

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012



Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,

Gillie has just returned from her annual trip to visit our various projects and is keen to let you all know how well everything is going and to thank you, again, for your ongoing help and support.

The Yoann Foundation and helping the disadvantaged

Gillie's trip began in Ouagadougou where she met with the team which runs this important fund to assist women who are disabled or in real difficulty, or who have children who are disabled. The aid given through this foundation is varied: we give money to cover medical / physiotherapy costs or help with housing or schooling expenses. Pictured (right) is young Adama who is both physically and mentally handicapped. Her mother, who has to carry her everywhere, copes pretty well, but all the more so for the help that we give her.



Adama



Giving the sewing machine

We have recently bought a Singer sewing machine for a disabled woman (left) who will now be able to work from home, making things to sell.

We also give food aid (normally sacks of rice and dried fish). In fact, the friars who help to run this foundation took the opportunity to appeal to us for extra funds to meet a rising demand for basic food assistance. This is primarily due to the very poor rainy season last year, which has resulted in a loss of crops and an increased incidence of hunger. We will, of course, be sending them what we can.



Gillie with some of the beneficiaries

Protecting girls and young women

The refuge in the Diocese of Koupéla



The bright and clean dormitory

When Gillie visited the refuge last year, the new dormitory had only just been completed. It was wonderful to see that, even after a year of being in full use, it remains bright, clean and comfortable. Each of the girls has her own bed plus a small lockable cupboard in which to keep her personal belongings. The girls at this refuge are generally teenagers who are old enough to be taught a trade by which to become self-sufficient. This year, however, the refuge has a couple of much younger girls, one as young as 9-years-old. We have undertaken to pay the school fees for these girls and they are now attending a local school and living at the refuge.

Also last year, we gave them the funds to build a small shop from which to sell the things which they make. Sr Clarisse, who oversees the refuge, writes:



The youngest girls at the refuge



Cloth for sale inside their shop

"We have the joy of sending you this letter in gratitude for all that you do for us. Thank you for the concern you have for us. Thank you for your dedication to helping our girls be fulfilled in life. May the Lord, who is generous to those who are generous, repay you. May he bless your projects and give you long life and health. We have received the donation for the building of a small shop, and we thank you. In the face of all that you do, we don't know how to thank you. God alone knows how to give you our thanks.

Sr Clarisse NANA"

Help for a home for girls in Boulsa

Thanks to a recent fundraising event for a home for girls in the parish of Boulsa, Gillie was able to tell the parish priest of Boulsa (Fr Lambert, who was in Godalming in 2007 and 2008) that we would be giving him the amazing sum

of £6,660. This will go a long way to helping his parish pastoral work of providing a home for girls who, for whatever reason, cannot live at home.



Gillie with some of the girls in Boulsa

Village shelters, cows, bicycles and so much else with which Fr Paul helps us



Children doing their homework

Father Paul's help is invaluable in pointing us in the direction of ordinary families who are in need of help. The type of help is extremely varied, being anything from a bottle of medicine to a donkey, a bicycle or equipment to start a small business. On Gillie's recent visit he introduced her to a family which was living in an area where there is electricity (there was a supply just yards from their front door), but who could not afford the initial outlay to get connected to the electricity supply. To see the family trying to cook a meal with a hand-held torch was enough to convince us that the cost of connecting the house to the electricity, just £250, would be money well-spent and would transform the family's life in a country where the sun goes down by about 6.30pm throughout the year. This is now in hand and we look forward to hearing about the completion of this project very soon.

In October 2010 Gillie visited the small village of Salembaoré in order to take a look at the village shelter which Les Amis had constructed to enable the village school children to do their homework after sundown, there being no electricity in the village. At that time, the shelter had been finished except for the solar-powered lights. On her recent visit she was really pleased to see that, not only were the solar panels in place and the lighting working perfectly, but a number of children were availing themselves of this important village facility. Tables and benches are on order and will arrive at the shelter soon.

Helping a school become more independent



Plans for the shops

building a row of shops along its perimeter wall. This will help them to become more independent and less reliant upon aid. We feel that any project of this nature is really worth supporting, and are pleased to say that we were given a special donation by a benefactor who wanted to support this particular project. When completed and leased out, these shops will bring in a monthly income of just over £300 per month which will be used to benefit not only the children of St Benedict's, but of other local schools as well.

To educate a child is to provide the potential to lift a family out of poverty. Therefore, we are happy to consider projects which assist schools. During the course of the year, we received a request from St Benedict's Catholic Primary School in Fada N'Gourma for help in

And finally ...

Could we take this opportunity to appeal to those who have not already done so, to consider setting up a **standing order**? This is a very easy way of giving regularly, and has the added benefit of helping us to plan ahead for the future. We do thank you for considering this as an option for helping us.



We are always pleased to be given opportunities to give illustrated talks about our work, so do let us know if you would like us to deliver a talk to any group to which you may belong, however big or small. Gillie's next talk will be at **7pm on Tuesday 20th March** in the hall at St Edmund's School, The Drive, Godalming, GU7 1PF.

In the meantime, we cannot thank you enough for all that you have personally done to support this charity. We are still proud to be able to say that 100% of donations to Les Amis are used directly to fund our many and varied projects.

The Trustees of Les Amis-Burkina Faso: Gillie & David Nicholls and Jude O'Mara-Spicer

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The poor will never cease out of the land;
therefore I command you to open wide your hand
to the needy and to the poor. (Deuteronomy 15:11)

In so far as you did this to the least of those brothers of mine,
you did it to me. (Matthew 25:40-41)