

BARBER BULLETIN APRIL 2012

Dear friends

Martin: Becky's visit: As I write this Becky is flying to join us for 3 weeks on her "International Buying trip"! Well that's how she described it this week on Face Book. This of course is a reference to her Fair Trade business, BOO Enterprise, which seems to be going from strength to strength. She is anxious to keep in close touch with the suppliers of all the goods she sells as well as developing the products and receiving feedback from the producers. Also I'm sure she is looking forward to a good rest and holiday as she has been very busy recently sending out orders from the 2nd container which arrived in UK about 3 weeks ago. We are excited about the contacts she is making and the demand for craft goods from here that she is generating. Although not sure how we will keep up with the demand!



The container was delayed leaving here in March because of cyclone storms so Becky had made special request to the UK handlers to get it through customs and delivered to her quickly. This was done in an amazing 48hrs which just gave her time to make the biggest delivery before the Easter deadline. This was to the Eden Project in Cornwall for sale to visitors in the shop there. It has become a major visitor attraction in UK so we are delighted she has goods there and wait to see how they sell.....

Kanana improvements: Our community building here is bursting at the seams with all the different activities that it's used for. In particular the BOO workshop takes over a lot of the space each week day. Also our very popular little grocery shop has claimed a permanent corner almost from the day we opened the centre 3 years ago. Neither of these activities were even imagined when we planned the building. Although everyone seems to coexist quite happily it was clear to us that we needed to expand the premises somehow. So we started a small extension of 2 rooms. One to make a dedicated place for the shop and a second to create a small medical room where people can have some basic first aid and treatment. The shop opened its doors for business last week and is proving very popular. Sisy, who runs it, is also happy having her own dedicated space and it's already created more space in the main meeting room. Now we have started a 2nd small room on the opposite side of the building to give some dedicated space to the sewing machines used by the BOO workshop and craft lessons. This will hopefully suffice for the immediate future although longer term we are looking at a separate building completely for BOO if the work continues to grow. Becky is looking for grants and sponsors to help with this.



I have also been able to finish the lounge floor in the Guest House. We made small wooden blocks from local eucalyptus wood (so avoiding tropical hardwoods) and pieced them together like a big puzzle of Parquet flooring.

On better afternoons I have been able to do lots of small jobs that have been waiting. So the guest house is at a stage where we can start to take visitors, especially those needing a break from city life.

Health: Sadly the last month has been rather dominated by poor health for me (Martin). I have suffered from depression on and off for the last 5 years now. Its cause is a mystery as I only get it when visiting the UK. This latest bout has its roots in the 3 weeks we spent in UK in March following the death of Mary's dad. So many days it's been hard to get up or motivate myself to do anything. Facing people and making decisions is also very hard. The treatment is working but always takes at least a month to be effective and I thank all of you who are praying for me at this time. It has put extra pressure on Mary acting on my behalf and I think is little understood by the Malagasy as there is very little of it here. I wonder what that says for our western lifestyle?

Mary: Computer lessons in the Easter holidays were very popular. We remember some years ago someone asking why we would teach computing to people who work in fields or as house workers.

Our reply was "Why not?" The world is changing so fast and becoming more computer dependant.



One man who came is a farmer but was very keen to get practical time on the computer. He'd done theory before! Our computers are all old ones, including Windows 95 and 98!! But fine for teaching basics. We did pick up a couple of old laptops some time ago, but we quickly discovered why they were not wanted anymore! If anyone has any that actually work, we would appreciate them!!

I was part of the team **training new camp leaders** earlier this month. Over 50 came from all over Madagascar, many of them training for the first time. My subjects were First Aid and Safety (using St John skills again the way we used to use as we are usually so far from help!), Follow-up after camps, and Crafts and Activities for camps (we made Papier Mache pulp bowls this time, but they loved having access to all my books and resources). I then had fun with both the childrens and youth clubs at Kanana making a mess with the same craft- the boys especially loved having a messy craft for once!!



I continue to struggle with mountains of paperwork and accounts. One of my roles at the moment is helping others take on responsibility for recording stock and accounts, as well as giving them help to organise rotas for teaching and making available my visual aids (many thanks to all who have given me flannelgraphs over the years!). Then I spend the next day rechecking the accounts and correcting all the mistakes! I am also trying to get our local members to take on responsibilities for the different ministries of children, youth, Bible and families.



We now have "Pearl" our dairy cow and we are all learning to milk her!! Pearl as she was linked with our 30th Wedding Anniversary. She is actually in calf so our herd will grow later this year! Our cat has also just had 4 kittens!

Sunday evenings have taken on a new routine- our Malagasy "family" (anyone living on site as well as visitors) join us for supper and then a Praise and Prayer time. It varies between 4 to 14 of us! Some evenings when we are not too tired we get out

the games too or watch a video.

Many thanks for your love, support and encouragement
Mary and Martin

Fundraising ideas or ways you can help and support us:

- Pray for us!
- Award miles from Air France Flying Blue scheme are always welcome!! There's a special offer of 40% bonus at the moment! www.Airfrance.com
- Sponsor a teacher
- Sponsor a club or camp
- Sponsor a stone or a bag of cement in our new building project
- Use "Easy Fundraising" when you buy online, and register us as your nominated cause. <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>
- Personal support always very welcome too!
- Come and visit!!