

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2016



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 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. September 2016 marks the ninth birthday of this charity. Nine short years during which you have changed thousands of lives.



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

Thanks to the dedication of the Franciscan friars in Ouagadougou and also Pélagie, the mother of the late Yoann, our work to relieve the suffering of the handicapped continues to flourish. We have been looking through the many photos which Gillie brings back from her travels, and it has amazed us just how much some of the children have grown. To the **left** is Amelie as she was in 2010, still being carried everywhere by her mother due to her handicap. **Above right** is the lovely young lady into which Amelie has grown, still very handicapped though now getting around in a wheelchair. We are so happy to have had a hand in making her and her mother's lives a bit easier over the years.



Somewhere to sit

Following our Spring newsletter, in which we reported on the completion of the building of a new secondary school in the town of Manni, and our appeal for help with the purchase of the necessary desks and other classroom furniture for all the classrooms, we have not quite secured the £5,000 which we need. Thank you to those who have specifically sent donations for this project. We would be very grateful to hear from anyone who is interested in helping us to reach our goal.



Protecting and educating girls and young women

.... in Baskouré, near Koupéla

Sadly, very young girls continue to make their way to the refuge in Baskouré. We say 'sadly' because young girls should never be given away in marriage. But such is the local culture and custom, that it is an ongoing problem. It is always wonderful to hear news about how the girls are getting on, and we share with you an email we received from Sister Françoise, who takes care of the girls at the refuge in Baskouré: *"Very dear Gillie, all is going well and all the girls are well. At the moment it is the rainy season and we are growing crops. The rain is really good and regular, compared to last year's. We have sown millet, maize and other things. Concerning the girls, all has gone well academically. The secondary school girls are now on holiday whilst the younger, primary school girls, are still at school. Their term ends in July. Two new girls have come – I'll send you their photos and stories, which are very touching. Those days when we take in new young girls, and I listen to them tell me about their miseries, I sleep badly at night; I suffer with them. They cry as they tell me their stories. It is hard. Many girls suffer because of how their families treat them. Thank you for the help you give to the refuge. You mean a lot to us. You are truly their 'mother' because so many of them have been rejected by their parents, and others completely banished from their whole family."*

Sister Françoise Ilboudo, June 2016

The stories of the two new girls are given in the 'How is your money spent?' newsletter. Reading these stories encourages us to do all that we can to continue to help and support all those girls who will have no option but to run away into the bush and into the unknown.

.... Justine

In our Spring newsletter we gave news of Justine (right), a very bright girl whom we have supported through her education and who is now studying Chinese and English at university in Ouagadougou. She has decided to spend her third year in Ghana, an English-speaking country. We are looking forward to helping her cover the £2,000 cost of this very important year away.



Father Lambert's disaster!



Very thankfully, Gillie has always been able to travel around Burkina Faso relatively safely due to the fact that she travels in the car of local priests. For the last two years Father Lambert Sawadogo has looked after Gillie from the moment of her arrival to the moment of her departure, driving her over a thousand kilometres to ensure that she gets to all the projects safe and sound. Just a couple of months ago he suffered a real disaster: his car caught fire and was destroyed. It was all the more disastrous because he did not have insurance to cover the possibility of a fire. Since June he has been considering how to replace his car, a crucial aspect of his life and work as he has to cover vast areas. Given that priests in Burkina Faso have no income, he has a mountain to climb. If you are in the position to help him

to fund the replacement of his car, we'd love to hear from you.

Lots of gratitude



A huge thank-you to Patricia Heaney (left, with her little helper) for the amazing variety and quantity of truly delicious Brazilian food she cooked and sold for us in May, raising £181 in the process. When she first mentioned this as a fundraising idea, we had no inkling at all of quite how much cooking she was planning to do, and of the terrific range of Brazilian food she had in mind to make and sell. This is just one example of how people help us to make ends meet.



Making ends meet is becoming more and more demanding due to the number of requests which are made to us from Burkina Faso, and how difficult it is to turn away anyone in real need. With your ongoing generosity and support we can look confidently towards the future as we embark upon our tenth year.

Giving talks is one of the best ways of gaining support for our work, and we are therefore always pleased to give illustrated talks to groups however big or small. We are looking forward to speaking to the parish of Petworth & Duncton on 16th October 2016, and to the Mothers' Union in Farncombe on 11th January 2017. If you are a member of a group and feel this is something which you would be interested in, then please get in touch.

A personal message from Gillie ...

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for making our work possible. I have said this before, and I will say it again – **you are all heroes!** We happen to be the ones putting all these projects into place and making them work, but none of it would be possible without your generosity. I want to leave you with some words from Father Paul on Abelle's situation: *"In other miraculous news, her son Alard [who has Down's Syndrome] has been walking since June. He has also begun to say some words. Abelle's life has been devoted to caring for Alard, so these developments are beginning to restore her joie de vivre. Her gratitude towards Les Amis is unending. She never stops being astonished at how this help came to her completely unexpectedly"*.



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)