

Franciscan Aid: Newsletter Summer 2019



Welcome to the latest Franciscan Aid newsletter, keeping you informed about our work with the world's poorest communities.

Farewells and welcome

Since our last newsletter, we have said goodbye to our wonderful secretary, Angela Alexander. Angela has served Franciscan Aid with thoroughness and enthusiasm for a six-year term and we are very sorry to see her go. However, with characteristic efficiency, she set about recruiting her successor, and ensured that there was a period of overlap for a smooth handover. Angela's shoes may be difficult to fill, but it is already clear that Lesley Smith is managing the challenge admirably. We are delighted to have Lesley on board.

At our July meeting we will be saying farewell to two more Trustees – Caroline Ugbo and our Treasurer Roland Randall. This brings home a constant issue for us – a maximum term of six years without a break means that we are always on the lookout for new Trustees. And now we particularly need a new Treasurer.

If you feel you might be called to do more, and to get involved as a Trustee of Franciscan Aid, please do contact Richenda (richenda@ymail.com). No decisions are made without a process of reflection and discernment beginning with attending a Board meeting as an observer, so you will not be committing yourself to anything until you have had an opportunity to find out more.

Getting to know you

If you would like a representative from Franciscan Aid to come and talk to your local group or area, please contact Richenda at richenda@ymail.com. Unusually, some Trustees are likely to be available this Francistide. We would love to come and meet you, share updates on our work and hear about any situations of need that are close to your hearts.

Jill Cannings visits Masiphumelele



In the last newsletter, we carried a tribute to Franciscan Aid's previous Chair, Peter Cannings. Recently we received this report from Peter's widow Jill, following a visit to two foster homes in South Africa which we have been able to support for some years. Jill (who had visited the homes with Peter) writes:

'I was able to travel to South Africa for a month with Peter's brother David ... We made arrangements to visit the foster homes again ... As before I was very impressed by what they achieve with very damaged children. The two foster mothers do a great job and the children are a credit to them. The manager works very hard to ensure that each child's individual needs are catered for. They are assessed and sent to appropriate schools and where necessary receive individual tuition.'

Franciscan Aid website

The Franciscan Aid page is now part of the main TSSF website. You can access it at: <http://tssf.org.uk/about/franciscan-aid/> You will also be able to download back issues of this newsletter from the site, as well as gift aid and standing order forms.

Natural disasters

The last year has seen a number of devastating storms and floods which have impacted severely on many people. Floods in Kerala, India, in 2018 have been catastrophic for the livelihood of many farmers. This year, Cyclone Idai has caused terrible suffering in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, closely followed by Cyclone Fani wreaking havoc on Odisha, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

One of our regular correspondents, Weston Tizora from Zimbabwe, wrote to us after Cyclone Idai. Here is an extract:

‘We are in the region where the Cyclone Idai took place. Most of the houses were swept away by the rain. Cars, bridges trees, cattle, goats projects and mountains were carried away. Big stones moved from high levels to lower places, leaving the places open. One of the boarding schools in Chimanimani was destroyed, a huge stone rolled over the buildings at night and three of the children died on the spot while others were injured...

‘... today we have experienced some rains again making life difficult for people to have clean water and other essential needs like toilets and food.’

What can Franciscan Aid do when confronted with a disaster like this? Realistically, very little in the early days when the big NGOs are involved. But after some months it generally becomes apparent where the gaps are, the places and people the big agencies failed to reach. That is where we have a role. For example, we have recently given a grant to a farming village in Kerala to help get their farms back on their feet – in particular supplying replacement seed for the crops that have been lost. This is small-scale, but it meets a real need and can restore hope to people who feel they have been forgotten by the system.

Disasters such as Cyclone Idai mean that we expect to have more calls on our resources towards the end of this year. Please bear this in mind when you review your charitable giving.

Where is the money going?

At the end of 2018, we responded to a number of requests, including one for funds for food from the hostel at Krishnagar in India where children stay so that they can go to school. Here are some of the children enjoying the food our grant has helped purchase.



At the last Trustees’ meeting (February 2019), we were able to award grants to most of those who had requested them. These included:

- The full amount needed for the water bore hole at a school in Uganda – mentioned in the last newsletter but fortunately the total needed was not as much as we had feared.
- A grant for equipment for teaching prisoners at Valparaiso, in Chile, to make and mend guitars – ensuring that they have a trade when released and a means to earn a living.
- Money for educational equipment for children in Uganda – in partnership with ACYP.
- Funding to enable a church in Yorkshire to support refugees. We have also sent funds to the First Order Brothers in Leeds who are working with asylum seekers.

Please pray

For all the projects and initiatives mentioned in this newsletter, and for the Trustees who must decide how to respond to all requests.

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