

AKAMBA CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND NEW YEAR 2013 NEWSLETTER

HUGE PROGRESS MADE AT BRAINHOUSE ACADEMY, HELPING CHILDREN IN THE SLUMS OF KENYA TO HAVE A FUTURE.

Enormous Thanks from Liz Formby

Sitting here, I am completely blown away and just have to say a huge thank you to all of you.

In listing all the things we achieved last year, I had to check if they all really happened in 2012! Incredible that we raised over £30,000 in the year.

I am quite staggered by the incredible support you have all given the ACEF team, enabling us to help take Brainhouse into a new space. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

This newsletter covers some highlights but there have been so many, for example:

The creativity of one volunteer who researched and developed a way to provide sanitary towels for our older students — a washable solution. She then took the initiative to find old hand driven sewing machines and had them renovated along with creating sanitary wear and bags here in the UK ready for the Brainhouse girls. Once the machines were out in Kenya the older girls chosen to learn how to use the machines thought all their Christmases had arrived in one. For 5 days they sat in the sun, working the machines with much laughter

and joy. When the girls realised that these sewing machines were staying in their care and that they would be able to start running their own little enterprise, the look of disbelief on their faces was a joy to behold.

And there is so much more:

- putting bottled lights into the primary classes – seeing the looks on young faces as their classrooms had light for the first time.
- hearing the appreciation when children spoke about the food we provided.
- the pride of the boarders as they showed us their bedrooms and the new mattresses that have been provided by us this year.
- disbelief when we demonstrated an OHP being used in a classroom.

So the list goes on.

Plus things in the UK have not stood still. At the beginning of the year we asked Jon Hodge to complete a review of what we have achieved and how we need to be



structured going forward to enable sustained growth of ACEF.

We were absolutely delighted with his work and have now created a management team which allows the responsibility of ACEF to be distributed, and more importantly a wider range of skills and talent to be bought into the team to enable ACEF to grow. I would personally like to thank Fred, Alison, Elysia, Jon and Claire who have all joined the management team and the results of their efforts are there to be seen.

This coming year, will see us take another huge step forward with the building of a vocational college to support our young people in having a viable and sustained future and I look forward to sharing more of this ambition with you as the year unfolds. For now, can I thank you for joining us in this adventure and I look forward to a fantastic year with each and every one of you.

In 2012 we have provided

- basic food and water for all children at Brainhouse Academy.
- sewing machines to manufacture sanitary towels allowing girls to attend school.
- a basic suite of reconditioned computers made possible by the establishment of solar electricity.
- funds for land to build a Vocational Centre.
- books for the children to read from their new library.
- opportunities to share good practice teaching approaches.

How can you help in 2013?

- **Become a monthly donor** with Give As You Earn or Just Giving—£5 feeds a child for a month.
- **Volunteer your time** — we need people to man a tombola on 30th March in Coventry.
- **Donate cotton material** to make into sanitary towels.
- **Collect business books** for our new library
- **Take part in a fundraising event** or organise your own!
- **Help at the Family fun day** in the summer—face painting and cake baking needed!

Big Plans



A visit to Brainhouse of a successful entrepreneur inspiring the current students.

We are currently planning a very ambitious and exciting project, to build a Vocational College and Business Centre for the young people leaving Brainhouse Academy.

Aggrey, the Headmaster has told us *"Our biggest challenge is that when students finish here, very few succeed to secure employment because they do not have proper skills for work. If we were able to start a college with vocational training they could leave with a real skill that would help so much. If they leave with a*

skill like carpentry or welding they will have something to cling onto when they are out of this place".

The business centre part of this project will provide support in writing CVs, giving access to the internet and newspapers for job searching, provide coaching on business skills and interview techniques, and will provide a PO Box address so the students can apply for jobs without the stigma of an address in the slum.

The college will give the students vocational train-

ing and will establish links with local businesses and the community so that they will be able to build these skills whilst having opportunities for work experience and apprenticeship schemes.

The project is ambitious and will take several years to be fully operational, but we are absolutely confident that, with the strong leadership at Brainhouse, this project will establish a much brighter future for our students as they progress into adulthood.

