



Newsletter No 11

December 2009

Hello Everybody

It is December and once again Christmas is almost upon us with all its festivities, good food and presents. It is a time to remember our relatives and friends, to spread good cheer to people less fortunate than ourselves and a time to reach out to people for who Christmas can be a sad and lonely time filled with memories of years gone by and the people no longer here to share Christmas with them. A time also to think of our vulnerable children in Kwazulu, South Africa and the world over who have nothing to celebrate Christmas with and many of those children are without parents to give them the warmth of a loving home. Nancy Khuzwayo of the Thandukuphila Centre will do her best to give the children something different for them to look forward to and to enjoy. One Life, at this time of year, sends to Nancy £1000 and this money is used to buy a small gift for the children and to give them the excitement of a Christmas Party. This is the highlight of their year and I wish we could all be there to see the children enjoying themselves and, for that moment, carefree, as children ought to be..

One Life has now been in operation for six years and a registered charity for five and a half years. This year we have sent out to South Africa over £25,000 and since the onset I am delighted to tell you that One Life has sent out to South Africa in excess of £105,000 quite an achievement for a small charity and none of it could have happened without the support and caring of you all so my grateful thanks come to you with the hope that you feel able to continue supporting the charity in the years to come.

The same problems continue as we are still losing parents to the AIDS Virus and related illnesses and when that happens we need to be there to help the orphaned children and to support their carers, many of whom are sick themselves or very old (grandparents) or teenagers who take on an enormous task of bringing up little children when they are not much more than children themselves. This means we continually need money for shack repair, mattresses, blankets, warm clothing, transport to school and hospitals and electricity. Electricity means warmth, a hot drink, and electric light bulbs instead of candles, highly dangerous for children living with only older siblings, hence the hospital wards full of children with burns from knocking over a candle. As always I am asking if there is any way at all you could help us raise money to help the children with their all-round care as well as the help we give for their educational needs. It would be wonderful if you could and any small amount donated means so much and goes towards making such a difference in these children's lives. Maybe a car boot sale or a sponsored walk or a sponsored silence at work for a few hours (not easy this one). Any how I will leave that with you now and tell you that our local Anglican church of St Anne's here in Chingford held a fund raise event for us last Sunday December 6th and raised a wonderful £1000 for One Life. They continuously support One Life and I would be lost without them now.

FUND RAISING EVENTS AND DONATED MONIES SINCE JUNE

On June 19th £123.60 was raised from the sale of Greeting Cards/African Jewellery/Artefacts and Bric-a-Brac. This was held in St Anne's church hall after the morning service.

The 12th of August brought another surprise donation of £764 from Thames Wharf Charity.

Christine Foster of Walthamstow donated £250 on August 14th towards the Sponsored Walk.

The Annual Sponsored walk held on September 26th raised £2,132



The 17th of October brought an anonymous donation of £500 for the emergency fund.

On November the 8th £131 was raised from the sale of cards/bracelets etc. This event was held in St Anne's Church Hall.

On Sunday December 6th Penny and David Rolfe organised a fund raise event after the morning church service. This event raised £1,000.

December the 9th brought another cheque from Christine Foster of Walthamstow, this was for £50 towards Christmas for the children we support.

Special thanks go to the Rev Jude Bullock and all the parishioners who support One Life by sponsoring and helping at the fund raising events organised by Penny and David. Also my grateful thanks go to everyone else for their support many who I haven't mentioned here. I would, though, like to make the space to mention three very special young people who unfailingly help support my charity. The youngest is Stefan Keeley of Chase Lane School. He is now eight years old (forgive me Stefan if I have your age wrong) Stefan raises money by joining our sponsored walk each year and raising money from his school and in the past has insisted I take the money from his money box for the children in Africa. The other two young supporters are my neighbours 12 year old Kate Pipe and 10 year old Megan who enthusiastically help at all fund raising events and Megan is shortly manning a stall at school where half the proceeds of money taken is to come to One Life. What an inspiration these three young people are.

Khanya (Nancy's daughter) has for the second time been refused a visa to enter the UK. for a two week visit. I have now applied for the third time via the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP who will forward the application to the minister at the Home Office. I have sent appropriate backing documents and letters which will hopefully now enable Khanya to enter the UK at the beginning of May.



Mr Iain Duncan Smith has shown an interest in raising publicity for One Life and yesterday afternoon, December 10th, he came to my house (the premises of One Life) at 2pm to ask me about my charity and what we do for the children in South Africa and he also enquired about

Khanya and her role in South Africa in supporting her mother Nancy's work with the children at The Thandukuphila Centre and her connection with me and my charity. It was a good visit and I am now hoping that with his help we will be able to bring Khanya over here next year.

FUTURE FUNDRAISING EVENTS

A Ploughman's Supper/ Charity Auction will be held again this year in St Anne's Church Hall. This is organised by Penny and David Rolfe, members of St Anne's Church.

One Life's Annual Sponsored Walk will be held again next year, possibly in September which is a lovely time of year. With all the autumn colours and being a hot sunny day, this year's walk on September 26th proved to be a very enjoyable event.

Both these dates have still to be arranged.

AFRICA NEWS

We have had a year of problems out in South Africa for Nancy and indirectly for One Life. Nancy has so been so ill and was in hospital for quite a length of time because of her diabetes. Two or three times she has nearly died and also, due to the diabetes, she developed terrible ulcers on her feet resulting in a gaping hole in her heel down to the bone and with that came the risk of amputation. I was horrified when I received photos showing me the state of her feet. Luckily she avoided amputation, one of her greatest fears, and slowly, very slowly, her feet are healing but it is taking months and even when they are healed she is in constant pain walking due to severe damage to the nerves ends because of the diabetes.

