



Destiny Children

Supporting Destiny Garden School

Annual Report 2010

Destiny Children was founded in Macclesfield in November 2009, inspired by Judy Roper following a visit to Kenya, the country of her upbringing. She did voluntary work at Destiny Garden School, Mombasa, where she joined her sister Jackie, who had worked at the school for 6 months and assisted in its founding.

Destiny Garden School, which is in one of the poorest suburbs of Mombasa, started up in May 2009 with much help from volunteers who provided advice, technical expertise and considerable financial support. It was immediately obvious that there was a need for the supply of the on-going basic running costs and Destiny Children was set up for this purpose.

A committee was formed comprising of Judy, husband Patrick, friends Barry Powell and Val Lear, Rotarian friend and colleague Adrian Ramsden and Kathy James who had visited DGS earlier in the year. The object of the Charity was established as :- *“The advancement of the education and wellbeing of disadvantaged children in Kenya particularly but not exclusively those at Destiny Garden School Mombasa.”* Later in the year we were fortunate to have 3 more committee members join us – Elizabeth Wright, Nadine Lear and Chris Jones.

To achieve our objectives, Destiny Children main activities were:-

- Secure sponsorship for each of the pupils
- Organise fund raising events
- Build an informative website
- Operate an ‘alternative gifts’ scheme
- Provide education materials to the school
- Become a registered charity and qualify for Gift Aid
- Receive monthly financial and progress reports from the schools director
- Visit the school from time to time to check on progress

On returning from DGS in September 2009, Judy created a website for the school, and subsequently created one for Destiny Children. During the year these websites, together with Kathy’s volunteer website, have been instrumental in obtaining volunteers for the school, getting sponsors and making helpful contacts

The sponsorship programme was initially started by Kathy James in September 2009 with 5 sponsors and procedures were put in place in November 2009, by which time we had 32 sponsors mainly from the committee’s families and friends. These numbers have grown through the year to 85, not only from the UK but also from other countries. Sponsorship is our principal income, each sponsor committing themselves to donating £10.00 per month per child for, hopefully, the foreseeable future.

We have organized a number of fund raising events, led by Val, which we believe are important to publicise our charity as well as raise funds for DGS’s needs. We have held a concert, coffee mornings, a book sale, a dinner party and a car boot sale. We have also made presentations to various organizations. We have encouraged people to give a gift to the school instead of giving ‘useless’ presents to friends and family. The gifts have included goats, stationery materials and support to the feeding programme.

Destiny Children Secretary, Val, visited the school with daughter Nadine in March/April. They took over the letters that the Kings Junior Division School had written to the DGS children and supervised the replies. Val took the photos of all the new children since Judy's visit the previous year and made sure the records were up to date. Val was shocked to find out that there was no one trained in First Aid to deal with a playground accident where a child broke a leg and that inspired her to raise £300 on her return to the UK to provide First Aid Training to all the teachers and some of the children.

Whilst there Nadine was very aware of the children's lack of writing materials; just one child had a pencil case which was his very treasured possession. With this in mind the Pencil Case Project was put in place and we organized, with the help of Kings Junior School, Macclesfield, to send each child a filled pencil case, together with a box of stationery for each of the teachers. These were sent in a shipping container generously supplied by Jane Ainsley, who also works with Vision Africa, and brought much joy to both teachers and children.

We registered with HMRC in February and were able to claim gift aid backdated to 23rd November. Having achieved in excess of the £5000 income required, in August we obtained our registration with the charity commission

Reports from the school are received regularly, frequently daily by email and occasionally by phone. We do not try to manage the school from distance, but the director seeks advice from time to time. We are working with him to develop a business plan which will require another visit to Mombasa. 2010 has been a difficult year to do this as there has been so much going on at the school and funds from different sources are unpredictable. It is not our intention to 'micro manage' the school but it is felt that a simple plan would help Jacob to focus on the School's priorities. We bear in mind this is Africa and their way of working is different to that of the UK's!

During the last year, Destiny Garden School has grown from strength to strength, and now has much more appropriate facilities. New classrooms were built enabling the School to vacate the unsuitable rented accommodation. Destiny Children Committee members themselves provided £4,500 towards the cost of building the 4 new primary classes. For more details please see 'DGS Progress Report'

The next main fund raising event is on December 4th in Macclesfield Town Hall when we are running a Dinner Dance to a live 9 piece band, and this event is being led by Elizabeth.

Secretary's Report

With the help of Adrian, Destiny Children's constitution was drawn up and put in place on 23 November 2009 and revised in August 2010 on the Charities Commission's recommendations. Many policies and procedures have been completed during the year and these include – Procedures for Transferring Funds to Mombasa; The Expenses Form and Procedures; The Charities Reserve Policy; Backup Procedures for the Charities Records; Confidentiality of Records of which a draft has been drawn up. Insurance is still to be decided. Re our Child Protection Policy – Destiny Children has adopted the Staffordshire University policy as an interim measure until we have done further research and are able to personalise a policy for Destiny Children.

Treasurers Report

Please see the balance sheet showing 11 months to 31 October 2010. Since July 2010, Destiny Children has been able to cover the basic running costs of Destiny Garden School, which was the main aim we set ourselves when we started in November 2009. It is most encouraging to note from the Business Plan that we should achieve all except one of the targets we set ourselves, and on many we have exceeded!