



NEWSLETTER MAY 2012

Smile Malawi was registered as a charity in England and Wales in 2004 and as an NGO in Malawi in June 2006. The main objective is to provide a home for vulnerable street children. The first Smile Malawi Children's Centre opened in November 2006 and now gives a home to 33 children who were jointly identified by Malawi Social Services and Smile Malawi from the streets of Blantyre and the local village. The charity also helps the local community of Ndokota with a developing outreach programme, primarily targeting the children and local school.

October 2011 Newsletter reported the building work that Smile Malawi had started to provide additional bedroom accommodation for our 19 boys. At the time, we were unable to complete the building due to funds, but Smile Malawi founder Elspeth Baecke can now report that the first boys moved in to their new house on Sunday 29 April. Elspeth has just returned from Malawi where she organised the final fit-out following on from a UK volunteer, Matthew Fletcher, who had restarted the work in February. Elspeth had raised the funds via an appeal on justgiving.com and we are very grateful for all the support received. Many thanks to Matthew who worked very hard to get the work organised.



Elspeth was very excited that she managed to buy our first solar water heater, which is actually from Fortune CP, a company in Dartford, Kent, who have an outlet in Blantyre. Now we have found the supplier, we will try to buy one for the big house too.



The children were still on their Easter break when Elspeth arrived in Malawi so she was able to have some good talks with our first secondary school children who are usually away at Government boarding school. Grace is in year 2 and Elijah is in year 1. Funny is also in year 1 but at the local school at Bvumbwe. We are very proud of Elijah who is top of his class and doing

so well, even after all his heart surgery and continuing medication. He is returning to Maputo Heart Institute in June for a check up and he is happy to fly on his own this time, so Elspeth will organise the trip via the internet from UK and the Heart Institute will collect him directly from the airport.



Here are all our older boys (Elijah is second from the left) looking very smart and grown up in new shirts donated by Berkhamsted Collegiate School. They are growing fast and are now almost 6 feet tall. Brian, far right, will be sitting his final primary school exams this month and is expected to pass to a Government School which is the best route for their future. Caroline, Jaquie and George, below, are also sitting the exams and George was top of his class in the recent mock exams.



Before Elspeth left England, she sent 3 large boxes of donated clothes by Air Freight for the children, which she intended to collect from Blantyre airport early in her trip. Unfortunately, the procedure for clearing these 'duty free' through customs has changed and it took over 2 weeks to get the paperwork sorted and a further 4 hours at the airport before she could collect them. Although it was very late by the time she got back with them, the children were so excited that everything was unpacked that evening and photos posed for the next day.



Many thanks to everyone who donated and there was something for all ages.



Finally Elspeth was impressed with the abundance of fruit and vegetables now growing at the Centre. Here Junior has been picking huge avocados from our trees which they eat nearly every day.



She also showed the children how to make juice from the Hibiscus flowers that are abundant and it was delicious as well as easy and cheap to make. The children had been making juice from seeds from a local tree which they bought in the market. They sold it in ice-pop plastic sleeves at the village shop. Now they are going to make the Hibiscus juice instead which will return a healthy profit!

We still need more regular funding. If you would like to help with the running costs of the Children's Centre, please visit our website or send a cheque to Smile Malawi at the address below.