

Richard Long & Co

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“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



Mara Rianda Primary School pupils dancing

Thank You

for your support and continued interest in the Maasai community at Mara Rianda.

In September Pola and I return to the Mara, it is always an exciting thought as we feel like a part of this community. What a privilege. As I have said many times before the Maasai people are a unique race and they have become so special to us, that it is now inconceivable for me not to go. I am also conscious that my return journeys are necessitated by your interest and support, for which I would like to thank you. We could not have achieved what we have done without you.

In February I signed a contract for the construction of a new kitchen and dining room. Funds were generously donated for the building of this last year, but as we are learning that obtaining supplies and reaching agreement regarding the requirements takes time. No one is ever in a rush in the Mara! The work should be completed by our return trip in September, together with ten new latrines. The kitchen and dining room will need to be furnished.



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Our first student graduated from Sosio Secondary School in December 2009. Jonathan initially contacted us two years ago to say that his brother was unable to continue paying for his education. His brother was working at a local tourist camp and because of tribal clashes during the election time many tourists avoided the Mara, which meant staff at the camps were at best given extended unpaid leave. Jonathan was desperate to complete his education and contacted us. A generous supporter offered to help Jonathan and he has worked very hard.

In February we agreed with the Headmaster at Mara Rianda Primary School for Jonathan to volunteer to help there for a term as a way of helping the community. This is something we are also looking into for our seven graduates this December, Susan, Francis, James, Joseph, Mike, Raphael and Simon.



Jonathan teaching at Mara Rianda Primary School

Through the amazing generosity of a sponsor Jonathan is now being funded through Narok University to read 'Education Arts'; his preference is History and he would like to become a secondary school teacher. All of our students are keen to continue their studies but we are uncertain how we will be able to continue to support them with college or university fees.

In January we were able to sponsor a further 11 students into secondary education. Seven joined the others at Sosio Secondary School and four students were offered places at schools in Narok, which is about half way between Nairobi and the Mara. When we were first involved, the children at Mara Rianda achieved very poor grades, the then Headmaster Lawrence, persuaded the Headmaster at Sosio to take on our children. However now with the required textbooks and extra support and teaching our children are attaining higher grades and therefore are being offered better schools. The education department places children into secondary schools.

The schools are graded into National, Provincial and District. National schools being the best. Sosio is a District school but has an excellent Head and we are pleased with the progress of our students, seven of which are Prefects. Many of our existing Mara Rianda pupils are now aspiring to go to a provincial school.



Former pupils of Mara Rianda Primary School now prefects at Sosio

We are continuing to supply sanitary towels for the girls. We are assured that as this has enabled the girls to not miss school that their grades are improving. Thank you for your ongoing support of this.

The windmill at Aitong is working well and the school and community continue to enjoy fresh water. Thank you again.

Tumpes the young man with epilepsy has responded very well to the medication and treatment we were able to provide. We trust that ongoing funds will allow us to continue to support him. We wait to hear how Sarorua the young girl with the distended abdomen has progressed.

It is always a joy to visit the three churches in Mara Rianda. On the Sunday morning when we arrived at our first church, we were surprised to find it empty. We were informed that there had been a fire in the village the previous evening and the pastor was visiting those affected. We were shocked to see the devastation the fire had caused. Twelve shops and family dwellings were totally destroyed. These were constructed with corrugated iron, sticks and cow dung, not much larger than a garden shed. They included small businesses.



Parents inspecting the damage caused by the fire

We spoke to one young couple with three young children who were sitting under a tree on a mattress they had managed to save. The husband was in a state of shock, he said that they had lost everything. His wife sold food that she had cooked. There is no insurance. We were touched by the love and support of the community. An emergency committee was formed. We were able to give some funds for emergency supplies from the Trust including some private donations from supporters.

We continue to support a pre school at Mary's manyatta (village). Kennedy, the teacher has over 50 pupils who are too young to make the one and an half hour walk to Mara Rianda Primary School. At the beginning and end of the day the predators are more active and it is not considered safe for the very young children to walk.



Pre school at Mary's manyatta with painting equipment we have provided

We hope to provide further bursaries for pupils to attend secondary school from January 2010. Last year we were able to provide 11 bursaries. If you are a UK tax payer a bursary can be funded by monthly standing order of £26 for three years. With Gift Aid your donations will effectively be the full amount required to fund one child for four years of education. If you are interested in assisting a child in this way please let me know and return the attached standing order and Gift Aid form.



Young girls at Mara Rianda Primary School with donated gifts

Support is always welcome and greatly appreciated. There is always a need for new books, sports equipment and general school supplies.

Should you be able to give any further support to the school please make cheques payable to The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust.

We are very grateful for the enormous support given by Governors' Camp, without whose assistance we could not carry out this work.



Some of the mothers of our pupils who offer the grateful thanks to you all.

As usual I do apologise if you feel this letter is an intrusion and should you not wish to receive any further letters then please do let me know. Finally thank you for your support and continued interest in the Maasai community at Mara Rianda.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Richard Long.

Richard Long
TRUSTEE AND DIRECTOR
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We now have a website www.mararianda.com generously made by Millie, a supporter in Nairobi