



Church Mission Newsletter January 2024

Here is a round up of the latest news and prayers requests from some of the charities that St John the Evangelist supports.

This newsletter comes out 3-4 times a year and, in each edition, we will focus on one charity in a little more detail. This time it is the turn of the Spring Playgroup.

Spring Playgroup



January 2024

Background about the Spring Playgroup

Spring Playgroup was founded in 1990 by Jackie Cross and has been providing free early years childcare in Kenilworth since then.

We are a Christian charity that aims to advance the education of children under statutory school age, regardless of their financial circumstances, in a loving caring and respectful atmosphere based on Christian belief and practice, while encouraging other charitable activities through which parents and carers may help their children. There are currently five Christian trustees, a playgroup manager, and six other staff members plus a small number of volunteers providing childcare for over 24 children between the ages of 2 and 4.

We do not charge fees for children to attend our sessions, instead asking parents to donate what they can afford and then relying on grants and donations to supplement the government funding that we receive for all children in their preschool year and some younger children. Despite the financial challenges, we firmly believe that it is God's plan for us to continue for years to come.

We currently meet in rooms at the Kenilworth Sports and Social Club on Upper Rosemary Hill, and are looking at moving to more modern premises this coming summer.

For more information see our website www.springplaygroup.co.uk

Latest news

- Spring Playgroup started the year with 25 children split into two groups. They have all settled in and are enjoying their time with us.
- Two of our staff recently successfully completed apprentice courses to gain additional early years childcare qualifications.
- The trustees are currently exploring the possibility of moving to more modern premises over the summer, which is really exciting.
- Finances this year are extremely tight, due to a lower than usual number of children in attendance receiving government funding. We really appreciate the annual donation from St John the Evangelist and welcome regular and one-off support, however small, to help us continue to offer unfunded places (perhaps you would like to sponsor an unfunded child for 1 or more sessions a week).
- We are also keen to add new trustees, particularly with financial, human resources, or fundraising skills.

Please pray

- that we will receive the further charitable grants and donations that we need to be able to continue;
- for wisdom as we make decisions about the possible move of premises; and
- for volunteers to come forward with the relevant skills to supplement our trustee team.

If you would like to be involved as a trustee, a prayer partner, or a volunteer, and/or could help support us financially then please contact Felicity Hawke (felicity.hawke@btinternet.com) or any of the other trustees.

The trustees:

Kevin Broadbent, Jackie Cook, Jackie Cross, Tony Feltbower, Felicity Hawke

Crossteach

Here is a brief update and prayer requests from Crossteach:

- Please pray for Pippa and Alan, who are both starting as school workers in Warwickshire. Please pray that they would settle into the role quickly, and forge good relationships with the schools and churches we partner with and work in.
- Please pray for us as we already start to get ready for our Easter Experiences. Pray especially for God's provision of enough volunteers for a busy season.

This half term we are joining in with the 'Love our Schools' prayer fortnight which is an initiative of Pray for Schools. We will be scheduling a prayer zoom meeting. Look out for more information in our newsletter.

Thank you for your continued support, it is a great encouragement to us all here at crossteach.

Tastelife

The team at eating disorder national charity tastelifeUK thank all those at St John's who kindly support their work. In particular, we would like to thank those who celebrated our 10-year anniversary with us in November 2023, at the tastelifeUK Gala at St John's! It was a fabulous evening, and wonderful to have so many supporters there.

Some stats to inspire you that it's all worthwhile:

- During the past year, we have helped over 250 people affected by eating disorders - either directly or as family and friends - to get much-needed support and education for recovery through our online/onsite recovery course. Participants report 86% improvement in their recovery journeys. These are often people who have had no other help, and do not qualify for NHS support.
- We have trained 30 new course leaders over the last year, through our OCN accredited training.
- 90% of our courses and resources are now available online as well as in person.
- Cov and Warks Mental Health Schools Team are piloting our Youth Track - a 3 session preventative resource to help young people understand and avoid eating disorders.
- We have conducted pioneering research with Cov and Worcester Universities, exploring the relationship between eating disorder recovery and faith.

