergency exit window seats and had plenty of legroom for the 8 1/2 hour flight to Nairobi.

THANK YOU.

From the children and teachers of Mara Rianda School a very big

“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”

Dear

26 September 2003

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HERTFORD
HERTS SG14 1HH
TEL: 01992 503372
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With the funds raised we delivered: -

Clocks	Pens	Exercise books
Calculators	Pencils – Coloured and plain	Textbooks: -
Files	Pencil sharpeners	English
Glue	Rulers	Maths
Football	Maps & atlases	Science
Volley balls	Writing paper	Religious Education
Tennis balls	Drawing paper	Geography/History
Skipping ropes	Blutack	Swahili
and more	Dictionaries	Teachers guides

And of course CHALK!

I was asked to speak to the children and parents. I told them that over 100 people in England had raised money for the school and these goods were a gift from them.

The boxes were unloaded by the children and taken to a room for unpacking and sorting. Jamie and I were then invited to a meeting with the head teacher, chairman of the school, teachers and parents. We discussed the needs of the school. It has neither electricity nor running water. A fence around the school buildings is needed to prevent the wildlife from coming too close and to provide a boundary in which flowers and plants could be grown and not eaten by the animals. I had met Naela, a young girl of about five years, who had been taken by a Hyena from nearby. She had lost most of her scalp and had suffered severe facial and skull injuries. Despite this she looked so pretty. Fortunately doctors in Nairobi have treated her. As there are a sufficient funds to pay for a fence I said we would fund the same so long as parents contributed 50KS/(c40p) per family. I have been advised that we should encourage contributions in order that they can feel it belongs to them.

The school and indeed the local villagers rely on rainwater and when that runs out they collect water from the river which is about one mile away. I asked about the possibility of drilling for water and using a wind or hand pump. I was advised that it could be done as the water table is not too deep but the cost is prohibitive. As we discussed this, the words *'Water is Life'* flashed through my mind.

We had taken with us drawings and notes from local Hertford school children and the Mara Rianda children gave me many drawings to bring back home. Written on one of the drawings was 'read Psalm 114'. The last line reads '...changes rocks into pools of water and solid cliffs into flowing springs'. That evening at the camp I overheard a man at the next table to us say the words *'Water is Life'*. It seemed to shout at me. I have arranged for a quotation for the cost of providing fresh water by means of a well or pump. It is expected to be between £5,000 and £10,000.

We returned to the school the following day and saw the pens, pencils, rulers and exercise books being handed out. In the classrooms all the pupils had brand new textbooks. The excitement of the teachers and pupils was tremendous. The schools needs are great. Further books have been ordered and Governors camp is again arranging delivery.

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