

Friends of the Lazarus Home for Girls

Easter Newsletter 2008

CHAIR'S LETTER

It would be an understatement to say that we are excited at the moment as the new building begins to take shape! God is so good!! Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will read about the latest developments regarding the building – hot off the press following Alan's recent visit to Bethany.

As we approach Easter with its wonderful message of resurrection and new life, please join us in prayer as we now seek the Lord's way forward for the Home. Pray too for Samar and her staff as they daily work to meet the needs of the girls in their care. Pray too for the girls themselves – that they may come to know God's love for them in their often traumatic lives.

And so, once again, I would like to say 'thank you' to everyone for their wonderful support for this work. Without your help, the foundations of the building would never have been laid; and as we said in our last newsletter, "Unless the Lord builds a house, the labourers build in vain.." How true this has been – praise His name.

– Revd Kevin Dunne, Chair of Trustees

VICE CHAIR AND BUILDING COORDINATOR'S REPORT

February 2008 visit to the Lazarus Home

As I am drafting this report for the Easter newsletter, I am flying home from my 7 day visit to the Lazarus home.

Construction Report

On the construction side, since my last visit in November 2007, great strides forward have been achieved. Construction of the ground floor level will be completed by early March 2008, "Praise the Lord". Work will then commence on the construction of the first floor, which will leave the remaining second and third floor to be built when funds become available. The external of the new home has been clad with white natural stone as depicted in the Easter card photograph.

Due to the extensive excavation work to the side and rear of the building, it has now been necessary to progress with the construction of the retaining wall up to ground level. This has become urgent, due to land movement creating serious health and safety issues. Adverse weather conditions have aggravated the situation, and work has now been directed into rectifying this situation.

Unfortunately, this unforeseen financial anomaly will have to be met from the building fund, which was allocated for the completion of the second floor.

Final stages of progress has now been achieved in the basement area with the installation of electrical services, and water supply, which are now operational.

News from the Lazarus Home

On the second day of my stay in Jerusalem, I awoke to find over 5 inches of snow had fallen overnight in and around the Jerusalem area. As I approached the Lazarus home I was met with loud cries coming from five children. These five children were just arriving at the Lazarus Home. The children were all suffering from shock, bewilderment and clearly severely traumatised.

At that time I was unaware of the plight of the five children who stood before me, twin boys aged 2 years and three girls aged 5 years, 7 years and 9 years of age. Their mother had abandoned the children in the centre of the local village. The children were found scantily clothed, cold, hungry and bewildered.

Fortunately, a local shopkeeper found the children and reported the children to social services, where they were immediately taken to the Lazarus Home for Girls.

Samar and her staff immediately responded to the needs of the children with warm dry clothing, food and lots of love, which was at that time was so badly needed and so gratefully received.

Although the children are now safe in the loving arms of Samar and her staff, it will be some time before the children will recover from their horrendous ordeal. The older girls, who fully understood what had transpired, cried on a daily basis for their lost mother.

No matter how many occasions I witness children arriving in this condition, I could never say I am not greatly affected by the children's suffering; it just reiterates the urgency and the need for the completion of the new home.

The total number of children now residing at the Lazarus home is 38 children, 35 girls and three very young boys, as well as Samar and her 4 housemothers.

{Before going to print I have contacted Samar for a progress report on the children; under the circumstances all five children are settling in well.}

On a brighter note

Part of my visit during this time was to join Samar for the 11th anniversary birthday celebrations of the founding of the home by Samar and myself.

The Local Educational Minister for Bethany presented special awards and prizes to the children for their educational achievements. The girls, whose talents included song and dance, provided the entertainment and were presented with student achievement certificates and prizes.

A large chocolate cake was the treat of the day with every child being given the chance to blow out the candles, especially when some of the girls use this date to celebrate their own birthdays. The local nuns, together with teachers from the girl's schools, joined in the celebrations. Truly a great day to remember!

To top off the day, Samar received an email from Italy confirming Samar had been successful in her application for an award for the commencement of the medical centre, beating 300 other applicants; truly the Lord at work. Negotiations are now in progress with the charity and partners. Further information will be released as and when progress is made.

Once again may I thank you for your prayers and support .

Thanks be to God

– Alan Anderson

TREASURER'S REPORT

The charity is forwarding out by international payment the sum of £70,000 GBP to the architect. This amount will be converted into US dollars, allowing the charity to take full advantage of the high US dollar rate of exchange.

This amount will pay for the construction of the first floor and the commencement of the second floor. This will reduce the funds held in the building account to around £10,000.00. Fundraising is now top priority to further the work and to keep the builders on site.

May I thank you all for your response to our call for financial assistance and to those who have gift aided their personal donations. Please hold us in your prayers.

An update on sponsorship news will be included in the next issue

– Shirley Anderson, Hon. Treasurer

PRAYERS FROM REVD DAVID ATTFIELD

I have now been compiling prayers for a year and have twice issued suggestions for intercessions, which have been reproduced on the back page of the Newsletter. I understand they have been widely appreciated and many people and churches pray for our world and for peace in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Problems of violence and hatred continue and threaten the Home and its young people. Their chances of a good future are in constant danger from conflict and the religious and racial feuds which surround them as they grow up. So it behoves us all to pray more than ever and to seek others to intercede for peace and the welfare of the Lazarus Home.

Prayers for the Homes and for peace in the Holy Land. They can be used as biddings in Church Services; for expansion into extemporary prayer; and as themes for meditation.

Mondays – For the Jeel Al Amal Boys' Home; for the helpers and teachers at the school; for the safety of the boys and their hopes of a better future.

Tuesdays – For the Lazarus Home for Girls in Bethany; for Samar and the house mothers; for the safety of the girls and their hopes of a better future; for those girls and staff who have been rejected by their families or who come from traumatic backgrounds.

Wednesdays – For the future of the Lazarus Home; for successful fundraising for the building works; for the completion, equipping and opening of the new edifice; for the order of Sisters to which Samar belongs, that it may take responsibility for the Home and the welfare of the girls. And that it may be possible to finance and provide a medical centre for the children.

Thursdays – For the peace witness of Alice and Samar and their Jewish women friends; for the wider reconciliation of Jews, Christians and Moslems in the Holy Land, in this country and in the US.

Fridays – For lasting peace and justice in Israel, the Gaza strip, the Palestinian Territories and the Lebanon; for Tony Blair as he tries to mediate in difficult situations.

Saturdays – For the protection of Israel from suicide bombers; for the overcoming of problems caused by the wall; for Hamas and Fatah, as they try to lead the Palestinian people; for talks with Israel about the way forward.