

Karuri School Project

Supporting Sacred Heart School, Naivasha, Kenya

"A Dream for Something Better" - Wangari Cecilia



News Update - April 2018

Visit by Wangari

We have been delighted to welcome Wangari back to the UK, for just a few short weeks. During the time she has been in Kenya, she has been steadily supported by a number of schools, parishes, individuals, organisations and fundraising groups in this country. She is deeply grateful and fully appreciates that she could not have achieved her dream without us. This visit has been an opportunity for her to personally thank as many people as possible.

Words from Wangari

Dear Friends,

I thank God for giving me an opportunity to come back to the UK and thank people for their great support. I am very happy to meet the members of Karuri School Project, who are part of my family. Nine years ago we came together with a dream to fight poverty in Africa through education; to give hope and future to destitute and orphaned children.

It is my first visit in 7 years and I am very pleased to meet my friends and people who have supported us. You have touched and transformed the lives of these children, and have made a great difference. Thank you for your passion and your love.

Wangari



News from the Churches

Two days after Wangari's arrival, we were still trudging through snowdrifts on our way to **St Gregory's Church**. Wangari spoke at both Masses of the Kenyan children whose lives have been changed by the Project and thanked everyone for their vital role in this success. Parishioners have contributed generously to the fund since its beginning and they crowded into the Church Hall after each Mass to meet Wangari again and chat over coffee and biscuits. Wangari was quite overwhelmed by the amount donated during this time - over £1,500. Our thanks go to all who helped to make this possible. Be assured every penny will go directly to the Fund and the benefits of the children.

The Priest from **St Patrick's RC Church**, Duston is very supportive of Karuri School Project and everyone there was delighted to see Wangari. Over £400 was donated to the Project over the weekend of 10th/11th March. Father Benny Joseph also donated a large sum of money to the Project last year.

Ice, snow and freezing temperatures greeted Wangari as she spoke at Masses at the **Sacred Heart Church**, Weston Favell during the weekend of the 17th/18th March. Despite a depleted congregation, over £300 was donated plus several Standing Order sponsorship pledges. Many parishioners commented on how inspirational they found Wangari's story.

News from the schools

Wangari has been warmly welcomed on her whistle stop tour of school assemblies and Q and A sessions during her stay. Thomas Becket, St. Gregory's, St Mary's, Good Shepherd, and Whitehills Primary have all been significant contributors to the Project down the years and Wangari was able to express her gratitude as well as introducing a new raft of children to her work; young children have a thirst for learning about the lives of those less fortunate and a refreshing innate sense of fairness. All these schools have expressed a willingness to support the Project in the months ahead. We were also delighted to visit Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Wellingborough for the first time and they have pledged their support in the Summer term.

The Good Loaf

Wangari was invited to visit The Good Loaf in Northampton to give a talk about the Karuri School Project to the women who attend this support group. They listened to her story of the journey from hopelessness to success for these destitute children and also the difficulties Wangari had to overcome to keep her dream alive of building a school for the children to be educated.



At The Good Loaf, all the bread is entirely hand-crafted, baked daily at sunrise with flours sourced from local mills, and with care and dedication to every loaf. But good bread is only half the story. As a responsible social business it aims to provide real employment opportunities to vulnerable local women in an attempt to break the cycle of poverty, unemployment and offending.

We were welcomed by Annabel, the Manager, who explained how their project worked for these women; many have been involved in crime, and are being rehabilitated through this project. There are opportunities to be trained in the bakery and cafe to work with the public. It was very interesting and we sampled the cafe's home cooking as we shared lunch with everyone which was delicious! - Chrissie Collins

WI News

Several friends, neighbours and WI members came for tea and cakes in Wistow for the chance to meet Wangari. She was greeted with another huge pile of red knitted hats, scarves, mittens, leggings and sweaters ready for the next shipment to Kenya. Her gratitude was sincerely and beautifully expressed to the group and she showed some video clips of the original classrooms, kitchen, dining room, dormitories, toilets and the new brick classrooms which are to replace wooden ones. Watching a class of very young children singing together in English reminded us all of the amazing work that is being achieved by Wangari, with our help. - Jill Wadsworth



Hunsbury Harmonettes

Wangari spent an enjoyable evening listening to the Hunsbury Harmonettes who had been invited to perform for the Music Appreciation Society at the Quaker House in Northampton.

