



Newsletter No 15

December 2011

Hello Everybody

Another year has nearly passed and Christmas will soon be upon us. The years seem to fly by these days, unlike when I was young and one Christmas to the next seemed forever. It has been such a beautiful long Autumn after yet another disappointing summer, though I was lucky as when I went to Cornwall at the end of September I was blessed with the only hot week of the year, apart from one in April. I certainly needed this break as running a charity can be very stressful and at times I feel depleted of all energy and I do get stressed from time to time. A break by the sea, down in Cornwall, gives me renewed energy and also puts me in a more peaceful frame of mind and I come back well ready and able to tackle the next problems which will inevitably arise.

This year the township where Nancy and Khanya live and where the centre for the children is run has been without electricity for the last six months. It has been extremely difficult to receive receipts and photos of the children etc and so this newsletter is, sadly, without any photos except one of the sponsored walk, taken, as usual, in Trafalgar Square and one other in the Africa News section. Hopefully, in June, when the next newsletter is due, we should have some photos of the children. I always think that to see photos of the children makes the work I do very real for those of you who support One Life.

Since the last newsletter we have sent out many parcels to Nancy for the children. As their winter arrived we were able to send out wonderful knitted jumpers, really beautiful ones. Eira Endersbee from St Anne's parish church is always knitting for the children and I know that she is now in the process of knitting more jumpers to be sent out for the next African winter. Eira, Jenny Harwood and Connie Gray from Dewsbury, Yorkshire are just three of the many people who support the charity with donations of bras, scarves, gloves, clothing and other items, such as pencils and pens. These are always needed by the schoolchildren, especially in time for the new school year which, in Africa, begins in January. We also send out wind up torches and occasionally radios. Both have helped enormously during the six months without electricity. My aim, when funding permits, is to send out more of each. The radios can make such a difference to the children and carers living in shacks without the basics of water and electricity. Life can be dismal and a radio can bring so much joy into so many lives.

The cost of postage for the amount of parcels I send is incredibly high and I cannot send any more parcels this year but will wait until January or February of next year. I have just bought many colourful, children's scarves at a much reduced price and I have also ordered more torches but all these will now be sent next year in time for winter and the

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cold dark days which, unbelievably, Zululand now gets. Storms and gales wreck havoc and hailstones too, they even have snow which was unheard of a short while ago in such a sub-tropical area.

A short while ago I sent out Christmas stickers for the children in the crèche and also I was able to buy and send several small Father Christmases and snowmen, all with long bendy legs. I think the children will love them. Again this year the charity was able to send money for the children to have a Christmas party with jellies, crisps and sweets and the things children usually have at parties and hopefully there will be enough food for the children to take home as a treat for their carers.

I find it extremely difficult to think of our children over here waking up on Christmas morning to the excitement of Christmas knowing that Father Christmas has once again visited them and then to think of our children in Africa, knowing about Christmas but without expectation of receiving anything at all. That is why when last year I was able to send enough money for Nancy to buy small gifts for the children who come to the Christmas party, at the end of the day, the children went to Nancy to return the gifts she had given them to play with never realising or believing they could take them home.

Many of our children are Christian and Christmas for them is about going to church, seeing the crib and hearing the story of the child Jesus born in a stable. When I think of it, like now, as I am writing about Christmas, I realise that these children were mostly born in shacks, not so dissimilar to being born in a stable. I would love for them to have some of the fun of Christmas and the excitement and expectation on Christmas Eve but --- would not like them to think only of that and lose sight of what Christmas really is all about.

This year, because of the appeal, which raised a phenomenal £6,111 we have sent out to South Africa £32,970. We are the sole suppliers of food for Nancy and the children and over the course of a year this costs a vast amount of money. We helped repair many shacks and because of the appeal we were able to help in many other areas of need.

Since the onset of the charity, £166,328.94p has been sent out and again I would like to thank you all for this wonderful support.

We lost several sponsors this year, for various reasons, but we also gained new sponsors and now we have sponsors and supporters in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales with one in Switzerland and two in Germany. If you know of anyone else who may be interested in supporting our children please give them my contact details. The school fees/uniform remain at £60 per year and can be paid either monthly or yearly by standing order.

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The annual sponsored walk held in September was another fine day and again warm enough for some of us to sit together and eat our packed lunches. The forecast was for rain so not everyone brought food with them but did the whole walk without a break and then went off to eat afterwards. Two of the walkers were a Dr Sanjay Patel and his wife who were both working out in South Africa a couple of years ago when I was last there. They know Nancy and Khanya and really support and believe in the work which they do. Sanjay's parents joined us on the walk, his father is also a doctor. Together he and his wife raised over £1,600, which is a wonderful amount of money making the final total a grand £2,995. I have just one more donation to come in and then we will have reached just over £3,000. I am very grateful to everyone one who walked again this year and helped to raise this vast amount of money. Please, if you can, give a thought to walking with us next year. The funds raised are invaluable.



