



Newsletter

"Planting Seeds for the Future"

Issue No 11
November 2023

Summer 2023

It's been another busy 12 months here at Ebo HQ. So much has happened since we last wrote to you all.



School closed its doors at the end of July 2023 after only our second full year in the New School. We have implemented new worksheets for the children to use during lessons, set up new report cards for the children so we can share with our sponsors a more in depth view of how their children are doing throughout the year & we have installed wifi & security cameras to allow us to communicate easily with our Head of School & see the children learning. It's been a huge boost to all the trustees to be able to see the school & the children, as none of us have visited in over 3 years.

It's not all been plain sailing though, as with any property there have been a few on-going maintenance jobs that we need to keep on top of, and after only 12 months the floor which was laid during the build was crumbling and becoming a hazard to staff & children.

The only real long term solution was to tile the floors in all 3 of the huge classrooms, a big bill to swallow but the safety of our children and staff is of the most importance and had to be done. The team got to work during the summer holidays & got all 3 rooms tiled and ready for the childrens return in September (pictures on page 4).

Children from the poorest families in Ebo Town have appreciated what we as a charity stand for, as we still endeavor to give a **FREE** high quality education to all of the children in all 3 classrooms.

We are always looking for new people to join us, whether thats as a trustee, fundraiser or sponsor. If you have any questions on how you may be able to help, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



THANK ALL FOR BEING A PART OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

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Special points of Interest

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Donations can be made directly via BACS - Acc 37946868. Sort Code 77-91-29

Childrens Lessons & Exams

23 Children have left to go to Grade 1 this year. They were all presented with certificates and parents were invited to the school to see the award ceremony.

In addition to the leavers certificates we also awarded children who placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd in their classes following the last term exams. We also handed out attendance and special recognition awards, Children received certificates & small prizes as a reward.

We had 5 children who achieved 100% attendance this year - this may not sound like a great number, but with disease rife and medical treatment



expensive in The Gambia it's a rare thing to achieve & not something we have achieved in the past so we are extremely pleased.

Back here in the UK we have been working with the teachers to build a brand new curriculum for 2023, supported by new and

exciting worksheets for the children to use in their lessons when school re-opens on the 25th September.

All these changes will ensure that for years to come we can give children a full and varied education during their time with us.

Enrolments

August saw us open our doors once again to the community as we opened our enrolments for the 2023-2024 school year.

This is always a crazy & long day as families flood the school hoping to get their child a place.

In previous years our enrolment number was always ruled by our leavers, but with the introduction of termly exams we have been able to understand how the children are doing in much greater detail than we ever did before. This means we can see if a child is ready to move up a level rather than their age

determining if they had to move up or not. This meant that although we had 23 children leave us we only had a maximum of 20 enrolment spaces to fill - This would give us 27 children in our Level 1 class which is the maximum the Education Department will allow.

Here are a few of the new faces joining us on the 25th Sept 23.



In The Spotlight

In a change to our usual format, we thought we would bring you something a little different. In this section we meet YOU! Our sponsors and supporters. Our first “guinea pig” is Alex Murray, Alex is one of our wonderful sponsors. We asked her to tell us about herself & put in her own words how she came to support us & why. Enjoy!



Hi, my name's Alex, and I have been a supporter of Ebo Town Community Nursery School for 5 years now. I was introduced to the charity by my sister who is now a trustee and fell in love with the work being done in The Gambia to help children access an early education. Having worked in a pre-school setting in the past, I know how much of a difference it can make to a child, being given a head start into school life! The fact that I can see how every penny is spent to support these children and their families is among the many reasons why I have so much faith in the work being done – that and the passion shown by the trustees and volunteers. It gives me great pride to know that my donation is providing an early education to a child in need of it.



Outside of supporting Ebo, I also support several local animal charities and rescues. I foster kittens for RSPCA Shropshire and founded a Charity of my own - Jelly Exotics, a charitable organisation helping exotic pets.



I work full time at home for Medivet and operate a charitable pet sitting service, raising funds for local animal charities. Besides this I spend my free time relaxing at home with my animals.

Meet our Trustees - Ellie Nicholls

I have been friends with Dave and Paula Howells for over twenty years. After one of their holidays away Paula shared on somewhere that had taken them both by surprise and it was something that they both wanted to make a difference and give something back. They wanted to help a school which had children being “taught” in what could only be described as a shack.



I thought of my own 2 children, going to playgroups, Mother and toddler etc before school and it just brought home to me how lucky we are here to be able to have these choices. Paula was hoping to be able to get people to perhaps sponsor a child to help get some sort of school started and I was quick to sponsor a child. Why, because I knew that every penny was going to help that child. Trust is a big issue for me and I totally trusted Paula and Dave with their vision of building a community school and giving a free education for children in Ebo Town.



I became a Trustee when Paula first started the Charity. The role includes a lot of things like fundraising but also gives me a voice in all matters with the school and its running. I now sponsor 2 children & in Dec 2015 I went to Ebo Town with Paula and 3 others. It was an experience I shall never forget and just seeing the children playing games and us doing art projects with them touched my heart I knew that I had done the right thing. As you know our school is now built and has three classrooms and I will continue to support and being a Trustee. Outside of Ebo enjoy spending time with my Husband Mike, Children Andy & Catherine, our 2 wonderful Grandchildren Ruby & Oscar & Baxter the Dog. Walking up Haughmond Hill is one our favourites!