We are building a partnership to last by listening closely to the needs of Brainhouse and responding with innovative solutions

First Brainhouse Graduate

Brainhouse Academy changes lives as shown by Victor Okumu, a former student from 2004 to 2007. He passed his National Exams (K.C.S.E) enabling him to join the United States International University in 2008.

"Coming from a poor humble background", Victor said, *"I thank Brainhouse for housing me in the school*

for four years. Coming from a community that was full of life's vices such as Crime, Drugs and Gangs I thank God and the Brainhouse Community for saving my life, for giving me that opportunity to pursue my dreams and goals through a decent education".

Victor graduated with a degree in International Business Administration in 2012 and dreams of being a prominent business man with his brands being household names. He also has a talent in Music, an emerging clothing business and

helps to maintain the social media presence of Brainhouse.

Victor is a dynamic young man and we are pleased he is returning to Brainhouse and will bring many skills to the Business and Vocational development projects. We applaud his determination and contribution to improving life chances of younger students.

" I thank God and the Brainhouse Community for saving my life. "

Building a Library Book by Book



Sorting the delivery of books for the Library

In October we were able to fulfil a dream of one of our students by starting a library at Brainhouse.

Project managed by Queen Victoria School in Dudley, we had collections of books from schools, individuals and companies, all ready to ship out to Brainhouse.

Support came in many ways, some investigated methods to transport the books and then to our disbelief a private supporter donated all the money needed to ship the books to Kenya!

Watching the books being carefully picked up and read with true wonder was

a great reward. Followed by sheer delight when Brainhouse students realised that these books had come to stay in their school.

In 2013 older students have requested business books and inspirational texts - can you help?

"It is a powerful experience to see a child hold and read a book for the first time!"

Pedal Power - ACEF's Sponsored Bike Ride

2012 was a year of weather extremes and these hit hard the running of the ACEF bike ride. The ride was planned for early June but unseasonable weather brought torrential rainstorms, hail and local flooding. Weather warnings predicted these conditions were due to peak on the Saturday of the ride—with 50mph winds forecast. The bike ride is a big family event and over half of the 85 registered riders were families. So we made the sad decision to postpone, as so many other outdoor events did this summer.

Everyone was amazing, responding positively to reorganizing the event whenever possible and so on Sunday 17th June a group of the hardier adult riders and a great group of scouts braved the still unpleasant weather to do 28 or 52 miles around the beautiful Warwickshire countryside.

We could have called a halt at this stage but our determined families with



younger members said that they too wanted to take on the challenge and since many of them had already got committed sponsors we wanted to make that happen! So on 16th Sept it was time for "Take 3"!

Around 50 riders gathered at Akamba with ages ranging from less than 5 to over 75! The focus was on the 12 mile and 28 mile routes but some stronger riders did the 28 mile route twice!

One of the happiest riders was David Wrennall, a "veteran" of the rides—he has attended every sponsored bike

ride since they began and at 75 he didn't want to miss a year in his creditable history.

Once again the fundraising total was amazing—around £7000. Plus the profile of ACEF was raised, attracting new supporters who have gone on to connect with the charity in wide and varied ways.

If anyone would like to be involved in the organising of the 2013 bike ride (or of course riding) please get in touch with Alison Halford on alisonhalford@gmail.com.



2013 Fundraising

Summer Family Fun Day at Akamba—BBQ and band, face painting and stalls for all the family!

2013 Bike ride in September - with 3 distances it's a challenge and a great day out for all!

Firework Funtasia — why keep fireworks for bonfire night when they are so much fun?

All dates will be posted on our Facebook page—follow us today!

Marathon Man

Roy Everson, whose son, Matt has visited Brainhouse Academy, was so motivated by what he heard about the work going on with the children that he decided to offer his support. Roy says "I wanted to undertake a significant personal challenge and in doing so, raise money for ACEF. I decided to do the Snowdonia Marathon".

So on Saturday 27 October 2012, Roy began the cold, steep and beautiful run winding his way up the Llanberis Pass at a height

of 1,180 feet and over the unmade roads at Bwlch y Groes.

