



Welcome to our Spring issue

As predicted numbers in both homes have increased, there are currently 35 sub-twos in each home. With Foster Houses and Harrogate House this makes 95 resident children.

We received a number of visitors since September. Our Chairman, Heather Fisher, and her husband came followed by Lord and Lady Hope, who have graciously agreed to be our Patrons. Karen Gillon came again accompanied by a party of Scottish MPs. To continue the Scottish theme, Dr West, Secretary to Strathclyde University, and Margaret his wife, spent time with Thomasena in Mangochi.

As numbers rise so of course does our expenditure. We are working with our English Board to produce a strategy which will enable a more sustainable approach to our future. Details of this will follow.

To free up spaces in OA Blantyre we are about to buy a fourth Foster House, generously sponsored in part by Janet Richardson and Newcastle Under Lyme Junior School. Five children from Harrogate House will shortly move there.

I'd like to mention here the great support we get from British schools, both public, private and international. They are listed on our website. The contribution they make is invaluable to us and we look forward to a long relationship with them. Kingswood School will come here this summer on their fourth visit. We know that the whole group have been working tirelessly for a year raising funds for the expedition and for us. We look forward to welcoming them. We were honoured to be asked by the Social Welfare Ministry to partner them and UNICEF in the drafting of the new Child Justice and Protection Bill. They were particularly interested in the contribution we can make to institutional care. We look forward to seeing the Bill enacted.

Finally we would like to say a special thank you to Clive Wilson of Harrogate and Sir Brian Hall for the funds raised on our behalf, and to welcome Steven Jeffries, whose family sponsored Rose's House, to the Board of Trustees in the UK.



Patrons Lord and Lady Hope



Visit of UK Board Chairperson

Fundraising for Open Arms



Hilary MacDonald of Leeds runs the Amsterdam Marathon



Pupils of Darras First School, Northumberland, creating the Malawi flag on their fundraising day

Staff Outing

Half of our staff on their annual outing to Lake Malawi. The second half followed on. The bus that transported us 130 miles from the home was lent for the day by St Andrew's International Primary School. This is a great occasion, eagerly anticipated.



Maggie tends the maize that will feed her family. Starter packs of maize seed and fertilizer were distributed to 130 guardians of children from Open Arms, courtesy of Strathclyde University.



Karen Gillon at our Traditional Birthing Clinic with Chief Namalo. She was inspecting the solar powered lighting that now assists deliveries, thanks to Angela Hassan and Agnes McAuslane of Scotland.

New Admissions, Discharges and Long-term Residents

Natasha on her way to her first day of school. She has made major progress at Harrogate House, overcoming behaviour learned before she and her brother Harry were abandoned in Mangochi last year. There have been four long-term additions to Open Arms since the last newsletter. Twins Emmie and Morris returned to Open Arms after their Chief and Social Welfare confirmed that they were severely neglected by their uncle.



Chisomo, who has been with us since infancy, and his father who is in a critical stage of HIV. We supported the father's attempts to care for Chisomo at home, but when he simply could not manage any more he asked Open Arms to again care for Chisomo, who now lives in Harrogate House. The fourth addition to the house is Jennifer from the Infant Home who has no known relatives. We have currently five abandoned infants, for whom we are seeking adoptive parents.

Doctor Dominic a.k.a Santa Claus joins our Christmas Party. Dominic is a busy pediatrician from Scotland spending a year voluntarily at our local Hospital. Every child in Blantyre and Mangochi had a present to unwrap on the great day. The Sekwe House children became the last house to obtain their own bicycles courtesy of generous donors in the East of England.



Open Arms Mangochi

Just over a year on from opening, Open Arms Mangochi is in full swing with the current number of children at 35. Despite seeing little of the rainy season here in Mangochi, we have a surprisingly good harvest in sight. While children and staff alike were sad to see the end of the juicy mangoes, the older children can now be found nibbling on chimanga (corn) after school, while the toddlers like to feast on papaya and mawungu (pumpkin). Often relatives of the children bring along these foods on their visits as a way of saying thank you to Open Arms.



MSP Karen Gillon, Michael Matheson and friends outside Mtendere Center in Ulongwe

Nursery School

As can be seen from the photo, plans for a nursery school at Open Arms have now become a reality. With donations left from our Deput visitors in September, small tables and teaching equipment were purchased. Each day begins with a short nature walk, ending at lunch time with a sing song and dancing. Local artists give life to the classroom with their lively paintings, which aid teacher Gladys Nsinga with her morning lessons.



Children in their new school room in Mangochi

Transition Hut

Volunteer Mirriam Kassim is pictured holding Kenson Chisale outside OAM's transition hut. This was taken shortly before his return home to Nkope, which is a good one and a half hours drive away. He is now living with his older sister (17 years old), who used to walk the distance here and back to see her brother when he was with us at Open Arms. Since our last visit, we are pleased to report that Kenson has settled well back at home and village.



Kenson in front of the newly constructed Transition Hut

Open Arms Malawi is a registered charity, number 1090655



Open Arms Malawi
www.openarmsmalawi.org

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