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TO WITNESS THE LOVE OF
JESUS CHRIST TO THE
STREET CHILDREN
OF IRINGA BY STRIVING TO
MEET THEIR NEEDS
THAT THEY MAY EXPERIENCE
LIFE IN ALL ITS
GOODNESS

Welcome to the Spring edition of FISCH Food!

Greetings, dear Friends of FISCH! We hope this Newsletter finds you well, and that you have all had a pleasant start to 2023. The months bridging the old and new years are always a busy time at FISCH – there’s seasonal festivities to organise and take part in, and also the end of one academic year, and the start of the next. Consequently, this FISCH Food is full of news and updates for you to enjoy! As always, please feel free to share this newsletter and the work that the FISCH Team are doing with anyone you think may be interested. See you at the next edition!



Christmas & New Year at FISCH

Christmas is always a special time at FISCH, with the Drop-in-Centre bustling with activity. Not only do we host Christmas celebrations and services at FISCH Church, but we also host a **huge meal** for all the FISCH Team, Kids, family of the Kids, and also others who visit the DiC to be part of the Church family. It’s a huge event and enjoyed by all – as you can see from the photos!

On New Year’s Day we host a New Year’s Service and Celebration, **thanking God** for the year behind and preparing for the year ahead. This year had something extra special – the gifting of **Community Health Cards** (see below). A PA system and DJ was hired for the event and it was great fun!





St Saviour's Craft Group's Fantastic Fundraising

We'd love to give a **big shout out** to the St Saviour's Craft Group, based in Guildford, who decided to support FISCH once again with their Christmas Fair stall full of **homemade goodies**. The group has been meeting for many years and after hearing about the great work of FISCH in Tanzania decided we would be their beneficiaries for a few fundraisers! Last year they raised over £400 producing homemade marmalade (that's a lot of jars!) and this year they sold **jams, marmalades, plants, lavender bags**, and more, and raised **£620**. Wow! We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the St Saviour's Craft Group for their crafty efforts and continued support. **Thank you!**



Some of the Craft Group and their wares at the Christmas Craft Fair.



Community Health Cards

In Tanzania there is no NHS-equivalent – all medical care is **private** and **costly**, even just to see a doctor and get basic treatment. Medical insurance is available but out of reach of the Kids and Families FISCH seeks to assist. To help with this situation, FISCH have managed to secure the **Community Health Card** (a form of health insurance) for many FISCH Children as a **Gift for the New Year**. These have been very gratefully received at a small ceremony on the New Year's Day Celebrations – with many parents getting up and dancing in traditional African fashion! Having a CHC card could mean the **difference between life and death** for some of these Children. No wonder their parents are so grateful!

There have been many barriers to overcome in the procurement of these cards, one being that most of the Children don't have any formal identification documents, so a **big shout out to the Tanzanian Team** for persevering and overcoming these challenges.



Some of the Children and Parents receiving their Community Health Cards at the ceremony



Short-Term Accommodation Update

The Short-Term Accommodation (STA) seeks to **bridge the gap** between **Street Life** and **reuniting with family** in a safe and supported home. It has played a **vital role** in so many Children's lives and has **increased the numbers** of Children successfully moving off the Streets, and then **staying off them**.

Demand for the STA remains high. Although we have capacity for **14 Kids** across two rooms, and a third room is available for Girls, the Team have been hosting **more Children than beds** with some Kids sleeping on mattresses on the floor. This is still a better option than them sleeping rough on the Streets! *Continued....*

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The Children at the STA requested a **television** which has been purchased. This was seen as a good investment, because it will encourage the Children to stay at the DiC to watch the popular football matches aired, rather than be tempted to go find public televisions elsewhere in Iringa and **be tempted by the Street Life**.

Not every Child moves off the Streets and into family life. One example of this is **Salome**, who is now training in Zanzibar. Here's her story to share with you;



Salome's Story

Salome hails from a village close to Iringa and after finishing free education she came to the Streets of Iringa in search of a job. After a while she came across FISCH. She shared that the life she briefly lived on the Streets really motivated her to work hard and make the most of any opportunities that she has. In her home village, there was no opportunities for the young girls apart from marriage, so she does not want to return. Salome's greatest motivation is for her to study and work hard so she can help her family to get out of the circle of poverty.

After her arrival at FISCH and registration at the Short-Term Accommodation, she was counselled and her needs and capabilities were assessed. Salome was then enrolled in the course Tourism & Hotel Management at a vocational training college here in Iringa. Part of her training has required her to go into field practice, where the Students are placed in real life scenarios to better understand the inner workings of their particular trade. Salome worked at a hotel in Nungwi, Northern Zanzibar, which is a booming tourist hotspot. FISCH funded her field training, and she worked in Zanzibar until the end of January, when she returned home and re-joined the FISCH Family at the STA.

Salome's school principle here in Iringa has been in correspondence with the managers of the Hotel where Salome was training. He says that they are very proud of the work that Salome is displaying. This feedback is great news as it will increase Salome's employability when she finally graduates.

