



ZIMELE 2017

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – AUGUST

FUNDRAISING

Upcoming Events

The 9th Annual Zimele Dinner

The 2017 Zimele Dinner will take place on Saturday August 26 in the Smith Hall at the St Kevin's College Senior Campus at 6.30 p.m. The Dinner Committee chaired by Jacqueline Dinan looks forward to your attendance and support. Please gather a table and spread the word! Funds raised on the night will go to the Education for Life Centre in Eldoret and the Start Support Program in South Sudan. This year's guest speaker is Mr. Bren Arkininstall, recently appointed CEO of Edmund Rice Foundation Australia (ERFA). Bren will share with us his professional and personal reactions to the 2017 immersion trip in which he

participated. He will also enlighten us to his vision for ERFA. Refer to the Dinner Flier (back page) for booking details.

The Dinner committee is also seeking donations for the silent auction and raffle. If you are able to donate please contact Marcella Meagher at marce.m@bigpond.com.au as soon as possible detailing what you are able to donate and she will contact you to arrange collection of the items. Any donation is gratefully received!

Zimele's main project Ministries are the Education for Life Centre in Eldoret, Kenya, and the Star Support Group in Yambio, South Sudan. Zimele raises funds for these ministries mainly through the Annual Dinner, the Walkathon, the 24 Hour Challenge, Sponsorships, Beads Sales and Direct Donations

The 24 Hour Challenge 2017

The 24 Hour Challenge takes place at the Senior School on Saturday September 16. This is an event essentially for the staff and students at the College. It is co-ordinated by Mr Baff, Mr Mitchell, Ms Marple and Mr McGirr. It was very successful in 2016, raising more than \$30,000 for Zimele's main project ministries in Kenya and South Sudan. (see relevant articles in this newsletter). Registrations are

currently underway and the event promises to be just as successful, if not more so, than last year. We are trying to involve as many students and staff as possible and to encourage parents and friends of St Kevin's to sponsor participants. It is a marvellous St Kevin's community experience, with barbecue, coffee, banter, jelly beans and cowbells. For information, registration details, or if you wish to sponsor a participant, feel free to contact any one of the above teachers at the College (baffn@stkevins.vic.edu.au)

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear friends of Zimele,

Thank you so much for all your support of our Zimele/ERFA ministries in East Africa. Having just returned from our most recent Zimele immersion I can assure you the contributions you are making continues to change lives of those most in need at the Brother Beausang Catholic Education Centre, Education For Life (EFL) in Kenya and Star Support Group(SSG) in South Sudan. With the closure of several agencies, the pressure on EFL in supporting those living with HIV&AIDS has never been as great as it is today. In South Sudan, civil war and drought has left many people and children displaced and vulnerable to attack which is increasing the spread of HIV/AIDS. (Cont Pg. 4)

2017 IMMERSION – *A reflection by Jack Fennesey – Immersion participant*

Like the broken, yet melodious record he is, the great Tom Purcell would habitually ramble on about the 'Kenyan magic' and the euphoric power it harbored. Indeed, I knew there must have been something in the water over there as it could account for Tom's apparent insanity; however, I never truly understood what he was talking about until I experienced it for myself. It wasn't the food nor the animals nor the landscape of East-Africa that filled me with the greatest sense of awe, it was the people. People who, despite hardship I would have crumpled under, continue to offer a smile and a greeting on the street to an Australian stranger. From the immersion's commencement, I made known to the group a conundrum I was battling internally: How can people who have so little in the way of fortune and opportunity still find the strength to get out of bed in the morning? By trip's end I came to a conclusion, but it wasn't before a lengthy period of listening, observing and reflecting that I found the answer. Following are three things I learnt about life during my journey through Kenya and Tanzania.

Your close relationships encourage you to swing harder at the curveballs life throws at you. We visited the homes of many local people, and as was so often the case, the family dynamic consisted of a mother, whose 'husband' abandoned her, caring for children you couldn't count on one hand. She would have to work during the week, leaving her kids to cook and fend for themselves for the five days. One boy of only 10 years had burn scarring covering his whole chest after he spilt a pot of boiling water over himself. Without him, though, the younger ones would go starving. We met so many other families in the same situation, but it was the strength of their relationships that kept them afloat. We visited the 'Education for Life' center in Eldoret, a project working to help improve the daily lives of people living with HIV/AIDS by providing psychosocial support and income-generation activities to the community. But more than this, the strong social network that this place offers gives these men and women optimism in the face of adversity.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Mandela, 2003). Since coming back home, I have a newfound appreciation for the education I have received. Unfortunately, many Kenyans will not get the same opportunity I did. Less than 50 percent of students transition from primary to secondary school and for many, this simply because they cannot afford it. What surprised me most during our visit through Brother Beausang High School and some smaller schools in the Kibera slum was the contagious joy that infected the kids. For them, school was a safe haven from whatever they had going on at home. They genuinely enjoyed and valued their education – something that we occasionally take for granted. I noticed some students finding it very difficult to let go of my hand, perhaps because they didn't get the same care at home. I found the growth of a person is not dissimilar to the art of glass blowing. In the beginning the molten glass is malleable and easily shaped, but once it starts to cool down, only fine details can be changed. In the same way, one's childhood shapes so much of who they will be when they grow up. I admired all the educators we met, and believe they should be held in such high regard for the work they do.