As we step into 2024, we face some significant financial challenges. We would like to expand our reach, and help more people, but cannot do so without support. Currently, we do not advertise what we do, yet get one sign up per day from people wanting to attend the tastelife recovery course. To keep up with demand, and reach more people, we inevitably need more resources, both staff and materials. We would be grateful for your prayers on this, and any help you can give us.

If anyone has any spare hours to give, we do have some voluntary roles at the local office at Di's home on the edge of Kenilworth which we would love to welcome you to!

Thanks again for your encouragement, gifts, interest and support.

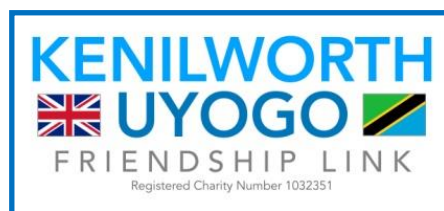
Every blessing

Di and the tastelife team

Kenilworth Uyogo Friendship Link

KUFL focused on funding for two main projects in 2023:

Uyogo Water Project – there is currently still no running water in Uyogo which means villagers have to collect water by hand from boreholes. Local advice has been to install solar panels to pump water into the village in order to avoid having to rely on the erratic electricity supply. The next step is to fit solar panel powered pumps to the original 2020 water pumping and piping system, and



build an extra branch to reach Umiki Secondary School. When it is ready, people, schools and local organisations will pay for their water usage. (For people who cannot afford to pay, Uyogo village will provide water for free.) Money collected from water payments will cover maintenance and pay for a security guard.

Umiki students digging trenches for pipes

New Primary Classroom for Igembensabo School -

Igembensabo is a sub-village in Uyogo Ward. This building project is similar to a project at Kasela primary school (another sub-village in Uyogo Ward) we supported a few years ago.

As usual, the villagers have made the bricks and done most of the building. KUFL funds the purchase of expensive materials for roofing, plastering, and mosquito netting. The roofing, foundation plastering, window and door frames have been completed leaving the floor to be laid using hardcore and cement, after which the door and mosquito netting can be fixed and the whole room painted. Pupils will probably be able to use the classroom once the floor is completed.



Outside of new Igembensabo primary school classroom

KUFL will continue to support, when funds are available, other projects such as the schoolgirls' reusable sanitary pads project. A daughter of Margaret Simon, the Womens' and Girls' Affairs officer in Uyogo Ward, continues to make reusable pads, distributed free to Umiki schoolgirls.

Completing the Maternity Unit in Uyogo - the government has now disbursed funds to the Uyogo dispensary's account, to finish the Maternity unit, although work is yet to be started

on this. The government processes of tendering can be long and drawn-out but receiving the funding is a big step forward.

KUFL is able to fund projects in Uyogo thanks to your great support over the years. Thank you so much for your generous donations in 2023.

Please do look at our website: www.kenilworthuyogofriendshiplink.org

This is updated regularly with news, photographs and videos of the current projects in Uyogo. ***Together, we work with the people of Uyogo towards a better future.***

Flourish

There is plenty to be thankful for and also to pray for at Flourish. Below is a summary of their latest news:

A graphic with a yellow background and teal and pink decorative elements. The word 'flourish' is written in a teal, lowercase, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, the text 'Because of you, we have been able to achieve all of this in 2023...' is written in pink. The main body of text is in black, with key statistics and achievements highlighted in bold. A quote from a mentee is in italics. A quote from a mentor is in black. A quote from the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire is in black. A quote from a parent of a mentee is in black. The text 'We had the privilege of being invited to the House of Lords ahead of the ratification of the Online Safety Bill to share how we are supporting girls with body image anxiety.' is in black. The text 'We are girl-led, our Flourish Advisory Board (FAB), have informed sessions on body image, training to parents about communication, recruitment of staff and collaboration with Compton Verney, keeping the voice of the girls central to our approach.' is in black. At the bottom, the text 'Thank you from all of the 250 girls who are flourishing because of you.' is written in pink. A teal circle with the word 'flourish' in white is in the bottom right corner.

flourish

Because of you, we have been able to achieve all of this in 2023...

