



Po Box 1493, Jinja, Uganda
www.softpowerededucation.com
info@softpowerededucation.com
British Registered Charity 1098936

Soft Power Education



NEW YEAR NEWSLETTER 2008

A very belated Happy New Year! Can you believe it is 2008..

Everything is full swing right here and thanks to continued incredible fundraising we have really started the New Year with a bang and we are currently working at six different schools. Here's a taster..

Sudique Muslim Primary School



Despite this school having only 5 very run down classrooms with no doors or windows and mud floors, the students managed to achieve 6 first grades in the recent Primary Leaving Exams - one of the best results in the sub county! We have been wanting to work at this school for a long time and thanks to some recent funding we are finally able to reward them for their hard work and we are building them a brand new five classroom block.

Namagera Primary School has had one heck of a year. Last summer they hosted a whole heap of volunteers who refurbished their existing classrooms and now thanks to €3800 from Patricia McNeela and her crew; £1000 from Diana Everest and a few others the builders are now working on the refurbishment of a huge 5 classroom block which was started by the parents but they were unable to complete it. Lucky old Namagera!



Wanseko Primary School



Wanseko Primary School just outside of the Murchison Falls Conservation Area has just been lucky enough to have the Hands of Help crew staying with them who came with an amazing £10,000! I visited just after Xmas and they were working like there was no tomorrow! They had already completed two 2 classroom blocks and were well on track to also complete the remaining 3 classroom block too! Huge thanks to all the Aussies!

FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

As always we have a million people to thank... first and foremost to all the volunteers who have been with us since the last newsletter. If you spent a day, a week, a month or more with us we can not express our gratitude in words for the amount you help us to achieve here. Special thanks to Emma and Andrew for helping us with the 5 Year Business Plan and to all those who helped make the Cycle Marathon possible once again. Thank you! On the fundraising side, wow you guys have been busy!

Catherine Moffat along with the help of her grandchildren Brogan, Dana, Dale and Lewis raised £350 from a sale of 300 soft toys and a raffle; The World class kayak academy came back to join us once again bringing \$2000 and with that they built two hand washing facilities at St Marys Nsuube and Buyala St Pauls. In addition, one of the kayakers sisters Alyssa did some of her own fundraising at her school and donated \$564; Sonja Brittain and her friends at the school where she works in Canada raised \$1460 which will help us create new teaching aids for Buyala Primary School; Daniel Rice donated his tax return of £488; Woodbridge school held a swing café raising £101; in addition to his help on the business plan, Andrew McMillan also convinced his bosses at KPMG to donate £2000 to us; 2007 volunteer Karen Middleton had a school dance competition at Langley Grammar School in Berkshire and raised £233.47; Alex Rowe took a rather chilly and slightly crazy Christmas morning swim across Grimsby docks raising over £700! Sebastian Bacher and his family made a Christmas donation of €190; Jenny McShane and her family donated £165 and John Whitney and his family donated \$200; recent volunteers The Gaunt Family donated \$511.

Our all time top fundraiser continues to be Dirk who works right here with us in Uganda. This time Dirk's home village have been busy we received a cheque for €2691 from Millekemol Primary School. Right is a sponsored run at De Zandloper Primary School last October which raised €3100. Very cute I think you'll agree!

We also just received €500 Solidariteitsraad Beerse. Beerse is the home village of Els who is a friend of Dirk and will be coming out to join us for the second time in a few weeks. Hats off to Dirk for involving so many people in his home country.



And still there is more, 2006 volunteer Caroline Pook donated £200 through the Sainsbury's Local Hereos scheme; Emma Heaphy's school, Kings Lynn Nursery, donated £60 instead of buying Christmas presents as well as some scholastic materials too; Hamish and Catherine Ross donated £500; Lindsey Turner donated £800; 2006 volunteers Tim and Laura convinced their friends Lindsay Rayman and Matthew Gilman to ask people to donate money to SP instead of engagement presents and raised over \$300; Bożena Ziemia-Grodska from Poland donated £1000 after spending just one day with us.