A few months ago the area where Nancy lives and the nearest town which is Empangeni suffered numerous lengthy strikes, buses, post office, electricity etc. I had no way to contact Nancy or Khanya or to receive any of the documents I need from them for my accountant and new people wanting to sponsor a child. In the end I became depressed and that was an awful time. It is so hard to run a charity to support children in Africa when every line of communication is cut off and you are not really sure what is happening until you are told afterwards. Inevitably, because of the circumstances out there, it is easy to start imagining the worst.

Earlier in the year Nancy had been held at gunpoint outside the bank. This was a terrifying experience for her. Luckily she had only withdrawn £70 for medicines and transport and the immediate needs of the children. The men took Nancy's bag and ran off. No-one passing by came forward to help Nancy as they were scared of being shot.

About two months ago burglars broke into Nancy's house, as luck would have it, there was an electricity cut, so when the men shot at Nancy's husband they missed his head but then pistol whipped him so badly that he ended up in hospital. As they were running out they turned and shot at Nancy and missed her by about an inch. Once again she was totally traumatised and the children who live in the house with her were in an awful state of fear.

The worst thing which happened is only a few weeks ago. The welfare Dept who have been demanding to take back for themselves the Thandukuphila Centre for their own use, leaving Nancy and the children with no-where to go, had a new board election and voted onto the board five men and three women. These men are bad and threw Nancy out of the centre once she realised that they were wanting money for themselves and demanding that Nancy gave it to them. The men then abused and threatened Nancy's female helpers, paid them nothing for being there and used the food for the children for themselves and all their friends. The children from the centre kept going over to Nancy's house saying they were hungry and that the men would not give them any money for medicines. In the end Nancy got a lawyer and the whole matter went to the high court. This was for the third time as the men and their lawyer failed to turn up twice. The court went in Nancy's favour and court orders will be issued against the men so they cannot go near Nancy and a court order will be given to the Welfare Dept ensuring they have no power to remove Nancy from the centre. Once the court orders are issued Nancy will go back to the centre and resume what she does in caring for the children.

The Zulu chief has donated to Nancy another large building which is in total need of renovation but will belong to Nancy and the children not the Welfare Dept as although the department can no longer remove Nancy from the centre they have during the past year taken over nearly all the rooms for themselves and Nancy has very little left space left for the children and the other work she does in support of their carers and for the counselling which goes on for the people with the AIDS Virus or related illnesses. One Life would like to raise money in order for the renovation of this centre to take place so that Nancy and the children can permanently move into it in the near future. Also because of the shootings and

threats to Nancy she was advised by her lawyer to put cameras and an alarm around her home. Nancy has not got the money to do this but has done it anyway because she fears repercussions from the men and is paying for it monthly, a little bit at a time.

There are so many reasons why we need to raise money for South Africa, all the reasons as before eg shack repair, mattresses and blankets, warm clothing in winter, transport, medicines, electricity and the many other needs of the children. Now on top of that we need money to renovate the new centre, build a kitchen and equip it with cookers and urns and pots and pans etc etc and I would very much like to help Nancy pay off the £2000 for the cameras and alarms around her house. I dread to think what would happen if there was no Nancy to help these children.

Our two young people in college are doing very well. One of them, Gugu, finishes college at the end of December. Despite having undergone many operations, a failed heart transplant and now surviving with an artificial heart she has managed to keep up with her studies and can now reap the benefits of all her hard work.. I heard that she has done really well. The other young person in college, Sakhile, despite losing his parents within days of each other then his grandparent has done so well he has been granted a full scholarship and we no longer need to fund him.



I am happy to say that due to an anonymous donation earlier in the year we now have a third young person starting college in February 2010. Her name is Thandisiwe Ntuli and she will take a two year course in Human Resources and is very excited at the prospect of going to college, an opportunity she never thought she would have. My dream is to have a fund just for higher education. With qualifications our young people will have to chance to totally change their lives and that of their families and this will enable this cycle of illness and poverty to be broken.

I cannot envisage ever having enough money to put more than a handful of young people through college but--- many wonderful people have come forward unexpectedly to support my charity in the past so I keep faith that one day we will be in a position to do more.

I would like to remind everyone that we still need people to come forward and sponsor children for their educational needs. It is still £50 per year and this

amount includes money towards school uniforms. It is such a worthwhile thing to do to give a child an education so if you think you know of anyone who may be interested please do contact them and pass on to them my contact details – see below.

Because of the shootings and violence in the area where Nancy lives and works I no longer feel safe, at this moment, to return for my yearly visit to the children, Nancy and to see Sister Emmanuel. That is why I am attempting, despite all the difficulties that I have had so far, to bring Nancy's daughter Khanya over here this coming year 2010, hopefully in May. If we do attain a visa for Khanya then I am aspiring to bring Nancy over here the following year or the year after. This would be an enormous boost to my charity and a wonderful experience for them both. I cannot envisage never returning to South Africa, never seeing our children and young people again, that is too final, so I will just wait and see what the future holds hoping that one day I can safely return.

Sr Emmanuel is quite frail now; she will be 86 years of age in April. She does, however, help and support Nancy in any way she can despite being hardly mobile.

All that remains for me to do now is to wish you all A Very Happy Christmas and A Happy and Healthy New Year and to thank you all once again for your continuous support of One Life. It is you the charities' supporters who enable One Life to function in the positive way in which it does.

Elena Utton (Founder and Trustee)

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