

TOFTA & LORDSMEADE VOCATIONAL COLLEGE NEWS LETTER

OCTOBER 2006

4th Edition 2006

On behalf of the Tofta Educational Trust (T E T), it is with great pleasure to welcome you to this October 2006 edition of the newsletter. We thank you for the continued support towards educating the less fortunate children in East Africa. We take pride in getting to you, the current news about the Trust and Lordsmeade Vocational College (L.M.V.C) through our newsletters.

MESSAGE FROM THE TOFTA TRUST OFFICE

The Administration of the Tofta Educational Trust (TET) continues to thank every one who has made efforts to see that the Trust continues with its aim of educating the disadvantaged children. Mrs. Josephine Okello, the Trust administrator continues to thank the many friends who have visited us in Jinja (Uganda) and not least, our dear sponsors who have made sure the kids are in class every term. Indeed, they have made major changes in the lives of the disadvantaged. Many are seeing their dreams come true. Thank you very much.

Through this newsletter, the Trust wishes to appreciate each individual for the various support and contribution towards the growth and development of the school, LMVC, through which many have “reached high through hard work” (*AD ASTRA PER ARDUA*) as the school motto states.

LORDS MEADE VOCATIONAL COLLEGE- Njeru

Lords Meade Vocational College is busy during this period, it being the third term of the academic year. The students are hard at work reading for their final term examinations. The ‘O’ & ‘A’ level candidates have been busy making their final touches since the beginning of the term. The senior 4 started writing their examinations UCE, on the 16th October, while the senior 6 started their UACE on the 13th November. We wish them all success.

THIRD TERM

We are in the third term of the 2006 academic year. It began on 18th September and will be ending on 11th Dec 2006.

Also good news comes that a good number of students who sat their ‘Advanced Certificate’ examinations last year have been admitted in the universities and other tertiary institutions in the recent August in-take.

OLD GIRL TEACHING AT L.M.V.C.

Constance Katengeke and Agnes Nabakiibi, both old girls of Lords Meade Vocational College and former beneficiaries of the Tofta Educational Trust sponsorship scheme, are teaching in Lords Meade Vocational College. Agnes has completed her second degree and teaches Economics and Geography at A- level, while Constance has been doing her teaching practice during the second term, and now is back to the University yet to complete her Bachelors degree in Education at Makerere University.

Lords Meade Old Students Association (LOMOSA)

LOMOSA, an association of old boys and girls of Lords Meade Vocational College, was formed last year. Its members who are now in different institutions of higher learning, came back to LMVC and conducted a career guidance seminar with the ‘O’ & ‘A’ level candidate classes. Their talk with the students included encouraging and inspiring them, which boosted their confidence towards their final examinations. Thanks to their coordinators Kefa Tugezeku and Henry Kasirye from Makerere and Gulu Universities respectively.

SCHOOL PARENTS PROGRAMME

The Administrators of Lordsmeade Vocational College have initiated a programme in school known as a ‘school parent programme’. With this programme, the child is required to choose a teacher in school who acts as his or her parent while at school. The aim is to create a bond between teachers, students and their biological parents such that a child’s problems, either academic or personal, are

solved more easily. Here a teacher gets to know his or her given child better and it improves a child's discipline while at school. Mr. Godfrey Kiganga, the Headmaster, explained the advantages of this programme to the parents during their Annual PTA General meeting on the 14th October, and the parents approved it. The parents were encouraged on their parental duties, such as role modeling, nurturing, training, and providing for, forgiving and praying for their children. The parents applauded the initiative and commended the school administration for the innovations taking place towards the development of the school.

PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On 14th Oct 2006, parents and teachers held their annual general meeting at school. After the parents toured the school and saw the on going projects, a number of issues were discussed in the meeting and among which were the following outlined bellow:

Library; it was noted that the current room housing the library is small for the increasing number of students.

Dinning Hall; There is no dinning hall, food is served from the kitchen and since we lack a dining hall some times the students are forced to carry food to classrooms and dormitories (especially supper).

Computer Laboratory; We have good number of functioning computers in one room on one side of the clinic complex.

Farnfield Medical Centre; It has five staffs and it's open to the public. The Headmaster urged the parents to tell the community about the Farnfield Medical Centre so that people can know and access the facilities.

For all the above issues, the Headmaster appealed to the parents who may have contacts both inside and outside the country to look for donors for the much-needed facilities.

He thanked the Founder & Director Mr. John Kirkwood and the Tofta staff for their support towards the development of the school.

HAILEYBURY YOUTH TRUST (HYT) BUILDS A TEACHERS HOUSE FOR LORDS MEADE VOC. COLLEGE.



