

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2014



Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,

We are pleased to be sending you this year's '**How is your money spent?**' newsletter, written by those who work with us in Burkina Faso, which will give you lots of information about how exactly we use your donations. Reading their reports is always wonderful as we realise just how much is being achieved thanks to you and your support. This charity has been going for just seven years but has touched and changed the lives of many. When we stopped and thought about everything that your donations have achieved in those seven years, we were amazed at just how far your money has gone.

The Yoann Foundation: helping to meet the needs of the disabled and disadvantaged

In Ouagadougou we have responded to the needs of up to 40 disabled women and children. We have paid school fees, given food, repaired houses, helped many to set up businesses, paid for surgical operations and physiotherapy, and provided opportunities for all these women and children to get together socially. To give just a couple of examples: to one woman we contributed the cost of installing electricity to her house and the purchase of a freezer by which she now makes a living selling ice. To another, we paid for the setting up of a small workshop where she now runs her own business repairing mopeds. We gave money to a blind man to enable him to start a business making chairs. To the Franciscan friars who run this foundation, we were happy to give the finances to equip their ICT training centre with up-to-date equipment so that young people with very little money can access a good education in ICT skills and thereby go on to get good local jobs. Just one little example of the sort of child we like to help, and who have only just come to our attention is Véronique now 18 months. When she was born she had a small bump near her eye. At her birth the midwives said it was nothing to worry about. However, not only did it not go away but increased in size, having turned out to be a tumour linked to her brain. She is now unable to hold up her head or sit and will need a lot of care.



Protecting and educating girls and young women ...

.... in Baskouré, near Koupéla

Right at the start of our work we stumbled across a refuge for runaway girls in Baskouré which was in real financial difficulties. As the stories of the girls were told to us, it was obvious that we should step in and help them. For just £5,000 per year we were able to house and feed up to 30 girls, as well as provide training in literacy for those who were unable to read and write. In order to give them a real future we have funded all the necessary equipment and training to give them skills by which they will be able to look after themselves for life, skills such as weaving, embroidery and beer-making. For the first time a couple of years ago, the refuge took in two very young girls. At the time, these girls were so much younger than any girl the refuge had previously taken in, the refuge was anxious as to whether to take them or not, as it would mean sending them to school and therefore having to pay the school fees. We were asked if the refuge should take them in. As far as we were concerned, there was no question at all. The



girls are working hard and have done brilliantly. It is touching to see the older girls looking out for the younger ones, and helping them to grow up without their mothers and immediate families. It has been lovely to fund lots of little items which the girls have asked for over the years, such as a freezer to enable them to sell ice, and a moped to help them get to the local town. However, the biggest project was the large 30-bed dormitory we built for them when it came to light that all the girls were jammed into one very small dorm and sleeping on a hard concrete floor. What unbelievable joy it gave us to see all the girls sleeping in a bed of their own in a bright, clean and modern dormitory.

Many of the girls meet the man of their choice at the local market and are eventually married with families of their own. Here is what they wrote to us in May of this year: "***The whole community of Sisters and girls at the refuge have asked me to greet you and to pass onto you our deep gratitude for your visit in the month of February, here in Baskouré. Thank you for your ongoing sensitivity and support. Here everyone is very well; soon the rainy season and our work in the fields will begin. The weaving is going well; people are beginning to order our cloth. We don't know how to thank you. We pray for you every day. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you!***"

.... in Gounghin

Not far from Baskouré we have been delighted to cover the costs of looking after and educating ten secondary school orphan girls since 2007. We have paid their fees, bought their equipment, housed them and paid for medical costs and anything else which has cropped up, such as the beds they urgently needed last year (there were previously just three beds between them), and the table and chairs they have asked for so that they can sit and eat together. Here is what they wrote to us earlier this year

We are writing to express our heartfelt and deepest sentiments of gratitude to you for your prayers and financial support which helped us a lot to keep our school running. It is through your generosity that all these children and their teachers are still in this school. Indeed without your support it wouldn't have been easy. You are a very caring mother and we really appreciate your concern for our well-being.

Thank you very much for all the sacrifices you made in order to help us. We'll never forget you in our prayers. May God shower his blessings on you, your family and all your activities!

.... in Fada

Our newest project in terms of looking after girls came about when Gillie met Clemence¹, a young girl who had run away from home and was being looked after and trained as a dressmaker at the St Joseph's Centre in Fada. Clemence was not the only young girl in this situation: there were seven others. It will be wonderful to help these girls into adulthood in the coming years and, with training, to give them the opportunity for independence.

Lots of gratitude!



Thank you to Mrs O'Mahoney (left), a florist, who has twice created and raffled a beautiful bouquet of flowers, raising a total of £60: enough to put two children through primary school for a year.

Thank you

Thank you to some children (right) of St Edmund's School in Godalming, who spent weeks creating lots of loom band bracelets and then selling them, thereby raising £62.



From time to time, we are approached by people who would like to make donations to very specific causes. We were recently offered some funding towards scholarships for girls. We immediately thought of a very bright young woman, Justine (left), whom Gillie met years ago when she was just a young girl and with whom she has kept in touch over the years. As a direct result of this funding Justine will be going to university from September of this year.



We are always pleased to give illustrated talks to groups however big or small, as this remains one of the best ways of telling everyone about our work. If this is something with which you think you could help us, then please get in touch.

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)

¹ Names have been changed to protect identity

