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29 August 2013

“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



Ten years of miracles - ten miraculous years!!

It was the 14th of March 2003, whilst I was on a selfish photographic trip in the Maasai Mara, that I first visited the Mara Rianda Primary School. Lawrence, the then headmaster, in response to my question asking what the school needed said the words that were to change my life. “*Chalk would be a miracle*”. These words, now all too familiar to the supporters of the Charity, have been used as the inspiration to achieve so very much. Ten years on and 24 trips later, I cannot help but look back with enormous humbleness and great wonder and gratitude to all who have supported this work.

Pola and I often reflect and question what would have happened if I had gone to the Isle of Islay, instead of the Mara, as it was toss up between the two places for my photographic jaunt!!



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So what have we achieved over the last 10 years:-

WATER AT MARA RIANDA PRIMARY SCHOOL AND AITONG PRIMARY SCHOOL



Lawrence the former headmaster with some of the pupils on the day that water was first pumped up from the new borehole at the school - 2005



The first time these children have ever seen water come out of a tap. Look at their expressions of wonder - 2005



Pupils at Aitong Primary School collecting drinking water from their then only source - 2005



Pupils at Aitong Primary School after the charity provided a clean source of drinking water -2009

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL EQUIPMENT



Teachers at Mara Rianda Primary school, two of which are funded by the charity



Excited pupils with their very first own pencils - 2003

SOME OF OUR STUDENTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED BURSARIES



Our boys and Susan, our first girl at Sosio Secondary School - 2007



Our first girls at Maasai Girls Secondary School - 2012



Jonathan is now at University



Jonathan's work experience at Mara Rianda School - 2010



Francis receiving his certificate - 2011



Sylvia's work experience at Enkereri School- 2012

NEW CLASSROOMS



The original classroom block at Mara Rianda Primary School 2003, at that time the school had about 250 pupils.



The new classroom block in 2008. The school now has over 1,000 pupils.

KITCHEN/DINING ROOM



Inside the old kitchen at Mara Rianda Primary School - 2010



Outside the old kitchen at Mara Rianda Primary School -2010



The new dining hall and kitchen at Mara Rianda Primary School - 2010



Pupils inside the new dining hall. No longer having to eat outside in the rain - 2010

ENKERERI PRIMARY SCHOOL



Enkereri School's former building - 2012



The new Enkereri School building with the headmistress, Jacqueline in the foreground - 2012

KENNEDY'S PRE-SCHOOL



Support given to Kennedy teacher of the pre-school group at Mary's Manyatta - 2007



Preschool children with books and equipment - 2010

MATERNITY UNIT



The new maternity unit with equipment funded by the charity - 2012



Harrison our community liaison officer with a new born baby and Mum at the maternity unit. - 2012



Pola with the mothers and children of the Mara Rianda community outside the maternity unit displaying blankets knitted by supporters of the charity - 2012



One of the first babies born at the maternity unit - 2012



CHANGED THE LIVES OF HUNDREDS OF INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING SARAURA AND TUMPUS



Saraura – had a life saving abdominal operation



Tumpus – receives ongoing medication for epilepsy and support for his visits to the specialist in Nairobi- 2011

PROVIDED WORK FOR LOCAL BUILDERS



Nigel (left) one of our Trustees, with Ambrose (right) our local fundi (builder) discussing the plans for the new medical centre which is currently under construction. - 2013



Laying the foundations for the new medical centre - 2013

I could go on about the fence, latrines, parachutes, books, Lego, uniforms, dollies, sanitary towels and of course chalk. The list is endless. The community are so grateful for all the support that has been given. None of the above could have been achieved without the enormous help of Governors' Camp and Deloitte in Nairobi.

I am known as the 'White Maasai'. When Pola and I visit we are accepted as part of the community, we are invited into homes and showered with beadwork and love. The mama's greet us in the market giving us hugs and kisses and asking for a photo. When I return I always give out photos I have taken. They even joke with us. Mary, a village elder recently said "Richard when I first met you you were like a blade of grass, now you are like a fat buffalo!"

It is no hardship to keep returning and all the while there is a need I will be happy to help these wonderful people.

We currently have enormous problems with the water and pump at Mara Rianda Primary School and we are looking to see how we can solve this. It will be costly. It is hoped that we can fund another classroom block at Enkereri Primary School and provide some accommodation for teachers. The building of the new medical centre is almost completed. There will be a full update in the next newsletter. We have had tremendous support to build it and purchase equipment, but it will need water and more solar power. This will also be costly.

Pola and I also feel that our life has been enriched and our faith strengthened. We are touched by your love and generosity.

During our recent visit to the Mara the headlines in the Kenyan paper 'Sunday Nation' read: "*The Shattered Dreams Of Bright Pupils*". "*Hundreds of youngsters who qualified to join National schools cannot make it to Form One due to lack of fees*".



It mentioned one boy called James who planned to sell a kidney in the hope that he would raise the money for his education. Fourteen year old children are pleading in a national newspaper for support with school fees. That is how desperate they are for an education. We are so grateful that we have been able to help 68 children to date to go to secondary school.

We are looking to provide further bursaries for pupils to attend secondary school from January 2014. Last year we were able to provide 14 bursaries and we hope to do at least the same this time. If you are a UK tax payer a bursary can be funded by monthly standing order of £26 for four 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 I shall let you have a 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. 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 should you ever wish to come and join us in the Mara to see firsthand the work we are involved in please let me know.

Thank you so much for your help and support.

Yours sincerely

Richard Long
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And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6 v8 (NIV)