

CORNERSTONE NEWS

June 2008
Volume 8 Issue 2

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Kitgum, northern UGANDA. Yes, at last we have arrived and are settling in to our new way of life in Kitgum. Since the last newsletter many things have happened that have been very encouraging. Read on for more details.

Tax Exemption Granted:

After 3 months delay in Kampala seeking exemption from payment of taxes and import duties and waiting for Uganda Revenue Authority approval to verify the contents of the containers on site in Kitgum, we finally received great news on 7th May. As a special consideration, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development agreed to pay all taxes and duties on the contents of our 2 @ 20ft containers full of tools and machinery to build and equip the training centre. Tax exemption is rarely granted in Uganda due to frequent abuse of the system by unscrupulous importers in recent years. We are so thankful for the intervention by the Minister to grant exemption from taxes. **What a wonderful answer to prayer!**

Unfortunately the fees charged by our consultant were much higher than we expected, to our great disappointment, but we still praise God for His intervention that resulted in the Minister granting our request. With the written guarantee that taxes payable to the URA would be met by the Ministry of Finance, we immediately arranged for the containers to be transported to Kitgum by our forwarding agent SDV Transami.

Containers safely unloaded in Kitgum:

We packed the Land Rover to full capacity and headed off to Kitgum in the early hours of the morning on Tuesday 13th May and arrived very tired in the late afternoon, after passing numerous “broken-down” and “bogged” trucks, but thankful for safe travel on a road that really defies description.

Over the next couple of days weeds and shrubs were hastily cleared from the area surrounding the concrete pads prepared on our land late last year in readiness for the arrival of the containers.

The first truck arrived safely in Kitgum on Friday 16th May, thankfully with the container housing the lifting jacks needed to unload it from the truck.

With 4 young men hired for the afternoon, and with the URA Customs inspector present, the first container was unloaded with clockwork precision. All of the prior planning and preparation at One Tree Hill to ensure that the lifting jacks would handle the 10 ton load paid off well. Our thanks are due in no small way to Ross and Marlene Shepherdson who kindly donated the 4 lifting jacks, steel beams, concrete blocks and ant-caps used to safely unload the containers.

The second container arrived late on the same day and was unloaded with no problems on the following day. Both containers are now safely in place on site, in readiness for construction of the training centre to begin.



Container Verification Completed:

With the containers safely on site, the next task was to have the contents verified by a URA Customs Inspector. Thankfully verification was completed in 6 days. The inspector took random samples of packed boxes and checked that the contents of each box matched the shipping / invoice lists. We were so pleased that he did not require the entire 385 boxes containing 9,600 items to be unpacked and checked off one by one!!! He signed all necessary documents to complete the verification process on 25th May, applied new URA seals and sent the papers to Kampala URA headquarters for taxes to be paid.

Unfortunately, our forwarding agent, SDV Transami has failed to date to provide the correct documents to the URA to enable the process to be completed.

SDV Transami have been a great source of frustration on numerous occasions. Their incompetence to carry out the very task we are paying them for has been quite a headache!! We cannot open the sealed containers until the necessary papers are lodged with the Ministry of Finance for payment of the taxes and then the URA must give final clearance before we can remove the seals and open the containers.

So We continue to wait for the wheels of beaurocracy to turn and allow us to start the project.



We have employed a day and a night security guard to patrol the property to provide a “presence” at all times on the land. This was a condition stipulated by the URA, in order to allow verification to be done here in Kitgum. We purchased a small tent to provide protection for the guards from the thunderstorms and torrential rain that we have been experiencing in recent weeks. 100mm of rain in one and a half hours one day last week is a sure sign that the “wet season” is about to arrive.

Our current residence:

Due to the kindness of our South African friends from AFRIMAX Pty Ltd, who dilled the water bore last year, we have been given the use of a small home for the time being, until our pre-fabricated room (packed in one of the containers) is able to be erected on site. We are so thankful for the provision of a place to stay, a roof over our heads, with a real “flushing” toilet and even in recent weeks the connection of electricity.

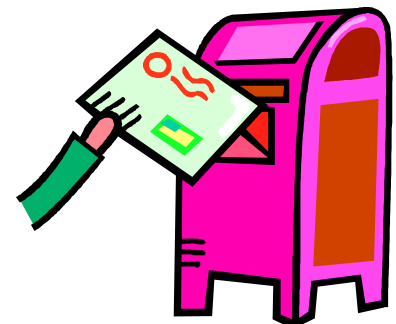
Due to the kindness of a couple from our home church in Birdwood, in the Adelaide hills, we are now able to keep drinks and medications cool, with the use of a “Waeco” portable fridge/freezer which they kindly donated. It was removed from one of the containers during verification, and the Customs Officer forgot to make sure it was re-packed before putting the seals in place. We are most thankful for this oversight!!!

Parcels and letters arrive safely:

We have received several parcels and letters in our Kitgum Post Box in recent weeks. It takes about a month for mail to arrive from Australia, so you are all too late to send Wayne any birthday cards, but SMS and e-mail messages will still be happily received on 5th July for the geriatric’s 60th birthday.

Our Postal Address is:

Wayne Stevens, PO Box 134, Kitgum, UGANDA



Land cleanup underway:

While waiting for final clearance of the containers from the URA we have begun the huge task of cleaning up the 6 acres of land owned by CFA. Unfortunately, our Pastor who was left in charge of maintaining the property in our absence, failed to carry out what he promised to do. A number of crops have been grown and harvested, and proceeds promised to the Foundation have to date not been received. The fence lines were overgrown, with weeds 6ft to 8ft high, and the majority of the property left in an absolute mess.