We are proud that **100%** of girls would recommend us to a friend and **89% report improved wellbeing.**

"I have learnt that I am worthy. [Flourish] has helped me be happier about myself and more confident in myself" (Mentee)

We have resourced and mobilised **10 new volunteer mentors** to join our existing team of passionate volunteers, who collectively gave nearly **3000 hours a year.**

"I could see a need for more extensive emotional support for teenage girls and have been inspired by how Flourish provide this in such an accessible and uplifting way. I was delighted to be able to offer my skills to help girls navigate their difficulties and better prepare them to fulfil their potential." (Mentor)

We have been **recognised locally** for our specialist support for girls with a nomination for the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

"I would like to thank you for all you are doing for the County. It is greatly appreciated and I know Warwickshire would be a lesser place without organisations like yours."
(Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire Tim Cox)

We have supported **264 girls** with **2519 hours** of specialist mentoring support, helping them to become braver, bolder and stronger.

"She is more confident and joyful than before. I'm very grateful for these sessions and for your support."
(Parent of a Mentee)

We had the privilege of being invited to the **House of Lords** ahead of the ratification of the Online Safety Bill to share how we are supporting girls with body image anxiety.

We are girl-led, our **Flourish Advisory Board (FAB)**, have informed sessions on body image, training to parents about communication, recruitment of staff and collaboration with Compton Verney, **keeping the voice of the girls central to our approach.**

Thank you from all of the 250 girls who are flourishing because of you.

flourish

CHIT (Children's Homes in India Trust)

Here is the latest update from CHIT:

The flood waters have receded, recovery under way, and the homes were able to celebrate Christmas. The new year beckons, what will it bring?

In India. Following the damage wreaked by Cyclone Michaung, the water tank repairs are underway and most of the fallen trees have been removed. Receding waters means that the final wiring of the new electrical supply can proceed (see attached picture). Join us in **giving thanks** that it was not much worse.



Christmas celebrations were held in the Nidamarru home, the school at Bapatla and also a special celebration was arranged for the children

in isolation (HIV+ etc) and a widows' centre Babu has often reached out to us at Christmas time. In a country with a government determined to marginalise non-Hindus, we shouldn't take this for granted. Babu has advised that Prime Minister Modi has required that all children register



through their schools to receive a message from him in the next few weeks, which Babu expects will have nationalistic/Hindu overtones. It will only be broadcast in Hindi, just to make the point. join us in giving thanks for the freedoms our friends have, and pray that they will continue and if anything, improve. Locally, the focus has now turned to exams. Because teachers and others will be involved in administering voting centres for the national elections in the Spring, the state exams (like GCSEs) for Year 10s, have been brought forward 5-6 weeks, but with no indication of how this is to be achieved. We have been told that our Elizabeth Barrie High School has completed the syllabus and is focusing on revision. But we should pray for the growing reputation of the school as a quality Christian school, whose message of hope will then be heard.

In the UK, as always, please pray for our financial position, and for wisdom for the Trustees as we consider how to handle our visit to India in March, should it get as bad as trends suggest.

Church Mission Society (Mark and Rosalie Balfour)

