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“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



Pola and I are always filled with wonder and amazement when we hear the news that a baby has been born in the Mara. What a privilege it was to be at the medical centre and hear that there were two mothers about to give birth and to hear the news the following day that both babies were delivered safely.

Harrison our community officer recently sent me a photo of a baby born in the maternity unit. I received the photo two hours after the baby was born. Amazing!

The medical centre is being put to good use. Earlier this year an ophthalmic team visited the Mara and held a two day eye clinic and there were 12 patients who were operated on and required an overnight stay.

It fills our hearts with joy and pride that so many people support the Trust. It allows the funding of projects such as this.

Cervical cancer screening and diabetic clinics have also been held, providing treatment and screening that may otherwise not have been sought or available. All potentially lifesaving.



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We felt like proud parents when we visited the Maria Rianda Village Tourist School to learn that one of our graduate sponsored students is now deputy head. It was also a touching moment to hear him explain to his class about the Trust and how it had sponsored him. This school was initially started by the local community and is now growing. We also have two graduate students, Gideon and Sammy, teaching at Mara Rianda Primary School.

Kevin, another graduate student is being supported by the Trust to train as a lab technician and we were able to meet and have lunch with him in Narok.



Once they have finished secondary school, and before they commence employment we encourage pupils to help out at the projects supported by the Trust.

Josephine, another former student, is pictured here at Nasalie's village preschool, with the children who are too small to walk to the main village. Josephine is now employed full time as a teacher at the preschool.

These former students are a true witness as to how the Trust has helped one person who in turn will help many others.

We continue to travel to Narok to visit our sponsored children. At present 54 children are placed in six schools. It is a long day, leaving camp at 6.30am, stopping for a picnic breakfast prior to arriving at our first school around 9.30am. Our time at each school is brief, with enough time to greet the Head and settle up with the Bursar! Pola speaks with the children until I finish and then I spend a few precious minutes with the pupils, often talking about football, as they all follow the English Premier League. Just enough time to educate them on which team they should support before we leave to travel on to the next school.



This is very different from when we first began sponsoring children and they were all in one school. It is so vital for us to meet with the children and find out how they are and if there are any difficulties. We have recently been informed that two girls became pregnant and have now given birth. The students' contract with us is that we will not continue to support them should this happen. The girls would like us to continue to support them and this is a dilemma for us, knowing how important their education is. However having missed a year from school, they will need to repeat a year adding to the cost of their sponsorship.



I am having ongoing discussions with Mara Rianda Primary School, as they have requested a new dormitory for the girls.

The current dormitory is overcrowded, with three girls in some beds. It has been made out of mud and wattle and leaks. It is disintegrating in places and is unsafe. I have had some plans drawn up for a much larger stone building, which includes new adjacent toilet facilities. We have received a quotation of just under £70,000 which unfortunately appears to be prohibitive.

Enkereri Primary School continues to thrive and grow as we continue to support it.

You may recall that we funded the building of a kitchen to provide meals for the children. However this has highlighted that many families cannot afford to pay for lunch for their children. It is disheartening how poor many of the families are and we are looking at the feasibility of supporting the school in this. The cost of providing a child with lunch for a year is just £25, or £20 with Gift Aid.



You may remember Saraura who some time ago was very ill and through the Trust, was able to receive medical assistance for a lifesaving stomach operation. We are pleased to report that she is thriving and in her final year at Mara Rianda Primary School.

The Trust is very grateful to Hovsep Yergatian, a website designer, for upgrading and maintaining our website without charge. If you have not seen the website do please have a look at www.mararianda.com Hovsep lives in Los Angeles, 5,500 miles from the UK and nearly 10,000 miles from Kenya. Amazing modern technology!



A question for you. When is a goat not a goat? When I put a photo of me holding a sheep in the last newsletter and told you it was a goat. I would love to say it was done deliberately to see how many people would notice, but it wasn't. I was quickly corrected by my friends in Kenya and told a sheep is a MUCH more prestigious gift than a goat.

And this is definitely a picture of a leopard!

If you are a UK tax payer a bursary can be funded by monthly standing order of £30 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 wish 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.



Should you ever wish to come and join us in the Mara to see first-hand the work we are involved in please let me know. September is normally the best time to join us as this is the time of spectacular wildebeest migration.

Whatever your faith or belief, Christmas is a very special time of year. Pola and I are constantly encouraged by your interest and support and this we will never take for granted. May I conclude with our personal Christmas greetings and thank you once again for your interest and support, which as you have seen over the years, is literally life changing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard".

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)