

Family Sponsorship Newsletter

A belated **Happy New Year** to all our Family Sponsors and donors. My name is Jo Bayley and I have recently taken over the role of Family Sponsorship Co-Ordinator from Megan Burley. I would like to thank Megan for her hard work over the past 9 months and I hope that I can continue to improve and expand the program in the way which she has done so successfully.

I first came to Kenya in 2006 to complete my Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. The expedition included an ascent of Mount Kenya and a community project at a rescue centre for street children in the Eastern Province town of Embu. The community project made such an impact on me that I decided to return to work at the centre for 6 months once I graduated from university in 2007.

It was whilst working with the street children in Embu that I first heard of Action for Children in Conflict and the work they were doing here in Thika. I came to visit the projects and experienced first hand the invaluable work which the charity undertakes. In September 2008 I returned to Kenya again, this time as an AfCiC volunteer. To be given the opportunity to co-ordinate a programme like the Family Sponsorship Scheme, which is making a real difference to the lives of some very desperate people, is a huge privilege and I look forward to working with local staff to achieve its aims and objectives.

Already this year four more families have been assisted by the scheme, two through business loans and two through

more unconventional means. Poverty, hopelessness and addiction are complex issues and the Family Sponsorship Programme aims to find real, lasting solutions. Sometimes businesses are not the answer to a family's problems; alternatively, circumstances, such as escalating food prices, mean that businesses collapse. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those sponsors who have continued to support us in light of this adversity and who trust our decisions to assist their linked family in the most appropriate manner.

We are constantly trying to encourage our beneficiaries to think of innovative business ideas and were very pleased when Mary Gikonyo told us she wanted to become a photographer in Kiandutu slum where she lives. Through Julie Nichol's (Merseyside) contribution to the Family Sponsorship Programme we were able to buy Mary a camera and several roles of film. Each day she walks around Kiandutu, offering to take photographs of families, special occasions or events, charging a set price per photograph.



Mary Gikonyo

Although business got off to a slow start, there are not many other photographers in the area (if any!) and, through word of mouth, demand for her

work is increasing steadily. Mary works extremely hard and has been repaying her loan on a weekly basis without fail. She is extremely grateful to AfCiC and her sponsor for providing her with the opportunity to make the most of her life.

Currently I am in the process of updating the Family Sponsorship section of the AfCiC website and would like to take this opportunity to request your help. If you have any feedback or comments about the scheme, which you feel would be beneficial for people considering making a regular contribution, I would be most grateful if you could email them to me on the new, dedicated AfCiC sponsorship email

address:
sponsorship@actionchildren.org.

Once again I would like to thank you for your continued support and generosity which enables AfCiC to make a real and sustainable difference to those families we support. There are always new cases being brought to our attention but we simply do not have the means to assist each and every one of them. If you know of a friend, colleague or family member who may be interested in sponsoring a family, please put them in touch.

Best Wishes

Jo