



Franciscan Aid: Newsletter *Winter 2016–17*

Welcome to the latest Franciscan Aid newsletter, keeping you informed about some of the projects we supported in 2016.

Franciscan Aid grants DO make a difference

The wonderful thing about a small, ‘family’ charity is that a small amounts of money can sometimes make a big difference to an individual’s life. We receive some lovely letters of thanks, giving updates on projects we have funded. Here are a few quotes:

‘We thank you for your partnership in caring for our children. You are the answer to our prayers and give our children the chance for a better life.’ [*St Francis Outreach Trust, South Africa*]

‘It is because of your help and contribution that many of the boys are able to continue their education. The students and the hostel authorities ... wholeheartedly thank the Charity for the grants to repair and renovate the toilets of the hostel. Today because of your help the students have access to clean toilets.’ [*Tribal hostel at Darafnagar, Diocese of Krishnagar*]

‘Your help will make a good change in the lives of the students and you can notice major changes in the school.’ [*Hope Secondary School, Jerusalem*]

‘I also thank you for your services to the poorest of the poor in the society and whatever we do will be remembered in the last day as Jesus promised us.’ [*Brother Christy in Sri Lanka*]

And then there is this touching Christmas message from Bethlehem:

‘The unexpected gifts we have received, be it financial, prayers or visiting our program, have been manna in the desert. We have been sustained by your generosity ... In gratitude for all you have done for the people of Bethlehem, through your support of the Holy Child Program, it is our most ardent desire to share the joy of Bethlehem’s first Christmas with you!’

Water for life

Water is such a precious resource, and in a country where rain is scarce finding it can be expensive. Over the last couple of years we have received a number of requests to help finance either the repair of existing water bore holes or the creation of a new one. These are generally expensive projects and we are unlikely to be able to advance the full cost, but we consider all applications and background information supplied by sponsors both carefully and prayerfully. We give grants for this important work where we can and are delighted to receive feedback and photos – such as this one showing the construction of a water bore hole at Kiboga, Uganda.



Making Christ known

This is the primary aim of our Order, and Franciscan Aid enables us to show the love of Christ in practical ways. Brother Christy wrote to us recently about a widow, struggling to care for herself and her children, who has been enabled to set up a small shop in her home and thereby earn a small income while her children are at school. He says of the family: ‘Although they worship Hinduism now they start to read the Gospel at home’ and adds ‘My main concern is giving them Gospel values to live a meaningful and peaceful life in their society’.

Targeted support from Areas

Several Areas have undertaken to support specific projects – for example, two are each supporting the start-up of a Montessori school for the benefit of disadvantaged children in rural Sri Lanka, Another Area has undertaken to finance the education of two girls recovering from fistula surgery following traumatic childbirth, and yet another is supporting work with refugees in Leeds. There is a wide variety of opportunities, many of them involving education.

If your Area might be interested in supporting a particular project, please contact Angela at angela.alexander@hotmail.co.uk

Emergency payments

In exceptional or urgent circumstances, Trustees can agree small grants by email, outside the regular thrice-yearly meetings. Over the last year, we have enabled the purchase of hearing aids for a disabled boy who had attacked in the street and had his hearing aids stolen. This was particularly difficult for this child as he has a significant learning disability and behavioural difficulties which were greatly exacerbated by the incident. We were also able to agree a grant for urgent replacement of computer equipment following a lightning strike.



Please pray

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

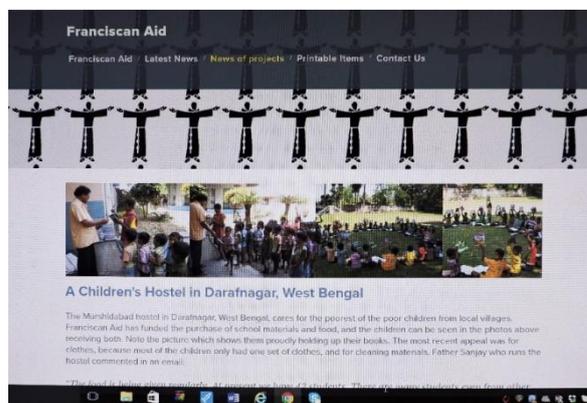
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The gift of music

At the Trustees meeting in November, we considered a request from Brazil for support for a music education programme for deprived children from a favela in the western part of Rio de Janeiro.

As the supporting documentation for this project makes clear, children growing up in poor urban areas in this country face enormous challenges. They have limited schooling and little hope; a culture of drugs and violence (including sexual violence) is widespread. Music education involves discipline and teamwork, but it also brings joy.

The programme aims to increase young people's self-esteem and ability to relate to others as well as keep them out of trouble. The request was carefully itemised to cover guitars and other equipment. The Franciscan Aid grant will cover the cost of the guitars and strings, and we hope to be able to bring you pictures of this exciting project in a future newsletter.



Website update

Have you discovered our website yet? For the latest updates on progress, projects and fundraising, go to www.franciscanaid.co.uk You will also be able to download back issues of this newsletter from the site.