

Richard Long & Co

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Dear

“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



Seasonal Greetings

and a big

Thank You

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

My wife Pola, my son William and I recently visited Mara Rianda and were delighted to see the local women coming to the school with their large plastic drums to fill with water. The children also come to school daily with plastic containers to fill with water to take home. The water is used by the staff, children and the local community, words cannot adequately describe their enormous gratitude, it is overwhelming.

Most inadequately I pass their immense thanks on to you; without you this would not have been possible.



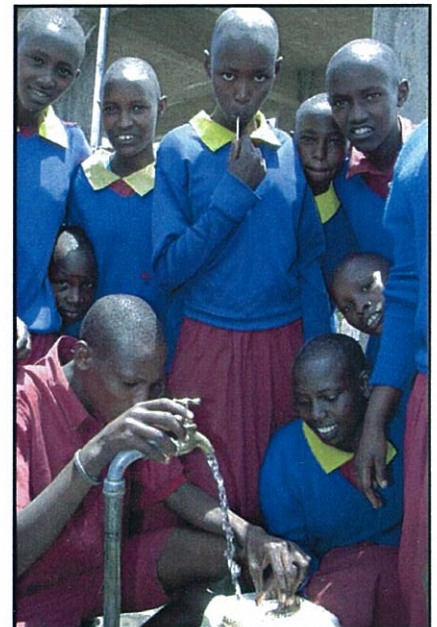
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Just a few days ago I heard from the Headmaster who told me "The rains have come, though late. The borehole water has been a big boost to the community as all streams apart from the dirty big river had dried up."

The provision of water has had an enormous impact on the school and community. No longer do they have to walk for miles to find water, which when located would probably be muddy and dirty with many unpleasant things in it. Upon arrival at the school the children are now being encouraged to wash their hands and faces, in particular their eyes. Whilst this will not eradicate eye disease it will help reduce it and the abundance of water now available means that this can easily be done.



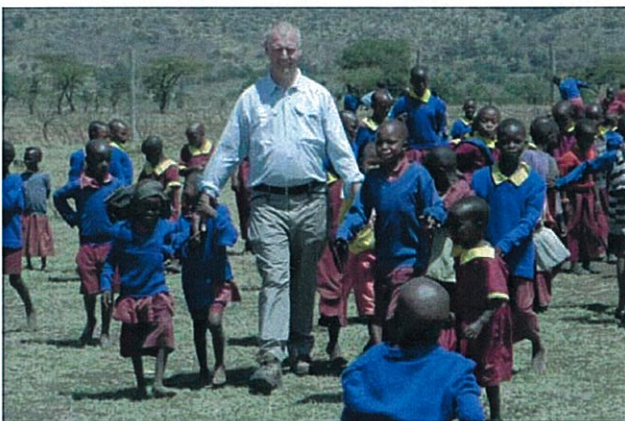
It is a requirement of the World Health Organisation that where a Non Government Organisation provides a borehole the water must meet the WHO requirements. Kenya generally has high fluoride content in its water and we must therefore provide a filter to reduce it. It appears that dirty river water with animal effluent is acceptable but clean fresh water from 150 metres underground is not! We need an appropriate filter, which including installation, will cost nearly £5,000.

During our visits to the Mara Rianda School we have been privileged to get to know many of the pupils. One particular boy, David, had not returned to school after the August break because his mother was very ill and he was needed to stay at home to take care of her. However, David heard of our visit and came to see us and asked if we would visit his mother and pray for her. David lives in a manyatta which we refer to as Mary's village. Mary is the village elder. It is very unusual for a female to be the village elder, but because she speaks excellent English she has been elected.

On arrival at the village we were greeted by Mary who took us to David's house. His mother and other family members were sitting outside their little mud house. We discovered that she had been ill for some time, she had taken some herbal remedies and had visited the local dispensary but was not improving. The nearest hospital is over 30 miles away. We felt so inadequate yet so privileged to be standing over this frail Maasai woman with her son whose amazing faith lead him to ask us to come and pray.

As we were about to leave David said "I want to finish school so that I can make life better here". Though David is 15 years old he is only in year four as he did not start school until he was 11 years old. Young boys are needed by their families to help with the sheep and goats.

One of the main purposes of this trip to Kenya was to visit a secondary school to which some of the children from Mara Rianda School will hopefully be able to go. The school is in Kilgoris which is a three hour drive, over 40 miles on mud tracks and roads. The majority of children board at the school because it is too far to travel daily.

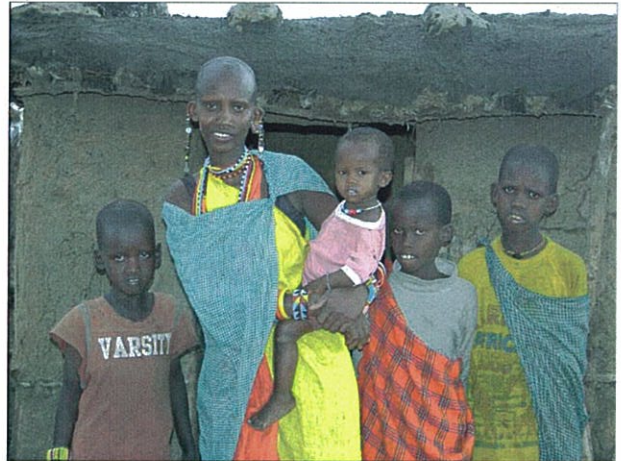


Very few children actually go on to finish secondary school as this has to be paid for. To pay for schooling the parents would need to sell some cows but that is not the only issue – while the children are studying who will look after the cattle or go to fetch water? With the help of bursaries, which we wish to set in place, we shall send some children to secondary school. The cost for four years is c£1,200, this includes not only the cost of tuition and school equipment but also includes board and food.



A bursary can be funded by a monthly standing order of £26 for three years. This amounts to £936 but if you are a UK tax payer, with Gift Aid your donations will effectively be the full amount required to fund one child for the four years. 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.

Notwithstanding the bursaries further support is always welcome and needed. 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 would you please make any cheque payable to 'The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust'.



Over recent months I have deliberately refrained from bombarding you with appeals and updates about the school but have been encouraged by so many people always asking me for updates. As usual I do apologise if you feel this letter is an intrusion and should you not wish to receive any further letters then do please let me know.

Finally may I conclude with my personal seasonal greetings and thank you for your support and continued interest in the Maasai community at Mara Rianda.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Richard Long

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