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Smile Malawi News Update

October 2015

smile malawi

Keep the smile alive



Grace, one of our original Smile Malawi children, with her baby boy (see story below)

Keeping their smiles...

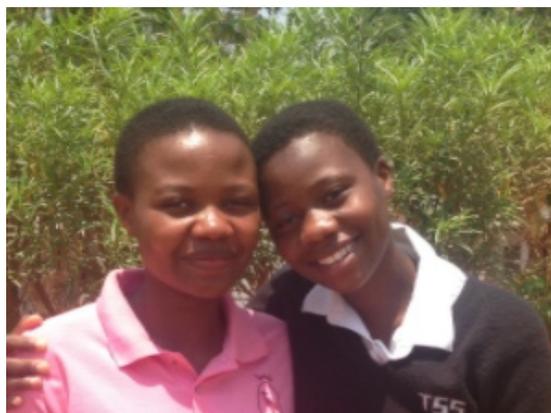
Elspeth arrived in Malawi in September ready to sort out secondary schools for some of the older children who finished primary school in the summer.

Fortunately all 4 boys passed their exams and were able to start Form 1 at the local private secondary school together (see photo further down). We now have

13 children at various secondary schools (with school fees to pay for!) and 18 children at Mchemba Primary School.



Result! Elijah with his School Certificate



Natasha (right) with her sister Emily

The really good news is that 18 year-old Elijah finished secondary school altogether this year and passed his Malawi School Certificate exams, so is now on course to continue with his further education. His ambition is to qualify as a doctor! Also pictured above, with her sister Emily, is Natasha, just starting her second year at secondary school. Amazingly, she nearly died a year ago as a result of meningitis but after medical help provided by Smile Malawi, she is now a picture of health!

As well as caring for our 37 children in the home, we also try to support children in need and the school in the local community of Khumbanyiwa. We are delighted that we have been able to help one of the village children with life-changing medical treatment for a cleft-palette condition. Elspeth had got to know the little boy three years ago. Luckily, when Smile Malawi supporters Ken and Lyndy Newell visited in October, they were able to arrange for the boy, who is now 7, to have surgery to be carried out in the near future through friends working at the CURE hospital in Blantyre. Sadly, the boy had been given the name 'Problem' due to his condition, but we agreed with his parents that he would be renamed Gift!





Gift, age 7



Gift at the hospital

Gift's parents have 6 children and are so poor that none are able to go to school. We agreed that Smile Malawi will also support Gift to start at Mchemba Primary School immediately, and he was beaming as he came the next day to walk up to school with our children.

One of our original children, Grace (pictured at the top of this news update), who is now married with her own baby boy, came to see Elspeth off at the airport at the end of her visit. It's wonderful to see her so settled and making a happy future for herself.

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Gift with his Mum as he sets off for his first day at school

On the Home front...



The new maize mill next door



Our Round House ready for guests

The local villagers now have their own maize mill sited next to the orphanage. This was the one request that we received from the old village chief back in 2005, but it was not delivered until a local businessman decided to construct the mill with a house for the miller, as we were able to provide the electricity supply. We hoped this would eventually benefit the village and now it has.

Maize is the staple diet of Malawi; the dried kernels are ground into flour, mixed with water and cooked into a solid mixture called *nsima*. There's a shortage of maize this year due to floods in January which washed away much of the crop.

While Ken and Lyndy Newell were visiting this month, they helped to complete work on our traditional Malawian Round House. As well as raising funds for the plumbing and electricity before they came, they worked hard in very hot temperatures to complete the painting work so that the building will be ready to welcome guests next year. Another recent visitor was university student, Charlie Bethell, who visited with a friend in August. After a hectic week, he commented, "The Smile Malawi Home is amazing, as are the children and all that work there. We found ourselves truly taken aback by how kind and welcoming the children were, as well as Mirriam and her team."

We are expanding our fundraising activities by offering 'holidays with a difference' – an opportunity to stay in comfortable accommodation whilst helping out at the home and the local school. Please email us if you are interested in coming for a working holiday and visit to the orphanage. elspeth@smilemalawi.com



Visitor Charlie saying goodbye to the children



Charlie and two football fans!



Four of the older boys setting off for secondary school

Our thank yous to you...



Keeping the smile alive is all down to the fantastic efforts of our valued supporters, not least Karen Matthews who collected four suitcases of new school uniform and clothes for our children, all donated by local schools.



We thank Gavin Baecke and Bex Newell who celebrated their magnificent achievement of completing the London Marathon back in March for Smile Malawi and raised over £3,000 between them.



Smile Malawi trustee Jane Hill plus some friends organised a 'dinner with opera' entertaining 65 people in August and raised an unbelievable total of just over £10,000 from tickets, auctions and other fun activities during the evening.



Most recently, on 11th October supporter John Stonborough completed the Gridiron 107 km (67 miles) bike ride round the New Forest and raised over £3000 for Smile Malawi.

We thank **everyone** who give so generously, both organizing and supporting events like these, and those who make regular monthly donations, however small. Every little helps to keep our children smiling...!

Our plans...

We want to make it easier for our friends and supporters to connect with the work of Smile Malawi and to help you spread the word. Thanks to the wonderful offer of support from the leading international design company, Landor, we are in the process of updating the powerful story and the 'identity' of the charity, as well as making it much simpler to communicate via mobile, social media websites and to donate online. We hope you have enjoyed reading this new look e-news update - do pass it on to anyone who you think would be interested to know about our work. And look out for the new website coming soon!



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www.smilemalawi.com

Smile Malawi is a registered charity in England & Wales no.1106225 and a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in Malawi no. NGO/R/07/19.

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