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“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



Thank You

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

My wife Pola and I are often asked what our plans are for our next visit to Kenya. We are not always sure although we know that we need to go. We are not always prepared for what we might face as there are always great needs but it is always a joy to be there.

Six pupils finished their secondary education last November. In February we met with Frances, one of our first pupils to leave secondary school. He was in Nairobi learning to drive and also doing a computer course. He would like to continue his studies and enrol on a certificate course, then a diploma course before going to university. As yet we do not have any promised funding for tertiary education. Frances comes from a very poor family and has such determination. I know he will succeed.



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We felt like proud parents when we met up with Jonathan who is at university in Narok. He was our first student to finish his secondary education following which a generous supporter offered to fund his university education. He is working hard and really enjoying life at university. It would be wonderful if we were able to support more students.

One of our supporters who visited the Mara with us last September designed a graduation certificate for us to present to the students.

We also met Susanne, Joseph, James and Raphael our other graduates in the Mara. Because of the drought Mike was unable to see us as he had to travel far with the family's cattle in order for them to be fed.

All our graduates would like to continue their studies and go to college. It was difficult to tell them that the charity could not offer further support at this stage. If you would like further details please let us know.



Pola and I feel so proud of these students. They are grateful to all those who have committed to support their secondary education. The students' families cannot understand how people who have never met them and live over 4,000 miles away are prepared to make such a sacrifice to educate their children.

I am pleased to report that the charity was able to offer bursaries to ten new students this year for secondary education. It has been decided not to send them to Sosio Secondary School as there have been some tribal clashes and some staffing difficulties. Staff incited students to rebel against the Headmaster leading to the closure of the school for a few weeks. The teachers involved have been moved on and so has the Headmaster. Although our students were not involved it has been really difficult for them.

The Kenyan secondary education system is tiered according to exam results. Some of our primary school students are now gaining good marks and are offered better schools, therefore it is now no longer advisable to send them all to the same school. This is good for the pupils but harder for me to manage to see them all. We decided not to send any further children for the time being to Sosio but to send them to various schools in Narok. Narok is a similar distance away from the Mara but virtually in the opposite direction. We now have 14 children at four schools in Narok and 22 at Sosio in Kilgoris. Unfortunately as you can imagine I now have to deal with five secondary schools which has just exacerbated the problems in communicating with schools in rural Kenya. Seeing all the students when I visit is difficult now as it involves considerably more travel.

At Mara Rianda Primary School we were able to see the new kitchen and dining room being used. It is thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The school continues to grow and more classrooms are desperately needed. I am pleased to tell you that the Charity is now able to fund the building of another new block of classrooms. The building of this should start later this year.



In September I am planning to visit a few primary schools in the Transmara, which is the other side of the Mara River.

The Charity is hoping to be able to support another school and in doing so it will assist in reducing the number of pupils who wish to join Mara Rianda Primary School. I shall report on this in my next newsletter.

We are very grateful to Governors' Camp for allowing Jonathan Sairowua, who works at Governors' to assist us. He was a pupil of Mara Rianda Primary School many years ago. He will visit the new schools with me to assist the Charity and Governors' in making the decision as to which one is appropriate to support.

Jonathan has been a 'God send' as he is able to keep us advised of what's going on in Mara Rianda, Sosio and Narok. He visits all our pupils and reports back to us. This makes life much easier for us.

In March Jonathan flew with us to Narok and 'enjoyed' his first time in a plane. When not jumping the Maasai like to keep their feet on the ground!





Most Maasai women will have their babies in their mud huts. However, if there are complications there are no facilities for them. The local medical clinic at Mara Rianda requested a birthing couch, baby cot and scales. The Charity has funds that we have made available for this.

If anyone would like further information about any of the projects do please let me know.

I have previously mentioned a Canadian film crew who visited the school and produced a story of the Charity's work. You may wish to watch it to see how some of the funds raised have been spent. Please see www.mararianda.com



We were given large quantities of Lego to take on our last visit. The teachers and children had great fun with this 'new' toy.

We are looking to provide further bursaries for pupils to attend secondary school from January 2012. Last year we were able to provide 10 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.

Support is always welcome and greatly appreciated. There is always a need for new books, sports equipment and general school supplies as well as assistance with capital projects. Should you be able to give any support please make cheques payable to The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust.

I would like to thank you once again for your interest and support. It is literally life changing. 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.

Yours sincerely

Richard Long
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