



NEWS FROM TANZANIA!

2020...hmmmmmm...what a year!!

We have tried writing a newsletter many times over the past few months. Starting one, then everything changed... starting over again, then everything changed...and so on...and everything still keeps changing. Well, here's another attempt...

Around the world we are all in the midst of unprecedented times, and facing uncertain futures. It is no different in Tanzania, though our government chose to take a very different path to our neighbours, and most other countries around the world, and instead of a lockdown, we were all told to pray, and wash our hands as often as possible! Whether the right or wrong approach, amazingly, we have in fact been relatively untouched. This wasn't without weeks of fear and anxiety at the beginning, when the rest of our Nord Anglia expedition season was suddenly cancelled, and a fortnight later schools were closed, and borders closed with all flights in and out of Tanzania stopped. Thank goodness, the virus hasn't taken significant hold here.

Five months later and schools and colleges reopened at the end of June, and everything else shortly after. However, though Tanzania is open again, the negative economic effect of the pandemic is huge, as the tourist industry has collapsed, leaving lodges and safari businesses without clients, and all the supporting businesses and support staff without work or income. The future for many here looks very bleak and scary right now.

We were so excited at the beginning of the year, and really looking forward to the next decade, but for once some of our news is very tough...

- On 23rd February, James Benedict passed away peacefully at SWTz, aged 13, after a long struggle with HIV and TB. He was surrounded by our staff and children, and covered in love. He had been released from hospital at the end of January as his condition was stable, and spent his last weeks at SWTz with his younger sister Doris.



We will always remember his smile; his laugh; his love of music; his empathy and love for others; his bravery; and his unwavering hope and faith. He was buried at his grandmother's family home with a full service



attended by many family friends and relatives (*above*), after a short service with SWTz neighbours and our children and staff (*top right*).

- The 2019-2020 Nord Anglia expedition season ended at the beginning of March, slightly earlier than planned. It has been the best season yet, and we are so very thankful to every student, teacher, and expedition leader who took part. We worked with 81 vulnerable families in 6 communities - building goat sheds, supplying female milking goats (14 from Ireland, donated by ECHO East Africa), installing solar systems, and building smokeless stoves.

We worked so hard at Kiwawa Secondary School building site, working on the administration block (complete apart from a bit of painting), the first set of classrooms (completed apart from painting), the toilet block, and the laboratories. We are continuing the work as finances allow, and hope to see students and teachers using the completed classrooms and administration block very soon. We hope expeditions will start again in 2021. In the meantime - see our news below about the ambitious upcoming Nord Anglia expedition leaders fundraiser!



- We had volunteer Sidonie from Switzerland with us for 5 weeks - her trip sadly cut short by the pandemic. Sidonie was amazing, and made a difference in so many ways and showed maturity way beyond her young years, and was loved by everyone. We hope she comes back to finish her time here when she can... The children have not stopped talking about how much they enjoyed having her here.



- We had many lovely visitors in the first three months of this year, including regular visitor Diane (left), from the USA, and Tanya and her parents from Belgium.



- Schools closed in mid-March due to the pandemic. We had to make some quick decisions to ensure the safety of our staff and children. Any child who had family in areas we felt would be safe was sent home (with on-going food and monetary support to help them and their families). We had 13 children still at the centre - those who either had no suitable family to be with or living in areas we felt unsafe. Thankfully, we had enough teachers from our daycare to hold classes for our residential children (several of whom have important national exams this year both at primary and secondary level). We made it more interesting by incorporating life skills, sports (*the kids loved skipping, below right*), gardening, and all children took turns in the kitchen to learn to cook. Mariam and Frida (left) were voted the best cooks!



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- In April we had one of the heaviest rainy seasons we've ever experienced, with much flooding around us...very destructive, PLUS our kids couldn't play outside for a few weeks, exacerbating the whole situation! Overall though, the 3 months of school closure was a great time to spend with our kids and get to know them all a lot better, but we were all quite

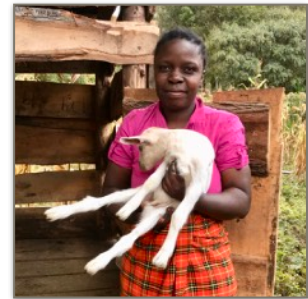


relieved when schools eventually reopened!!



- Our manager, Neema, has gone on sabbatical for a few months to pursue some political dreams in the upcoming elections - we wish her all the best! Standing in for her is Hedwiga (*left*), who joined us as a consultant in January and is now a full-time staff member and making a huge difference to the way we do things at SWTz - change can be challenging and scary, but Hedwiga is bringing the changes we need gently, challenging us to think and act differently, and it is having a positive impact on everyone.

- We have started a new livelihood programme to help some of the families we have been supporting in different communities over the years to become more self-sufficient. Headed up by Hedwiga, we have helped 3 families with goats and chickens so far, and have other families about to receive help. Different to our usual goat shed family projects, the recipients have to give back, whether in the form of offspring from their animals, or monetarily, so that we can then help additional families. We have also been visiting some of the Nord Anglia goat recipients recently - several have already had offspring - here's Habiba (*right*) with her baby goat!



- We had new babies at SWTz...well, our staff did - Rose (*far left*) had a daughter, Arianna, and Evarline (*left*) had a son Eugene! Congratulations to them!

- **RIGHT...THE SEPTEMBER FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE NEWS!!!** The amazing Nord Anglia expedition leaders who we've been working with the past few years, and who have become friends, are organising an ambitious fundraiser in September, to virtually travel the

7303km distance from the UK to Tanzania by foot, bicycle, kayak and other human-powered means! We are humbled and excited by their desire to help get the building at Kiwawa school back on track, and get classrooms opened for students. There is a video at: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AtK65qnlpqtgSe0syzmILzQ9c1E>, and the fundraising link is at: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ExpeditionsTeam1> There are also lots of pictures and videos on the Facebook page at: <https://web.facebook.com/kiwawafundraiser> It is truly inspiring - Check it out, like, share, encourage, get involved, and let's get these classrooms open!

- We are so thankful to every one of our supporters, partners, and friends, who make all of this possible. We have lost a lot of anticipated funding due to expeditions being cancelled, but instead we have had several unexpected donations since March, which have made such a difference and given us encouragement and hope. We are thinking of you, and praying that you are well and safe. We really appreciate your continued help, especially now. Together we are reaching hundreds of children and families in our community, and changing lives positively!

Thank you for making a difference in Tanzania!