We were very disappointed when we visited the site on 14th May. However, over the past 3 weeks we have employed 6 young men to slash the entire 6 acres of land, dig out any stumps, and remove many small trees that have grown un-checked for 5 years. These men have done a wonderful job so far with over half of the property now cleared. Learning Acholi, chasing rats, watering newly planted banana palms and vegetables, burning off dried grass and dodging thunderstorms and rain amid much laughter, have all contributed to a very successful 3 weeks. We hope that the whole property will be completely cleared in the next 2 weeks or so.



Overgrown land



Removing tree stump



Cleared land

Cornerstone Website:

The CFA web-site is now “on-line”. A number of people both on our Management Committee and members of CFA, have now visited the web-site and agree with us that Elisa Davies and her team of helpers in Sydney have done a fantastic job. It is a very professionally produced site.

Please take the time to visit www.cornerstonefoundation.org.au and learn more about Cornerstone Foundation, and progress made to date. There are many links to other sites with further information about Uganda, its geography, people, history and much, much more.

The photo gallery is particularly good and well worth a visit. The site will be regularly updated with the latest photos from Kitgum so that all are aware of progress being made in Uganda.

Details of coming fund-raising events are also given on the web-site, so please check it out and note these events in your diary. eg. “Soul Factor” Concert, June 26th, Modbury Church of Christ.

Please encourage your church family and friends to visit the site!!



Ochola John's visit:

It was an absolute thrill recently to receive a visit from Ochola John (whose story we have told where-ever we have spoken). John had his fingers, lips, ears and nose cut off by LRA soldiers. He is looking soooo well!! He has been able to receive surgery on his hands, through a sponsorship programme, and is now learning Computing. His attitude is so positive and he wishes no pity. He is married with 3 children (our last information was that he had one child). He is very happy and just wants to get on with life!!

Cornerstone Foundation NGO Re-registration Approved:

We have recently received the news that our **NGO Re-registration has at last been approved** awaiting the signature of the NGO Board Chairman. Due to this delay, our **Entry Permits** are still in limbo, but our **Special Passes** have been renewed for a further 3 months. Richard from MAF is still "on the case" on our behalf. We are very grateful for this service provided by Mission Aviation Fellowship to Christian organizations.

Membership Renewal 2008 / 9

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a Membership/Renewal form for 2008/9. As most of you would be aware, our membership year runs from July/June, so please complete and send the form back to our Treasurer, Mr Don McKenzie, at the address given. We also welcome any new members. Thank-you for your support.

Entertainment Books:

As a fund-raising venture for Cornerstone Foundation, Candice Walker is promoting "Entertainment" books containing vouchers for discounted prices at a large number of restaurants, movie theatres, sporting events etc. These books are great value! Vouchers can be presented at a wide range of venues and are valid from March 27th 2008 until June 2009.

To purchase an "Entertainment" Book please contact Candice: (08) 8371 2001 or at walker12@arcom.com.au

"Soul Factor" Concert:

Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) inc. presents an evening with '**Soul Factor**'
Where: Modbury Church of Christ, 955-957 North East Road, Modbury, SA 5092

When: Saturday 28th June at 7.30pm

Come and enjoy an evening of great food and music with 'Soul Factor', one of the best performing singing groups in the 2008 Adelaide Fringe festival!

Admission is \$15.00 which includes a scrumptious supper. All welcome!

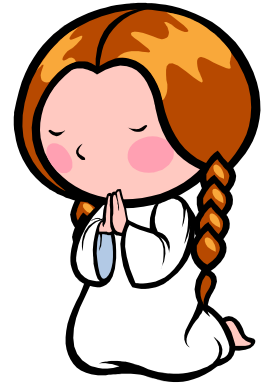
For reservations and ticket sales contact:
Bob & Margaret Lineage (08) 8263 2012 or
Ian & Denise Turvey (08) 8264 5005.



All proceeds from the night go to the mission of Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) Inc. seeking to provide practical care for orphaned and destitute teenagers in Kitgum, northern Uganda.

Prayer Points:

Praise God: For the CFA web-site now being “on line”
 For His protection when travelling on the road to Kitgum
 For approval by the URA to verify the container contents in Kitgum
 For the “waiving” of taxes & duties on the container contents
 For the safe transport on horrendous roads, and incident free
 un-loading of the containers at Oryang Ojuma
 For accommodation provided for us by Afrimax
 For improved health for both Wayne & Bev since arriving in Kitgum



Please pray: For continued financial support for the project in Kitgum
 For the management committee as they plan fund-raising events and for their new role of
 providing the vital support we need in Uganda
 For prompt signing of the NGO Re-registration papers and approval of our “Entry Permits” to
 enable our long-term residency
 That insurgence by LRA rebels will not rise up again. Pray that any plans by Joseph Kony
 to plunder northern Uganda, Sudan or the DRC will be squashed.

Thank-you for your on-going prayerful and financial support.

Lubanga Omedi Gum *(God Bless You)*

Wayne and Bev



Donation Reply Slip:

(A receipt and thank-you note will be issued for all donations)

I / We would like to Support the ministry of Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) Inc. in Kitgum

Donate toward Wayne & Bev’s personal support Monthly Quarterly

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Enclosed is my donation of: \$ _____

Phone: () _____

Method of Payment: Cheque Postal Order

Please post to:

Mr D McKenzie
 Cornerstone Foundation (Australia) Inc.
 PO Box 26
 PINNAROO SA 5304