The handover of a teacher's house at Lords Meade Vocational College was held on Friday 27th October 2006. Two semi-detached houses for teachers have been built by funds donated from HYT, a charity in England aimed at improving lives of young people was handed over to the school administration by Dr. Musaaazi, a lecturer in Makerere University and the founder of the appropriate technology brick-making

project. "The use of appropriate technology bricks, which are easily made by students, are cheap and scientifically appropriate in this project". They have been tested and approved by professionals. The Headmaster, in his speech thanked the Haileybury Youth Trust for its support, and he heralded the relationship between H.Y.T. and Lords Meade Vocational College, most especially Mr. Russell Matcham, who has successfully coordinated this project. The project consists of the construction of two semi detached two bed roomed houses to accommodate two teachers and their families. He said that LMVC is very lucky for being the first school in Africa to have benefited from this Trust. Part of the project is to construct a 2-classroom block, which is nearing completion. It is hoped that in the near future two students from LMVC will be able to study a new degree course at Makerere University. This course will emphasize the use of appropriate technology.

L.M.V.C. NINTH IN COCA-COLA CRICKET WEEK.

Lords Meade Vocational College participates in a number of co-curricular activities annually. Notably this year is the Annual Coca Cola cricket week competitions held in Kampala from the 19th to 26th August 2006. LMVC put on a good show while playing with the giant schools in the game, like its neighbour Jinja Secondary School which it defeated by 65-64 runs. After a weeklong competition, LMVC was ranked ninth out of the 12 school, which participated, at the national level.

VISITORS

In the past few months, we have received many visitors, both national and international, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, and parents to the Tofta Educational Trust's Office as well as to L.M.V.C. The Trust received Rotarians from UK and USA, students and teachers from John Lyon School, Harrow, who camped at the school for a week. King Alfred Community College, Wantage, whose students and teachers spent a day visiting their twin school, LMVC. We also enjoyed visitors from the British High Commission who were hosted by the Headmaster Godfrey Kiganga as they checked on the donation of the carpentry workshop and tools.

The Rotary District Governor of District 9200 Rotarian Francis Tusbira visited the Trust Office while on his visit to the Rotary Club of Jinja on 30th August. He was hosted by the Trust Director / Field Officer Rotarian Peter Kalibbala and the Administrator Mrs. Josephine Okello. The District Governor commended the good partnership between Tofta Educational Trust and the Rotary Club of Jinja.

CONFIRMATION OF STUDENTS



Monsignor Kayondo, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Lugazi, visited Lords Meade Vocational College in October to confirm twenty one students into the Catholic Church. This was a mile stone in our history as he is the first religious leader to not only visit but also carry out an important function. Many students and parents attended the service to support the confirmation candidates. In his remarks later on, Monsignor was very supportive of the work of T. E. T. and LMVC are carrying out.

Above: Monsignor Kayondo confirms Alan Kuria into the Catholic Faith.

TOFTA RESOURCE CENTRE

Tofta Educational Trust, in its initiatives to educate the less fortunate, has formed a resource centre in form of a small Library on the office premises. Students in Universities under the Tofta scheme borrow and return the books after getting holidays. We thank all those who donated the books to us through the Rotary Club of Jinja, and Wolverhampton Grammar School.

TOFTA WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Tofta Educational Trust works with 'Jinja Network', a Non Government Organization in Jinja for children and youth. Jinja Net work, monitors, evaluates coordinates and implements all non Government, Community Based Organizations and Local Government service provision in Jinja District to marginalized children and youth. T.E.T is proud to be among the 18 member organizations which are trying to cater for the disadvantaged children through their education and welfare.

KENNAIR FOUNDATION

The Director, John Kirkwood, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kennair Educational Foundation. Richard Kennair, who comes from Edmonton in Alberta, Canada, has applied to the Canadian authorities for charitable status for the Kennair Foundation. When this comes through then supporters in Canada can give tax deductible donations. Richard has been a long time supporter of both TET and LMVC, having worked as a volunteer for six months. We are most grateful to Richard and his family for their generous support

CANADA

Director John & Jack took advantage of their time in Canada by visiting 22 Rotary Clubs in the Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto and London areas. They were kindly hosted by the Kennair Family in Edmonton, Rotarian Tony & Noreen Howard in Calgary, Rotarian Dennis & Jeannie Urbach in London, and President Anne & Paul Pennock in Guelph.

Rotarian Garth Toombs, who has visited LMVC and kindly sponsors a girl, kindly co-coordinated the 3 days in Calgary.

While in London they greatly enjoyed a visit to Niagara Falls.

During their final week in Toronto John & Jack visited several NGOs that are working in Uganda, as well as visiting several other Rotary Clubs.

It is hoped that in the future some of the Rotary Clubs will be able to work with TET & LMVC for the benefit of the less fortunate in Kenya and Uganda.

AIDS CONVENTION 2006 – TORONTO



Director John Kirkwood and Kenyan Liaison Officer Jack Ochola traveled to Toronto for the AIDS 2006 conference where they had a booth in the Global Village. Over 1500 brochures were handed out during the week long conference, and we are hopeful that some will produce results. People from all over the world commented on the valuable work that both TET and LMVC are doing and many wished that the Trust could extend its work into other areas of the world where AIDS is hitting hard.

