

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011



Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,

As we embark upon our fifth year of helping some of the most disadvantaged people in the world, and reflect upon how things have gone, it is impossible to ignore the difficulties which charities have experienced in fundraising since the banking crisis in 2008 and the subsequent and ongoing financial uncertainties. We are therefore deeply grateful to everyone who has ever contributed to this charity and look forward to your continued support in the future. For now, however, we are pleased to be sending you our latest news and are taking this opportunity to enclose a booklet which gives much more information about our work, written by those who work with us in Burkina Faso. We hope that, in reading it for yourselves, you will feel inspired by how your money is being spent.

The Yoann Foundation and helping the disadvantaged

Still working with the severely disadvantaged and disabled in Ouagadougou through our Yoann Foundation, we are delighted with the success of these last few years and with very specific people who have, effectively, been given a chance of living a normal life due to the intervention of Les Amis. You can read what our team out there has to say about the work of The Yoann Foundation in the enclosed booklet.

At the Franciscan friary in Ouagadougou where the Yoann Foundation is based, Gillie took a tour of the Frère Flobert Centre (named after one of the founding friars of the parish/friary who died of malaria). There they have two training rooms: one for ICT (Information & Communication Technology) training and the other a room full of sewing machines where women learn to sew.

Gillie met the very physically handicapped ICT teacher who gives lessons at a price which makes the learning of ICT accessible to the poor. In Ouagadougou, the average cost of a course in ICT skills would be in the region of £400. At this centre the cost is just £90 thereby making it far more accessible. However, their computers were very old, dilapidated and excessively slow. The friars made a direct appeal to Les Amis to help them find the funds to replace all the computers, thus enabling them to deliver much more up-to-date facilities and ICT skills.



The new computers and the students

Not long into the New Year one of our major benefactors, who was keen to support this project, gave us the necessary funds, the result of which is the complete replacement of all the old computers with brand new ones. The lessons which they are now able to deliver are considerably more efficient and enable the students to learn with the latest software. This will greatly increase their chances of finding work. We subsequently received these words from Brother Vianney ...

"On behalf of all the Brothers present here in Burkina, I express my deep sense of gratitude for what you have done for our mission and, in particular, for the Frère Flobert Centre which gives local youths the means of tailoring and computer education, and the possibility of getting reintegrated into society and into work. It was my dream to equip the centre. Through your kind and generous mediation, we are able to achieve it. I have no words to express my gratitude. May God reward you a hundredfold."

Helping women in business



In our last newsletter we gave you news of Judith, a young seamstress who needed help in setting up a tailoring business. We had bought her all the equipment and machinery that she needed, and she had found a small shop from which to work. However, when Gillie visited her in February, trade could have been more brisk which, of course, is normal for new businesses. We had the idea to give her shop a boost by sending her something which would make it unique: material from the UK. To that end, we had a lot of fun sourcing some materials which we hoped she would like and duly packed them off to her. As you will read in the attached booklet, we have hopes that, less than a year down the line, the shop will provide her with a steady income.

The refuge for runaways in the Diocese of Koupéla

In our last newsletter we were pleased to be able to tell you about the wonderful dormitory for the 27 young runaway girls at the refuge in Baskouré, in the diocese of Koupéla, which had just been completed. Prior to this, they had been forced to squeeze into one small dormitory and to spend the night on mats placed directly onto a concrete floor. All the girls now have a bed of their own and we couldn't be more delighted about this. However, there remained one further important thing to do for them: to build a wall around the complex for the protection of the girls. We are happy to say that, since then, we succeeded in finding the funding for this and that the wall is now on its way to completion.



Construction of the wall

Fr Paul helps us to reach out to the sick

There are countless ways, both small and big, in which our money is used and which really do make a huge difference. For instance, when Gillie was in Burkina in February she met a 17-year-old boy with a serious heart defect. She had met him on previous visits due to his living in the village where Fr Paul lives. He had always been ill but, this time, he was in serious trouble. Whilst the lower half of his body was very swollen, his upper body was painfully thin and he was struggling for breath. He was lying in his mud hut with no relief from his sufferings. With help from Les Amis funds we were able to get him out of the village by ambulance and to hospital in Ouagadougou where he received care and comfort in what turned out to be his final hours.

Use your mobile to donate

This charity has signed up to what we hope will be a useful new initiative being run by Vodafone. It means that if you have a mobile telephone - and it doesn't have to be Vodafone - you are now able to make your donation quite simply by sending a text! Les Amis gets 100% of every donation and it costs us nothing to take part in this initiative. Our unique code is LABF11. Therefore, for example, if you wanted to donate £25, you would simply send a text¹ saying LABF11 £25 to this number: 70070. You will then receive a text message receipt and the chance to Gift Aid your donation (either by filling in a web form or by text message). This charity will receive the donations a month after they were made, and the Gift Aid a month after that. To get full details of what it means and how it works you can visit: www.vodafone.co.uk/vodafone-uk/about-us/just-text-giving



Money Matters!

As all charities will tell you, fundraising since the banking crisis in 2008 has been hard, to say the least. We want to thank all those of you who have set up Standing Orders: knowing how much is coming in regularly, on a monthly basis, makes an enormous difference as it helps us in our planning for future giving. Please, if you have not already done so, can we appeal to you to consider this easy way of making regular donations?

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.

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*

Les Amis – Burkina Faso

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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 Texts are charged at your mobile phone operator's standard rate. The charity will receive 100% of your donation. You must be 16 or over and please ask the bill payer's permission. For full terms and conditions and more information, please visit www.justgiving.com/info/terms-of-service