A strong faith and a willingness to remain hopeful will get you out of bed in the morning no matter your circumstance. However, there was an exception: a 20 year-old man I met was bed-ridden after major complications with his spine and recently developed bed sores. He said he was saving up for a laptop so he could study computer science from home – he remains hopeful. Sadly, we found out later that the family didn't have the money for his treatment. It seemed, however, that everyone we met had instilled within them the same sense of hope and faith. On a wall in Kibera I saw written: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you (Isaiah 43:2)". The church services were alive with song and dance. People were so grateful for the beauty they saw in life. This, I've come to know, is what Tom calls the 'Kenyan magic'

NEWS FROM MINISTRIES

The Education for Life Centre - Kenya

The Education for Life Centre in the city of Eldoret is a ministry of the Eldoret Catholic Diocese under the authority of Bishop Cornelius. It is administered by Angie Obutu and the Christian Brothers, and is a source of hope for over 300 mainly women with HIV and their children. Most of the Centre's clients are women but not all. A recent Zimele immersion party met Moses, 56 years of age, who has HIV and relies on the centre for support and for the food he needs to take with his medication. Moses' wife died in 1997 of HIV. He has three daughters who live outside Eldoret. He lives in a tiny shack with two of his grandchildren.



2017 Immersion participants at the EFL centre

One is in school and is sponsored by Zimele: the other he cannot afford to send to school, and

Moses, 56 years of age, who has HIV and relies on the centre for support and for the food he needs to take with his medication.

desperately needs a sponsor. Moses takes his retro-viral drugs every morning and evening, and needs food to go with them. If he doesn't take the food he suffers severe side effects. If he doesn't take the medication, he dies. The World Health Organisation and the Kenyan Government provide the medication free, as long as you can get to the clinic. The nearest is 12 kilometres from Moses' shack. He walks there every month. The food he eats is porridge in the morning, no lunch, and beans at night. Moses boils the beans on a wood fire outside his shack on the ground. When it rains the wood gets wet, and it's not helpful inside as his

roof leaks. He uses a kerosene lamp at night. There is no sewerage system and, from a nearby bore hole he gets his water which he must boil to avoid getting sick. The landlord often ejects him when he falls behind in his rent and they have to sleep outside which can be very dangerous. Moses' situation is the norm for most of the 300 people who depend on the EFL for practical and emotional support. The stigma of HIV is devastating for them, and they turn to the EFL Centre as it gives them hope and affirmation. The Centre relies utterly on funds from sources such as Zimele.



NEWS FROM MINISTRIES

The Star Support Group

The Star Support Group in Yambio, South Sudan is co-ordinated by Br Gerald Ellul, a Christian Brother. It has 2000 beneficiaries, most of whom are women suffering from HIV, a situation exacerbated by the civil war raging in the country. The Centre also caters for 358 orphan children whose parents have died from HIV infection.



***Patient of SSR
receiving treatment at
Nzara (small town 15
miles North West of
Yambio)***

A Human Rights member has been educating the children and their guardians on their rights and awareness workshops continue to provide opportunities for beneficiaries to receive crucial emotional support. The Centre also gives direct nutritional support to 550 clients who are on medical regimens with severe side effects if medication is not complemented with nutrition.



***Workshop for children & the guardians on Child
Protection Policies***

The centre also conducts Tailoring Vocational Training, mainly for women, as part of its programme to empower its beneficiaries. So the Star Support story highlights an urgent, compelling need which deserves our support.

Cont. Pg 1... The success of the upcoming Zimele Dinner on August 26th and the Zimele 24 Hour Challenge on September 16th are vital to the ongoing medical support programs for over 1700 adult members and children at EFL and SSG. I wish I could take all of you on an immersion to see the impact your contributions make to the most vulnerable women and children in our world. Your support is an inspiration to the beneficiaries, giving them great hope and strength knowing there are people in Melbourne who care about their survival and wellbeing. Every dollar you give transforms lives. I hope to see as many of you as possible at our Zimele Dinner. This is the one time of the year where we celebrate our Zimele story together and raise the necessary funds for Zimele ministries to enable our most marginalised brothers and sisters stand on their own two feet.

Kind Regards,

Tommy Purcell
Chairman Zimele

**For more information on the work of Zimele and how to kindly support please
visit Zimele.org.**