Wangari was delighted and we greatly enjoyed the music and singing. The programme included a wide genre of music, from Alleluia, William Boyce, jazz, pop, musicals and even a beautiful poem "Your presence" written by one of the choir members set to music composed by Helen Thorman who is the Music Director. The concert ended on a very happy note, ABBA "Thank you for the music"



Wangari was given the opportunity to say a big thank you to the "Angels" as she called them, for all their support, raising so much money with the concerts in the past. Also Wangari wanted to pass on her gratitude for the money that was given from the Music appreciation Society. As she said, every pound is used directly for the children's welfare and education. - Chrissie Collins

The Lions Club

Northampton Eighty Lions Club is a 'service organisation', with the simple motto 'We Serve'. As well as supporting local youth groups and organisations, the club provides help to national and international charities. We were delighted when Trevor Harrison was able to provide a link between Northampton Eighty Lions Club and Lions Club of Nairobi Greater. The Northampton Eighty Lions Club were pleased to welcome Wangari to one of their meetings, and to hear about the contributions made by the Lions Club of Nairobi Greater. Amongst other things, they have contributed cattle feed for the growing number of cows at the school. This is the beginning of support from Kenyan-based groups, and we all hope this will continue.



Walk for a Cause

It was a double pleasure to visit 'Tools for Self Reliance' and to meet Bob Walder, one of the trustees for 'Walk for a Cause'. Bob said "Walk for a Cause is a charity which was formed some years ago with the aim of raising money to give assistance to small local charities with a portion also to overseas charities which are supported by local charities. We particularly look at charities where relatively small amounts of money could make a large difference. The Sacred Heart School in Kenya was one of those projects which we felt fitted our criteria and we were delighted that we could help."



Messy Church

Learning about Christianity can be fun and what could be more fun than doing stuff together as a family at the Kingsley Park Messy Church! It's called Messy for a reason. A fun filled session of painting and craft activities, a time for celebration with storytelling and music followed by sharing food together.

Wangari was delighted to celebrate an early Easter at Messy Church, Kingsley Park Methodist Church. She joined in with the activities, and gave the closing prayer.

We send our grateful thanks to Kate and Margaret Pell for their continued support and generosity.



International Women's Day, Greens Norton

It was a happy coincidence that the WI's International Women's Day took place while Wangari was here in the UK. Nine years ago she spoke at the conference "Women reaching Women" and since then the Karuri School Project has received massive support from the WI. Wangari accepted the invitation from former chair Lynda Beck to speak at this year's event, thanking the members for their valuable support and help to the school by knitting jumpers and holding bag sales.

Wangari was also able to describe how FGM is a common cultural practice in some African countries, and she explained that good education is the first step in changing people's attitudes.

Sheila Dowling joined us later in the day, and a very pleasant and interesting time was had by everyone. The event provided an opportunity to renew old friendships and to meet new friends amongst such a wonderful group of ladies.

- Myra Smith



The Guild of Friendship

It was wonderful to share an evening of fun and friendship at the Guild of Friendship, a group of women supporting the Girls' Brigade. The speaker spoke amusingly, yet touchingly about her life as a vicar's wife.



Methodist Cottages Women's Group

The group were fascinated to learn just how Wangari's dream started with a field and is now a thriving school with 120 pupils, homes on site for teachers, an improved dining area, toilet block and washing facilities, electricity, water storage and livestock, whilst adjoining fields are farmed to provide food.



SunCare

SunCare is an amazing day service in Northampton for people with learning disability, head injury, autism and physical disabilities. SunCare have been very kind to Karuri School Project over the years, with the team running a marathon and holding a sponsored 'walk to work', and we were delighted to catch up with old friends.



Remembering Hebe



It is over 6 years since Hebe was inspired by Wangari's story. Hebe Holmes was diagnosed with a terminal illness at the age of 14. She lived her final two years to the full, never feeling sorry for herself. Whilst facing her own problems, Hebe was touched by the challenges faced by others. Wangari's story of unconditional faith and belief gave Hebe inspiration, and she willingly gave her time and energy to supporting the Karuri School Project. Hebe died on 26th March, 2012. She would have been proud, delighted and amazed that her name and her memory were benefitting children who deserve the opportunity to make their mark in the world. Her memorial fund has raised about £6000 and we offer our thanks and gratitude to Hebe's family for this generous act at a time of great sadness.

The children and teachers remember her as we do in our thoughts and prayers. - Chrissie Collins

So many people to thank!

A special thanks to Helen and Noel Sullivan for hosting Wangari so generously, and for welcoming us all into their home, at any time of the day or night. Thanks to John for organising the timetable of events so ably and tolerantly. Thanks for Myra for meeting Wangari at the airport, and to all members of Karuri School Project, who have made this visit such a success. We are grateful to the churches, schools and other organisations and individuals who welcomed us with open arms. But most of all, we send a huge thank you to all our friends and supporters. Without you we would not be able to continue our work. Thank you everyone.



Future fundraising

Having almost completed the building of six new classrooms, Wangari would like to build a new kitchen and dining area. Any ideas for fundraising or donations would be gratefully received. Please contact John Sleet on 01604 786077