

Newsletter 73

During 2015 we have daily been confronted with pictures and reports about people fleeing for their lives and searching for a safe place for themselves and their children. The hope to find jobs and schools for their children drives them on. Under the most terrible hardship and big risks have they been taken advantage of by refugee smugglers, who have taken the opportunity to earn big money from other peoples misfortune. For those , who manage to cross the sea remains a long journey towards the dream of safety. Men carry their old parents on their backs, traumatized silent children follow the adults, pregnant women give birth under terrible conditions. Those pictures are innumerable. But we have also seen examples of people, who like us enjoy the privilege of living in a country without war, with functioning schools and health care have got engaged in helping.

Like today's refugees the children in S:t Christine are totally dependent on our engagement and support to the school. During the past year all the donations from you, members and sponsors, were the all important funding of the operation of the school. Thanks to your contributions and the sale of gems etc. we managed to raise the funds for the operation of the school, which the Association and the Foundation agreed upon in December 2014. During most of the year the exchange rate was unfavorable, but it improved slightly towards the end. The money the Association has managed to raise in various ways doesn't suffice to cover all the needs of the school. What unfortunately is lacking is maintenance of the buildings. They undergo hard wear due to weather, winds and termites and staff is continually working with minor repairs, painting etc. In the caucus on November 30th representatives for the Association, the Foundation and the School Board took part. On the agenda was among others the budget for 2016. Estimated operating costs, renovation needs etc. were discussed. The meeting concluded that the Association can not by itself contribute all the needed money. The Association asked the Foundation and School Board to review the estimated costs to see if there are any items, which may be reduced without putting the quality of the education at risk. In the longer run the two sheet metal buildings must be renovated. The wooden structures begin to deteriorate. The best alternative would be to replace them with brick buildings, but that would cost around SEK 100 000 for each one. The library books are well used and worn and in the need of replacement and additions. The computer room needs new equipment and in the long run we need to look at the possibilities and costs for cable/fiber connection.

Latest news from S:t Christine School in Kabondo

We are approaching the last weeks of December, and the pupils of S:t Christine have another school year behind them. The 42 students in 8th grade show even this year very good results. They are now about to leave school and go on with their lives. If they succeed as well in the final exams as they have earlier in the year, it is likely that all of them will get enough points to qualify for Secondary School. The engagement and dedicated work of the teachers are important factors in the students' success. The teachers are anxious to see the students do well and good results is also a personal success for them.

The children in the preschool class have now finished their first year in S:t Christine School.

In November a colorful ceremony was held at the school. Nicely dressed in blue the 33 pupils got their diplomas as proof that they are ready to proceed to 1st grade next year.

Many custodians were present at the ceremony and took the opportunity to show their appreciation and thank the teachers for their dedicated work and the sponsors for the support given to the school and the children.

November 28 - 29th the Association was participating in a "Fair Christmas Fair" at The Museum of Work in Norrköping.

This Christmas Fair is open to non-profit actors and charity organizations only. Some of the

participants were Amnesty, the local Society for Nature Conservation and the Agency Against Discrimination. The general mood was very positive and we had an even flow of visitors during the two days. Quite satisfied with our achievement we finished on Sunday afternoon, counted the money and found that the commerce was quite successful. One contributing factor was that we now have “Swish” and “iZettle”, which simplifies payment, as using credit cards or cell phones instead of cash becomes increasingly common.

New Years gift to the children.

In January the next school year begins and new children will start in the preschool class. The other pupils have grown and their uniforms are worn. Since they have only one uniform, it is used every day and after a year the sweaters, shorts and dresses usually show signs of play and every day wear. Both new and old students need a new uniform, so a donation corresponding to the cost of a uniform is a very much appreciated gift. A complete uniform consisting of shorts or dress, a blouse and a warm sweater costs SEK 120.

The Association's and Foundation's Webb Pages

On the Association's Webb page www.kisumu.se is a link to www.st-christine.org, which is the Foundation's Webb page. There you can find reports and news from the school. The Kisumu Association can also be found on Facebook.

Upcoming activities

Concert

Planning of the concert we mentioned in the previous newsletter is ongoing. We are primarily looking for opportunities to arrange a concert in the Norrköping area. Suggestions regarding performers are most welcome. Please contact Julia Olson, member of the board, julia@kisumu.se

Markets, events etc.

We gratefully receive suggestions from you members regarding markets, events, places and localities, where we can participate or arrange our own activities and hopefully attract new members and establish new contacts with the purpose to secure continued flow of money for the operation and maintenance of the school. If you have friends who might be interested in buying Kenyan gems, please contact Bitte Brask, telephone 0707-57 68 77 or via mail to ordf@kisumu.se

Hoping for a continued good cooperation and engagement for the children of St Christine Education Centre the board wishes all members and sponsors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The Association's different accounts

Swish: 1236 072 698

90-account: Plus giro 90 04 64 – 9

Bank giro: 5734-8534

Plus giro: 17 62 64 – 0

Regarding the Association's Handelsbanken account and IBAN number, please contact our accountant per.kingfors@kisumu.se