Left: Jack Ocholla explains Tofta's work to some Canadian ladies.

AFRICA HALL RISES AGAIN



About eighteen months ago our beloved 'Africa Hall' was blown down during a storm. After the visit of Gerry Holden of Rendcomb College, near Cirencester, England, the Africa Hall is rising again. We are most grateful to all at Rendcomb for making this possible. With brick columns and a ring beam it will take a very strong wind to blow down the renovated Africa Hall.

Left: Dennis Nsereko, Felix Opio & Francis Wada assist in the rebuilding of the Africa Hall during their free time during a Saturday afternoon.

COMMUNITY SERVICE – THE VOLUNTEERS CLUB



Margaret Kabuye, an AIDS widow living in Njeru, cares for her orphaned grandchildren. Two of her children died on AIDS, and a third, a son who was supporting her 'family', died in a traffic accident. Margaret approached Paul Kato of St Francis Health Care Services, a local NGO working with HIV+ & AIDS patients, about the condition of her mud & wattle house, which was falling down.

Paul, (2nd left) shared the problem with the HM of LMVC, who shared it with the Volunteers Club.

The students not only gave their free time and newly acquired building skills, but also fund-raised amongst

themselves & the staff. Other well-wishers also were approached for funds, and recently the Director handed over the two bed-roomed house to Margaret. Margaret (on right) wept for joy as she entered her new home with her grandchildren.

The students of the Volunteers Club are now fundraising for cement to plaster the outside and some paint for the inside.

Paul Kato said in his speech that the students at LMVC are unique in that they not only gave of their time but also of their money for a widow they barely knew. He encouraged them to maintain their good spirit!

Joseph Kiríwájjo - Newsletter Editor

Director's Message

I would like to thank all those who have continued to give both TET and LMVC your very valuable support – whether by donation of cash or kind, prayer or other support. I would also like to thank all those who so kindly gave Jack and me such kind and generous hospitality during our 5 weeks in Canada.

The AIDS 2006 Conference was an eye opener in many ways – the rest of the world is waking up to the many problems this scourge of our time is creating. Many people from different parts of the world were begging us to start a similar programme in their part of the world as they realized what valuable work Tofta Educational Trust is doing. Jack, who has recently lost a brother & sister-in-law to AIDS, was excellent at relaying the message of the work of the Tofta Educational Trust.

I am most grateful to Richard Kennair who is getting the Kennair Educational Foundation registered in Canada. He has great ideas for creating awareness and support from his home country, Canada.

Coming back to home, I was delighted to see several of our students working on the reconstruction – and alterations – to our 'Africa Hall'. This work has been generously sponsored by Rendcombe College in England. I find it particularly rewarding to see the students actively involved with their hands – I am confident that they will always be able to find something useful and financially rewarding to do in their lives. I was equally delighted when I found one of our Senior Three students, Felix Opio, constructing an out building at Director Peter Kalibbala's home, using the new interlocking blocks. Peter had tried to get local people to do the work, but they did not want the work even after Felix had shown them what to do. What delights me most is that Felix was considered a useless failure by his family a few years ago – now they are thinking that he may be their saviour from poverty!

As the number of students grows the pressure on our limited buildings increases. Fortunately we are gradually increasing the classroom space, but this is still lagging behind our needs. The boys' dormitory is overflowing as they use triple decker beds, and the girls are not far behind. We still lack a Dining Hall where the students can eat their meals – instead of outside in the compound or on their beds in the dormitories. If anyone knows of donors who may be prepared to assist in such construction, we will be grateful for the information.

As I sit down to write this message kids in Primary Seven all over Uganda are sitting their Primary Leaving Examinations – and already worried 12 year olds are visiting the Tofta Office wanting to apply for assistance with their fees in Secondary School. Currently we know that we will only be able to assist a few, as our resources are greatly committed to the students we are already assisting. A few more sponsors – or even part sponsors – will go a long way to assisting those youngsters who currently are likely to be relegated to a life of ignorance and poverty through no fault of their own.

I would especially like to thank those who have taken up sponsorships through donating £20 per month standing order in UK. This regular giving, plus the tax refund, covers the cost of one needy child for a year – is this a way that others could kindly consider?

I apologise for the delay in getting this newsletter out to you, but Uganda is experiencing a shortage of power – at times we only receive 4 hours of power that can enable the computer to work within 2 days – this greatly reduces everyone's efficiency.

Again – many thanks for all your support – it is so important to all of us as we strive to 'Educate the Less Fortunate'.

With very best wishes

John Kirkwood Director

If you would like to make a donation, cheques can be sent to: Hon. Secretary, 17 Sion Hill, Bristol, BS8 4AZ and should be made out to 'Tofta Educational Trust', or else one can donate by credit card on the website: www.lordsmeade.org