FISCH has been given the privilege to empower Salome as a young adult to take charge of her life through education and opportunity. Our hope with Salome when she finishes her field education is to get a job as an attendant at a hotel, or for us to explore avenues for her to open a small business where she can make food to sell to people.

This is just one of the ways in which the STA has offered a stepping stone from Street Life to opportunity and a new way of living. If you would be interested in supporting the STA and the role it plays in many Kids lives, please check out; <https://gofisch.org/donate>. or email Roy at rjmfish@gmail.com.

Food Parcel Update

This ministry continues to **thrive** and **bless** both the Children enrolled and their families. Currently **47 Children and families** are being supported with a monthly Food Parcel (**25kg maize flour, 5kg beans, 5kg rice, 1kg sugar** and **1 litre of oil**) with several more on the waiting list. **Sarah Maguire** of the UK FISCH Team oversees and co-ordinates the Sponsorship Programme and provides twice yearly updates from all the individual Children to their individual Sponsors.

At the end of 2022, we invited Sponsors to contribute towards a **Christmas Gift** for their Sponsored Child. Thanks to the generosity of so many Sponsors, we were able to provide a Gift of **clothing** or **bedding** to every Child in the Programme! So if you're a Sponsor and you're reading this – **Thank You!**

Some other great news is that after some lengthy administration processes, FISCH has been able to provide medical insurance in the form of **Community Health Cards** (see above) to every Food Parcel Beneficiary. **What an amazing achievement!**





Rose – A Food Parcel Beneficiary



Rose is 10 years old and lives in Iringa, attending a local primary school where she enjoys Mathematics and Kiswahili. When she grows up, she would like to be an English teacher. Rose lives with her aunt who works as a hairdresser. Rose's mother has passed away and her father's whereabouts are unknown.

At most, Rose and her aunt would have two meals in a day. Frequently, Rose would go the whole day without food. When times are tough and her aunt cannot secure enough work and earnings for the day's meals, they are forced to go to bed hungry.

For a significant portion of her meals, Rose depends on the kindness of neighbours and strangers in her local neighbourhood. Although she tries to attend school as much as possible, this is inhibited by her home situation and poor nutritional state.

Fortunately, a Sponsor was matched with Rose and she and her aunt are recipients of a monthly Food Parcel. This means that she can enjoy regular, filling and nutritional meals daily, and she is able to attend school consistently. The provision of something so simple but essential as food has changed Rose's life for the better and given her a hope and a greater chance of a good happy future.

If you would be interested in sponsoring a monthly Food Parcel, we'd love to have you onboard. Please contact Sarah at sarahmaguire@onething.org.uk for more information.



The Uniform & Stationary Programme



One of the ministries at FISCH that has been operating for a while now is the Uniform & Stationary Programme. In Tanzania, children are unable to attend school if they **do not arrive in the correct uniform** and with the **correct equipment** (pens, paper, textbooks, etc). This makes education even more expensive to sustain. The Programme was set up to provide these required items to Children who are able to go back into education. The school year runs from January to December in Tanzania, and before the 2023 school year started we were able to help around **300 Primary and Secondary School Children** with their uniform and stationary requirements, who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend school. It has been a massive undertaking and is the cumulation of **three months of work and effort** across different parts of the Team, including, of course, the **Sewing Club** and past **Sewing Graduates**. We are really grateful to our Partners and individual Friends of FISCH who contacted us and asked to contribute to this specific Programme – **300 Kids are able to receive an Education thank; to you!**



An Interview with Simon Tolan

Simon is one of the UK FISCH Team Members who has recently been out to Iringa and is involved with an upcoming Project of FISCH. Here we chat to him about his experience in Iringa, and what he was doing out there.

How did you get involved with FISCH?

Through St Saviours Church. I have worked in Africa for 20 years in many countries as a Civil Engineer. I wanted to find a charity in Africa where I could use my skills in infrastructure and development.

What aspects of FISCH ministries are you interested and involved in?

My mission is to help with creating a new Community Centre for the Children, "FISCH City"

Please tell us a bit about what you got up to on your recent trip to Iringa.

We are building a second structure on the site of the new Drop-In-Centre. We have had problems with builders and the project had been at a standstill for 6 months. I went out there to get things moving again. We are now back on track and the new building should be ready in a months' time.

Please tell us what you can about the site where the new Community Centre ('FISCH City') will be built.

We have brought 9 acres of land on the outskirts of town on which we will build a new community, to include a training centre, workshops, classrooms, a church, accommodation, kitchens, shower blocks, sports facilities, a farm, and a fish farm.

What are your hopes for FISCH and the new site in the future?

To create a new home, with the intent that we will take Children out of the city where they are at risk and create a safe haven where they can learn, grow and worship the Lord.

What did you enjoy most about your time at FISCH or in Africa in general?

It's all about the Children. To just see one of them with a smile lifts you enormously... to see a transformation in their lives from having nothing to going to school, university and then a career.

Friends of FISCH, watch this space! Below you can see some photos of the land where this development is going to take place. Please join us in prayer for this project of FISCH.



Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. – Psalm 127:1



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