Dear friends at St John's,

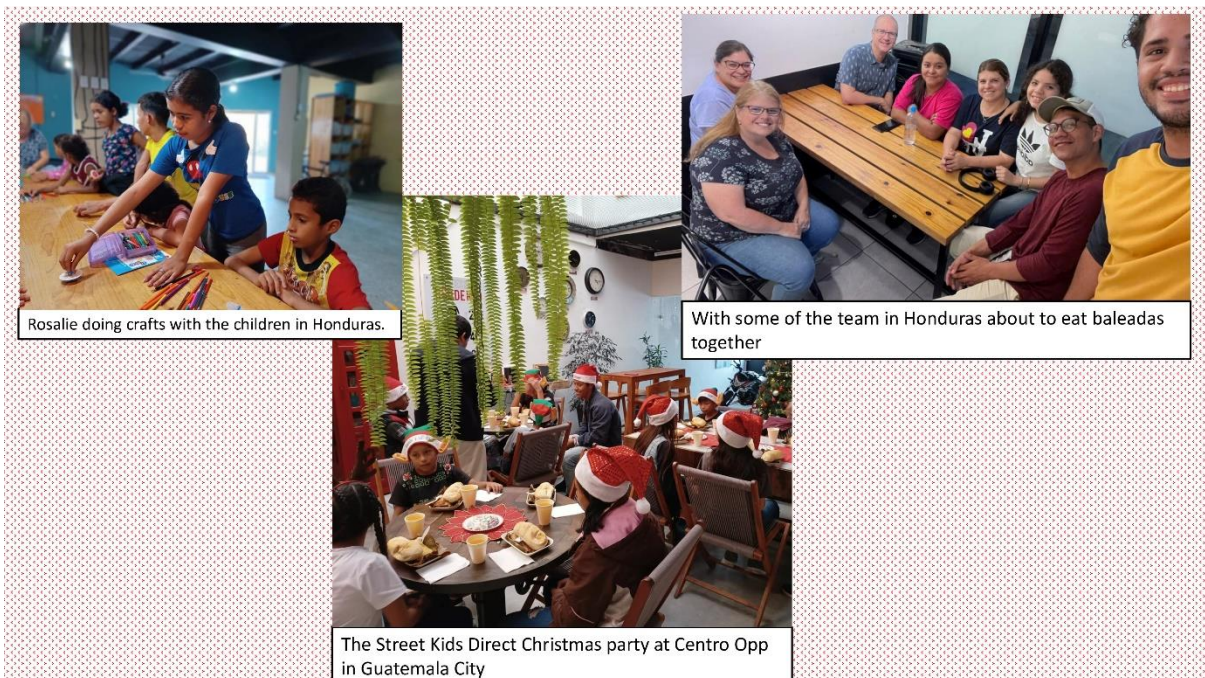
Thank you for your continued prayer for us and support as we work with Street Kids Direct in Guatemala and Honduras. Since the last newsletter we have continued to give pastoral support to the Street Kids team in Guatemala City. As well as meeting with team members individually, this has included helping with a two-day retreat in November at which Mark gave some training on "expectations" based on material from Peter and Geri Scazzero's 'Emotionally Healthy Discipleship'.

The autumn was marked by huge political unrest in Guatemala as pro-democracy demonstrations and a fortnight of roadblocks brought the country to a standstill. Thankfully the new president, who has pledged to tackle the widespread corruption that exists in Guatemala, was finally sworn in at midnight on the 15th January, after efforts were made even on the day to prevent him taking office.

In December we made another journey to Honduras to visit the projects there. We were accompanied by our friend Maddie, who works with the mission organisation Latin Link. As a result of her visit, there is a possibility that a group of young people from a tough area of Guatemala City may engage in a mission trip to the project in Honduras sometime later this year. We love helping to make mission connections in that way.

A highlight for us in Honduras was running a Christingle for the children in the project – and we did the same for Street Kids Direct in Guatemala when we returned. Christmas Day for us was spent hosting a group of friends in mission from a number of different English-speaking countries.

It already looks like 2024 will bring some major changes both for us and for Street Kids Direct in their ongoing work in Guatemala. We will keep in touch with you about those but, for now, thank you again for your friendship and support in so many ways.



Kenilworth Youth for Christ

Here is an update from Centre Director, Dave Boyle:



- We had an incredible time at our National Conference, being inspired and equipped for the year ahead.
- Our Catalyst event is on January 26th (also a prayer point).
- We are going on our Weekend Away from 9-11th February (another prayer point)
- By the end of January our beloved Emily and Erica will be half way through their Year Out!!! Please pray that the Lord blesses them abundantly in their last 5 months with us.

Please also pray for the team as we continue to go into schools and make a difference. We have a solid number of young people joining us weekly and some attending the Youth Cafe on Fridays.

Please continue to support us in prayer, which is at the very core and heart of our ministry, please also consider supporting us financially as we connect with more young people.

A Brief description of the work of all these charities and the others St John's currently supports can be found on the church website at:

<https://www.stjohn316.co.uk/copy-of-our-mission-partners>