

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2015



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 eight years but has touched and changed the lives of many.

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

Pictured (**right**) is a mum who Les Amis helps with the considerable day-to-day difficulties of coping with a severely handicapped child. Women with disabled children typically have nowhere to turn and rely upon the type of help we give. This year we have responded to the needs of Robert¹, the orphaned son of Roselle, one of our beneficiaries who very sadly died last year. You can read more about him in the enclosed newsletter. Also, last February, we were approached by Margaux who wanted to train as a nurse but whose parents were very poor and could not afford to help her. We have given her the funds she needs and she is now well on the way to securing a job which will help her and her whole family. These are small but important examples of the ways in which we can give individuals a chance to make their way in life, despite tremendous difficulties.



So many really great projects, both big and small



In the town of Boulsa, where Father Lambert is the parish priest, we are happy to have given funds to help with the costs of the refuge for girls, school fees for children, the development of the women's garden for growing food, the repair of wells, the teaching of literacy (**left**) and the relocation and rebuilding of Iseult (**right**) and her husband's small café. There is more information about these in the enclosed newsletter.



Protecting and educating girls and young women



.... in Baskouré, near Koupéla

In May we heard that there were two young new arrivals at the refuge for runaway girls. Anna who is just 17 years old and Léa (**right**) who is now 16 years old. Both have run away from a forced marriage and are now very happy to be safe in our refuge, being trained in skills which will give them a future. They are by no means the youngest of the girls we are currently looking after, some being too young to work and who will attend school until they are old enough to take part in the training which the older girls receive. Very good news this year was the birth of Lorette (**left**) to Agathe, a young woman who was looked after by the refuge until her marriage to Michel in January 2014.



When Gillie visited in February she was pleased to see that the girls are broadening their areas of expertise. To add to the growing of fruit and vegetables, weaving of cloth, embroidery and beer-making, they now make soap. Everything that they grow or make is sold at the local market; they therefore have a hand in their own future. **Left** is a picture of all the bars of soap, ready to go to market.

¹ All the names of the beneficiaries have been changed to protect identities in this online version of the newsletter

.... in Fada

At the St Joseph's Training Centre in Fada, we have been supporting eight young girls through their training as seamstresses. Last February, having found out that the girls had to share just three beds, we bought five further beds and eight new mattresses. We recently heard from Sister Antoinette, the Sister in charge of the centre: "All the girls are so happy with their new beds and mattresses and want me to say a big thank-you. The two girls who took their end-of-training exams were successful in obtaining their diplomas (Certificate of Professional Qualification). They were Celeste and Felicia (**right**). They now have to undertake work experience before setting themselves up as seamstresses. They will therefore need a bit more support. Thank you, once again."



A big ask!



When Gillie arrived in the town of Manni last February, to her great astonishment she was met with huge crowds of townsfolk, drummers and choirs and what seemed like the world, all wild with joy. The reason was because the town has been praying, earnestly and for a long time, for someone to help them build a much-needed secondary school. The children of Manni leave school at age 11 and then have to travel almost 200 kilometres to the next school. A direct appeal was made to us to help them finance the building of a small four-classroom secondary school. Giving children a good education is key to helping to lift whole families out of poverty, and we are therefore absolutely delighted (and relieved!) to say that, thanks to the

extraordinary generosity of a couple of benefactors, we have found the funds and that the people of Manni have begun the process of building their new school. **Above left** is a photo of the ceremonial laying of the first stone.

Really and truly 100%?

Once in a blue moon we receive criticism for sending out what is perceived to be an expensive mailing. When we say that 100% of donations go to the needy that really is exactly what we mean. Our lovely printer (Mark Warner of Headline Design and Print in Woking) loves our work so much that he prints the newsletter for nothing. The Trustees then take care of the postage costs of the two mailings we send out every year. Further to that, at the end of the financial year we tot up how much the bank has charged the account in terms of online transfer fees and other charges and this is fully refunded to the account by the trustees. Therefore we can safely say, hand on heart, **that every penny given to us is passed on to those in need.**



Lots of gratitude!

Thank you so much to you all! Without you and your amazing kindness and support our hands would be tied. It is hard to adequately express, in just one newsletter, the reality of how you are changing lives. People often tell us what wonderful work we are doing. Our response is to say that it is not us but YOU who are achieving so much; it is YOU who are the heroes ... thank you a thousand times over.

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 you are a member of a group and feel this is something you would be interested in, 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)