In July a very unexpected donation of £5,000 came into the charity. This was donated by the AD Charitable Trust with the stipulation that a large part of it be used to put a young person through college. We now have a young man, Brendon, starting college in January. He will be doing a three year I.T. Course. This young man so badly wanted to go to college, with the aim of eventually supporting his siblings and helping them to a brighter future, but for him and other young Africans, college is never an option so after leaving school he tried so hard to get a job but ended up with only odd jobs in peoples gardens. When he heard that he was going to have the chance to go to college Khanya told me that he broke down and sobbed. I wish and have always wished that we had a fund enabling more young people to take up higher education. There are very few good jobs for the young school leavers and the future looks bleak for them. Brendon is our fourth young person to go to college, the other three have now finished and each one has done very very well and has begun to help their siblings towards a better and more hopeful future.

If you are connected at all to a large firm, one who donate yearly to a charity or are thinking of doing so, please remember that because One Life is a relatively small charity we have no overheads and every penny received goes out to Africa and is used for the reason it was given



### **Some of the monies raised and donated since May**

From the May appeal the final total of money donated came to £6,111.

July brought in a very unexpected £5000 from The AD Charitable Trust.

The Annual Sponsored Walk, held in September raised £2,995.

In October £1,400 was donated to One Life.

Also in October £1,000 was received from St Anne's Parish Church. This was half the proceeds raised at the Auction/Pledge/Supper which was held on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

In November £500 was donated and will be used towards further shack repair.

### **.Future Fund-raising Events**

Alice Rolfe may, in the New Year, take part in a mini triathlon event in aid of One Life. She has said that the next fund raising event she does she will do for this charity.

Penny and David Rolfe may, health permitting, hold a garden party between May and the end of summer and this would be in aid of the charity.

Since I met Penny and David down at St Anne's Church they have wholeheartedly supported my charity and held yearly and at times bi-yearly fund raising events for us. They are no longer in the best of health so if any of you reading this newsletter can help at all with an event to raise money and in the organisation of such an event please do contact me.

### **Africa News**

I heard a short while ago that the township where Nancy lives is now with electricity. I am very happy and relieved about this and hopefully next time we will have some photos to share with you all. I had just sent funding out for a scanner and printer when the electricity was cut off and remained so until now. I rely on Khanya to send me photos, documents and the receipts I need for the accountant, letting me know when parcels arrive and answering any questions that you may have regarding the child you support.



Well that was the good news but sadly and worryingly there are still problems as a short while ago after we helped build up the shacks, the township was badly hit by its first ever tornado .The schools were damaged, the shacks damaged and one of the trees came down on top of a shack killing one little boy and badly injuring his brother. The problems are never ending but we have to keep sight of the fact that despite numerous problems, sickness and setbacks we have and still are making an enormous difference in the lives of the children.

I may have told you in a previous newsletter about a little Downs Syndrome girl who was in our crèche. Her mother was raped at the age of twelve just after both her parents died leaving her at that young age to care for and bring up her six younger siblings. She has only now returned to school to take up her education as from the age of twelve there was no money for school fees or food etc. The young mother is now 18 years of age and her little girl is five years old. We managed last year to get the little girl into a residential special school where she can be well looked after and where she can learn to develop life skills. She goes home to her mum in the holidays. It is fortunate that Nancy came across this young family as during my many trips to South Africa I met several disabled children who had no chance of ever receiving help let alone an education.



Nancy has not been very well for a long time now. The basis of the problems stem from diabetes. Many, many Africans are diabetics and suffer, like Nancy, from related illnesses. Nancy has kidney problems and sadly developed a tumour on her spine. She has now had this removed but the tumour damaged several of Nancy's discs caused by the pressure they put on them. This has rendered her unable to walk and a while ago we sent funding for a wheelchair. We also paid for Nancy to have a private scan which showed that right now she is free from cancer. The prognosis is that she may, with extensive physiotherapy, be able to walk again after several more months. Nancy is a very strong, determined woman devoted to helping the children but also dogged with bad health so please keep her and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

It is summer time in South Africa now, a blessed relief after a very cold winter. Now is the time we should be fixing the shacks, making them waterproof and as strong as possible but there is not an abundance of funds in the charity so please, as I mentioned before and as I have no wish to put out another appeal this coming year, if you have any ideas, time to spare and the energy to organise a future fund raising event I would be so very grateful. We need all the financial help we can get.

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As always, my thanks go to you all for your wonderful support. I am overwhelmed at times by your caring and thoughtfulness. I cannot run this charity without you and I appreciate your patience when at times I cannot get the photos or information about your child to you as quickly as I would like to. Please continue to be patient.

All that is left is to wish you A Happy and Peaceful Christmas and to give you My Very Best Wishes for the coming New Year.

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