We were also incredibly lucky last week to receive over 13 million shillings worth of goods from The Church of Jesus Christ in Kampala. They donated 4 brand new computers, agriculture equipment like wheelbarrows and spades, seeds and lots of stationary equipment. We will also shortly receive a theatre puppet set to help tackle tricky subjects like alcoholism and grief with the children in their drama classes. Huge thank you to all at the church but in particular to Elder and Sister Bean.

We also seem to have a couple of crazy climbers amongst our supporters. Caroline Souter spent 3 months with us at the end of last year and came with a huge £1420 after completing the Three Peaks Challenge - well done! Then Natacha Fudem, who has just returned to Canada after spending 2 weeks up at Murchison helping to paint murals on Paraa Primary School, raised a huge \$3200 after climbing Kilimanjaro - she tells me there is more to come too. Amazing achievements in terms of the climbing and fundraising - thank you both very much.

In other news, we held a School Festival in November to see just which schools had been paying attention at the Education Centre. The day was fun filled with dance, drama and singing as well as a more serious side with 10 chosen pupils from the school answering questions on each of the Education Centre subjects. Budondo School hosted the event and also won it! They were elated with the mega trophy! In addition they too did very well in the Primary Leaving Exams with 6 first grades. We are rewarding them by sprucing up the school with a repaint of the insides of the classrooms.



We are very lucky to be enjoying the support of two organisations this year. Firstly, Site Property Group (www.sitepropertygroup.com) have agreed to donate 10% of their profits to us this year after their Director Cheyne Goulden visited us last year and was impressed by what has been achieved. Thank you very much to Cheyne and all at Site Property. Secondly, The Tutors Association (www.thetutorsassociation.com) will be donating a % of the registration fees of each person who signs up to their site. Check them both out!

The Amagezi Education Centre



Marie and Fearghal have taken on the task of running the Education Centre and done wonders. We are pleased to see the Community Programmes in ICT, Agriculture and fuel efficient stoves up and running. Photos above are of volunteers helping with the building of a fuel efficient stove in the community. The Health and English language Community programmes are due to start anytime now too. Big thank you to Happy Computers who donated £1000 towards the running of the community ICT programmes this year. We are also happy to welcome on board three new members of staff to help keep up with the growing task of keeping everything running smoothly!

The Murchison Project



Work is also progressing in Murchison with some of the dorm blocks, the dining hall and resource room completed. The Education Centre (above right) is getting there too and Calum hopes to start the community programmes very shortly. A very big thank you to The Canning Trust who donated £3000 and to Anita Wray from Solar Aid who donated \$5000. This money will be used to buy solar panels for the Education Centre.

The School Refurbishment Programme



As mentioned at the beginning, we are currently working at 5 sites - painting the inside of the classrooms at Budondo; building a 5 classroom block at Sudique; finishing a 6 classroom block at Namagera; finishing the 3 classroom annex at Naminya; working with Hands of Help at Wanseko Primary School in Murchison and putting finishing touches onto a block at Wakitaka. In addition to all that since the last newsletter we have completed the refurb and painting of Busoona Primary School and Bususwa Primary and the new school hall and 3 classroom block at Kivabuka have been beautifully painted too. Phew!

The Annual 12 Hour Cycle Marathon

Oh yes we did it again! An incredible day was had by all with 16 teams participating and raising over \$3000! Not bad for one sunny day in Uganda. We were very happy to not have to battle the rain like 2006 and it all ran like clockwork with only a brief shower in the middle of the day. Thank you to everyone who took part, donated prizes or time to make this happen.



How can I get involved?

Do you like what you have been reading? Do you fancy getting involved right here in Uganda? If so then drop me a line at sharon@softpowereducation.com to find out about volunteering opportunities in 2008.



Fundraising just got a whole lot easier too as we are now signed up to Justgiving. A very nice man named Nick Atherton has agreed to pay the monthly subscription so that we can get maximum benefit from the site. Thank you Nick!

Just go to www.justgiving.com/softpowereducation/supportus

That's about it for now. We really can't thank people enough for the time and energy they put into fundraising for us or simply spreading the word about Soft Power Education. If anyone has any comments or suggestions please feel free to send me an email and as ever, if I have forgotten to mention anyone then my deepest apologies.

Until next time...