Donations can be made to our PayPal Account (friends&family) - ebotowncommunitynurseryschool@outlook.com



Fundraising

Do you shop online?

We have some fantastic news! Now, you can support our charity effortlessly and help raise funds every time you shop online - and the best part is, it won't cost you a penny!

We've teamed up with easyfundraising, a fantastic platform with over 7,000 participating brands, including popular names like Tesco, ASOS, eBay, M&S, Boots, Just Eat, and many more. Here's how it works:

1. Go to the easyfundraising website & sign up with your email address - <http://efraising.org/snW7oWSBux>
2. Shop online as you usually would.

Make sure to install the browser reminder as this will pop up everytime you go to a participating retailers website so no need to scroll through lists before shopping.

The magic happens when you make a purchase. These retailers will donate a portion of your spending to our cause, all at no extra cost to you. It's that simple! But wait, there's more! Throughout September, easyfundraising will donate £3 for every new supporter who registers and shops within their first month, and there's no upper limit to this offer. So, if 10 new supporters join, that's £30 extra for us, and the more, the merrier. (T&C Apply).

School Visits

We welcome anybody to visit our school and meet our wonderful children. If you wish to attend, we ask that you complete a visitor application form, which can be downloaded from our web page, and forwarded to the Trustees for approval 8 weeks prior to your intended visit.



Team April 2019

As we take safeguarding of our children seriously. **NO** visits are permitted unless prior approval has been authorized

Sponsorship Programme

Our sponsorship Programme has seen a resurgence in the last few months with lots of new faces joining us on our journey. BUT we are still in need of more sponsors to ensure our charity keeps going and we turn the tides on our financial deficit sustained through Covid-19.

If you know anyone who may be interested in joining us, please pass on our details and ask them to get in touch.



Projects

We recently had all 3 of our classroom floors fully tiled. Unfortunately due to the cement breaking up and at risk of causing an accident it was an urgent job.

So during the school holidays the team of builders & tilers got to work, firstly fixing the holes in the current floor then tiling all 300 sq m's. They did a fantastic job & now the worry of a child or adult having an accident is firmly in the past. Here they are looking super.

We have so many things on the "to do" list if & when funds allow, including enclosing the ceilings in each classroom - this will reduce the noise transference and allow each class to fully focus on their teacher without being able to hear the other classes.

This would also allow for us to install ceiling fans to help keep the room temperatures bearable during the hottest months.



Sign up to Easy Fundraising now to raise funds for us as you shop online.
Unique Sign up link - <http://efraising.org/snW7oWSBux>

Staff News

At the end of September we said a sad goodbye to Fatoumatta, our Butterfly Class teacher.

We had a bit of a race on our hands to find a new member of staff before the school opened its doors for the new school year but Ebrima (head of school) got to work putting out job adverts & the word spread.

Amy, Paula & Ebrima then set some time aside to interview the candidates face to face & via whatsapp.

Following those interviews the trustees deliberated and invited 1 candidate for a second less formal interview, this time lead by Paula as we all felt it was important for any new employee hear our story and what our mission is & who better to hear it from than the founder herself.

We were very pleased with how the interviews went & i'm pleased to say we welcomed a new Teacher to the school just a few weeks ago.

So without further adue, we are pleased to Introduce Ya Awa.

She is 23 years old and recently qualified from the Gambia College of Education. She takes the reins in our Butterfly Class (level 3) and



so far has settled in well.

We look forward to working with her closely in the future

A word from our Founders

In January 2024, my husband Dave and I will celebrate 10 years of a journey to help and support those living in poor and hard conditions within Ebo Town.



We have been blessed to open our own school with most financial support coming from Thomas Cook Childrens Charity, and Concorde College Shrewsbury.

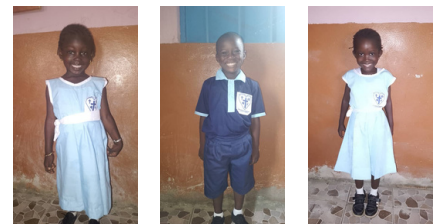
We now run a 3 classroom school, and employ 7 staff members mostly from the Ebo Community.

In hard times like Covid, and times when we have shed tears of frustration, we only have to look into a childs eye and remember WE ARE PLANTING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE. Thank you to all supporters for believing in the project as without you we could not continue working the way we do and giving children the best possible start in life.

It was in January 2014 we decided to make a difference with £200.00. We look back over these 10 years where we have seen many changes. There have been numerous trips out to the school, giving out rice aid, setting up clothes banks, giving out bedding as well as repairing roofs on homes & floors & flood damage.



We have never lost sight of why we started this project and still to this day offer a totally FREE education to all our wonderful 80 children. Still every penny goes to the school and all 8 trustees give up their time freely with love in their hearts to continue to drive forwards.



God Bless, and thanks Dave and Paula



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