Roy raised £400.00 in donations and £81.25 through gift aid and we would like to thank and congratulate him!



Roy, smiling through his Snowdonia challenge.

Party time

During the party season Akamba has been helping to give everyone a warm glow by making small donations to an ACEF collection.

This idea followed the huge contribution of Ann Roxburgh who decided, in her 70th year, to hold her first ever birthday party and did so at Akamba.

Ann said "At my age I needed no gifts so at Chris Canaan's suggestion I opted for donations to ACEF. The party was terrific! Akamba staff pulled out all the stops. The whole night was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended - I am still

getting letters going on about it! The fireworks were wonderful and a complete surprise and the wish lantern a lovely touch".

Ann raised an amazing £1027 and has decided to visit Kenya in 2013 to see where all the good work takes place.

Thank you so much to Ann and other party-goers at Akamba for their generosity.



ACEF would value your time and skills to help build childrens futures.

Links to Scouting

ACEF's link to the Scouting and Guiding movement has been strong since the outset and this year there were two super, new examples.

A group of Rainbows (5 and 6 year olds) in Bromsgrove had a session dedicated to finding out more about Africa. They heard about the conditions of children their age who live at Brainhouse Academy and got to hear and play some African instruments.

Taking this a stage further they undertook a sponsored Reading Challenge where they read every day for a fortnight and investigated Africa at home.

Thank you to these young Rainbows for their interest and engagement.

During 2012 the Scout movement was launched at the Brainhouse Academy. ACEF organised the first ever day trip for a group of Brainhouse students. They visited Nyeri; a Mecca for Scouts and Guides, as this is where Scouting founders Lord and Lady Baden Powell chose to live and are buried.

On the outward bound trip the 30 scouts sat in excited silence for most of the 3 hour journey.

First stop was the Nyeri Scouting shop; all of the Scouts were fitted

out with brand new uniforms paid for by ACEF. The children got changed straight away, with Naomi, the youngest in her haste forgetting to undo the buttons on her dress before pulling it over her head. With just an eye peeping out, she cried out to Mama Liz for help. Once freed her eyes sparkled with joy of putting on probably the first brand new dress she had ever worn. Pride beamed from every child as they stood together in their new Scout uniforms!

They visited the resting place of Lord and Lady Baden Powell, and also the Guide and Scout museum at Paxtu. Overlooking a beautiful lawn the Scouts and the ACEF team sat together to enjoy some cultural dancing and singing.

For lunch another new experience as the scouts ate for the first time in

a restaurant, marvelling at the opportunity to eat around tables with cutlery.

They hot footed it back to the bus and drove a small distance to meet some Nyeri Scouts; Paul, a local Scout trainer gave an extraordinary talk to the troop teaching them all about the history of Scouting and what is meant to be a Scout.

After such an action packed day one would have thought the Scouts would sleep all the way home, but the excitement was contagious, the Brainhouse Scouts sang, clapped and chanted the entire journey; the atmosphere was buzzing, such a contrast from the morning journey.

Beautiful thank you letters from the group showed that for many, this day trip was truly a once in a lifetime experience that will be forever treasured.



So once again we have had a packed time, many new opportunities have arisen and many relationships have deepened.

With a strengthened team of volunteers leading ACEF we look forward to even greater growth in 2013.

We will work hand in hand with the leadership at Brainhouse Academy listening to their greatest needs and identifying imaginative ways to engage more people in supporting this inspiring school.

A huge thank you to those that have been on the journey with us this year and please involve more of your friends and colleagues, because together we are changing the lives of youngsters who were born into the most difficult situations imaginable, but who are striving to make their slice of the world a better place.

Join in with more change in 2013!

TO CONTACT ACEF :

Call Liz Formby on 0121 745 2597

or E-mail: elizabethjane07@gmail.com

**Donate monthly -
just £5 feeds a child!**

**Visit and "like" the ACEF
Facebook page and look out for
our soon to be launched Website.**

**Create your own
Just Giving page or donate on
www.justgiving.com/Liz-formby0**