



KAKUNYU SCHOOL

united for the good of the children

Newsletter May 2011

www.kakunyuchildren.org

Welcome to the latest newsletter from Kakunyu School for Children with Special Educational Needs in Uganda. It's a real pleasure to be able to tell you about a few of the events that have taken place since our last edition.

The first visitor of 2011 was Rachel from the UK-based charity "Watering Roots", who visited the school during the Christmas holidays. She delivered some wonderful presents for the children and was the first person who was able to take pictures of the newly installed solar lighting in the children's dormitories. The picture shows Amir, one of Mary's sons, adjusting the control unit. The picture was taken at night, and it's easy to see what a difference the lighting makes to a room that would otherwise be in total darkness.



Rachel is planning to return in the summer, with two groups of Girl Guides who will be undertaking all sorts of activities with the children - can't wait to hear how they get on and I hope that we will have some first-hand reports from them in the next newsletter.

The children returned to school for the new academic year at the end of January. As expected, the number of pupils has increased and we now have a total of 70 students attending the school. We have 30 children who board and 31 day students. We also have 9 students who are unable to travel to the school and are on home-based individual programmes. We have 5 teachers, a cook, and two matrons to look after the needs of the children.

Towards the end of January, 4 of our children with physical disabilities were taken to Katalemwa Cheshire Home for rehabilitation. We are happy to say that they are progressing well and we are planning for more children to spend time there due to the support of Kerlin from the Netherlands. Thank you Kerlin!

In March some of our students took part in the Special Olympics for children with learning difficulties held in Masaka. It was so very interesting for everybody who attended and people learned that though we may be academically challenged we can excel in other areas.

We are so grateful for the support that has been shown to the children of Kakunyu in so many ways. We continue to be blessed by so many acts of generosity, and would like to thank everyone who has supported us in our work to improve the lives of children with disabilities.

We have been able to bring forward our plans for the future thanks to a generous donation from The Performance Coach. We are planning to extend the dormitory block and establish a sponsorship system for the children without parental support. More news to come!

A number of people have said that they would like to hear more details about the staff and pupils at the school, and so I would like to introduce you to one of our most loyal, long-serving and dedicated members of staff, Bisirikirwa Tom (Master Tom to his pupils). Master Tom is 24 years old and has

been working with Mary for 5 years. He is married to Harriet and lives locally. He has been trained by medical personnel to create exercises for the children with physical difficulties and he also teaches many subjects in the school including PE.



Master Tom visits the children on the home-based programmes as often as he can and carries out exercises with them. He tries to ensure that the whole family are trained so that they can encourage their children to reach their potential. Master Tom says

“some of the clients I work with are very far away. I visit as often as transport allows. Sometimes they are missing a lot when I am not visiting and their progress is slow. Sometimes I use my feet and sometimes I borrow a bicycle from someone. It is much easier with a bicycle.”

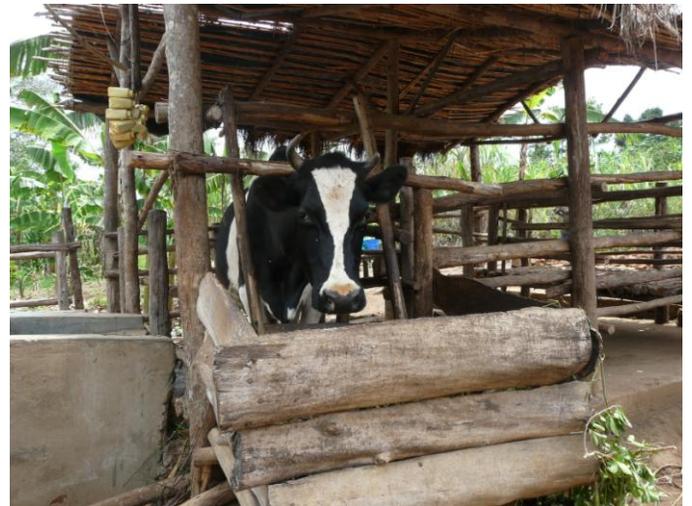
Master Tom will be thrilled to hear that we have recently received a donation that will enable us to buy a “school bike”. Not an airy-fairy go-faster speedy type bike but a solid work-horse that will allow Master Tom to travel to the home-based students so much more quickly and efficiently.

Further donations have enabled us to make sure that every child eats breakfast (porridge) and lunch at the school, thus ensuring that they are learning with a full stomach. We grow as much of our own

food as we can and plan to grow more. The picture below shows some of the pupils during their “weeding” lessons.



Our wonderful cow, Mulungi (meaning “Beautiful”) below, continues to provide sufficient milk to make porridge for the whole school each morning.



As I write, there are visitors at the school who will (I hope) be able to provide some up to date photos of what is happening in Kakunyu; Liv House, a student from UK who is travelling and working in Uganda, and a team from Douglas College, Canada, led by Bob Shebib. Some of Bob’s students have been fundraising for the school and I hope to have more details and pictures for the next newsletter.

Please don’t forget that if you would like to know more about Kakunyu School, just contact Jan Lowe (01494 890675) (jan@kakunyuchildren.org) if you are in UK or, if you are in Uganda, please contact Mary Kabiito (headteacher@kakunyuchildren.org).