



Dear Friends,

## Amazing Donors!

A huge thank you to all of you who contributed to our appeal to fund the new toilets and the lightening arresters. Your response was incredible and we raised the whole amount needed for these two projects very quickly. Work is now nearing completion on the toilet block creating a safe and hygienic environment for the day



pupils. As the lightening arresters were being installed a local donor came forward and donated the cost there and then! Rather than asking Sister Amala to return those funds to us we have agreed that she should hold the remaining balance on account for the next project.

## AGM

Thank you also to everyone who came along (virtually!) to the Friends' AGM last week. We talked about future projects, fundraising and we shared news from Sister Amala. We said a sad goodbye to George Sadd who has been a trustee for nine years and thanked him for his work and commitment.

Such is the reputation of the school and the Friends that we had two people step forward to volunteer to serve on the Board of Trustees. Both Isabel Montgomery and Esther Lindop are very familiar with the school. Isabel was on the trip to Sierra Leone in 2009 when the idea for the Friends' charity was born and she has remained a committed supporter since then. Esther works for the Tear Fund charity. Her work takes her on a regular basis to Sierra Leone and in her downtime she spends time at the school. One other supporter has expressed a wish to become a trustee but unfortunately could not be at the AGM. It is hoped to co-opt him onto the Board at the next trustees' meeting and he will then be formally elected at the next AGM. We are grateful for their willingness to serve in this way.

## General news from the school

### The search has been successful!

The recruitment of a new administrator to help Sister Amala has now been successfully concluded by Viatores Christi, an Irish NGO ([www.vcvolunteers.ie](http://www.vcvolunteers.ie)). A finance and compliance manager, Chernoh Barrie has been recruited and has now been in post for about three months. He has worked tirelessly to help Sister Amala bring all existing and necessary policies and procedures up to date and to ensure that all donors have every confidence in the long term sustainability of the school.

The Leone, Sierra Leone's currency, is decreasing dramatically in value against international currencies. The slide against the US Dollar began at the end of last year and in July the Sierra Leonean Government "recalibrated" the Leone currency by knocking off three zeroes. This doesn't appear to have helped stop the slide so Chernoh has now opened two new accounts, a Euro account and a Sterling account, to help protect the value of donors' money from the UK and the EU.

### Visit from a VIP

At the end of September the Minister of Education visited the school, seen here with Sister Amala and some of the pupils. After his visit he tweeted "Amazing leadership of Sister Amala. The boys and girls are full of joy to hang with".



## Retirement of the Head Teacher



On 23 September a party was held to mark the long service and retirement of the outgoing Head Teacher, Andrew Dumbiya. Interviews are now ongoing to appoint a new Head Teacher to work with Sister Amala to lead the school forward. At the same time the school is hoping to recruit a Principal, a Vice Principal and a Deputy Head Teacher. All those posts have been advertised and it is hoped that interviews will take place shortly.



### **New accommodation for boarders**

As we reported in the last newsletter a new boarding facility for the more senior boys is being built. It was due to be handed over to Sister Amala by mid July but work is still continuing on it. One of the problems has been the continuing problem of theft. Just recently all of the glass windows were stolen. Sister Amala is hoping to install a CCTV system throughout the school to try and combat this increasing problem.

### **Keeping the lights on!**

EKI [www.fundacioneki.org](http://www.fundacioneki.org) is currently improving the current solar panel system at the school. EKI, a Spanish Foundation that provides solar power to schools and hospitals, has already agreed to donate a solar system to the entire school and compound and has committed to servicing the equipment regularly. The Primary Department is the latest building to benefit from the instillation of the solar panels.



### **Want to help?**

If you have been inspired by the work of Sister Amala and all the staff at the school who work tirelessly to give the hearing impaired students a better future, please consider making a donation, however small, by following this link:

<http://www.justgiving.com/friendsofstjosephsmakeni>

Thank you so much to all of you who contribute to this amazing school. You are making a huge difference! And a big thank you to all of you who have taken the time to move your regular financial support to Just Giving, our new fundraising platform. Unfortunately there are some fees involved both for us and the donor so please read the conditions carefully when making your donation.

We are always looking for anyone to help out in fundraising for the school - as you know, we are a very small team of volunteers, so any support is always gratefully received! If you've any ideas for fundraising, from sponsored events to church collections or having a clear out and donating the profits (ebay and Vinted are great for this...) we'd love to hear from you, and can offer practical support for things like sponsorship forms or information about the school. Thanks so much!

With all good wishes from Kate and Stephen Dixon and all the Trustees.

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