



Think Lovely Thoughts:

An Update on The High School's Gift of Water
to Our Sisters at Mtwara Girls' Secondary School, Mtwara, Tanzania

In J.M. Barrie's wondrous tale "Peter Pan", there is a particularly moving scene in what is a very moving story. The children have seen Peter flying, and wish to do so themselves. They try, but fail. "Peter," they ask. "How are you able to fly?" Peter replies, "I think lovely thoughts. Think lovely thoughts, and you, too, will fly!"

Dreaming impossible dreams and turning those dreams into extraordinary realities often begin with each of us thinking lovely thoughts.

Lovely thoughts abound here at St. Albans High School for Girls. These translate frequently into a compassionate and energetic drive to do good for others, to love God by loving our neighbours in all that we do and say.

Since 2004, one of our major and on-going efforts to turn lovely thoughts and impossible dreams into reality is being built upon the relationship we have forged with our sister community at Mtwara Girls' Secondary School in Southern Tanzania. The 550 girls and 50 staff members at Mtwara, most of whom are boarders, have not had access to a regular, hygienic, and convenient water supply for many years. Instead, they have had to depend upon one hand pump located at considerable distance from the main classroom buildings and dormitories. This has made proper sanitation, washing, showers, and toilet facilities impossible.

Slowly but surely, over the last four years, the pupils, faculty, and wider family here at the High School have been striving to make a reliable, high quality water pumping and plumbing network a reality for our friends at Mtwara.

Funds raised largely through collections at Founders' Days and Carol Services, along with significant contributions from the Governors, Old Girls, the Old Girls' Association, as well as a private donor, have enabled us to lay extensive groundwork for this life-transforming project. So far, we have engaged Mr. Joas Makwati, a well qualified Tanzanian charity consultant, to assist us in every aspect of our endeavour. Along with him, we have formed an excellent collegial relationship with the engineering professionals at Tanzania's national drilling agency, the DDCA. We have appointed Mr. Lazaro Msaru, a hydro geologist and superb site manager based locally in Mtwara, to coordinate and supervise the project on behalf of both schools. We have acquired a water rights license for Mtwara School. We have arranged extensive topographical surveys to be carried out to locate the best possible locations for borehole drilling. We have proceeded to drill, case, and test three boreholes for the presence of water, two of which have been gifted to us by the Government of Tanzania. Most joyfully, in December, 2007, at the third borehole dug approximately 757 metres beyond the school's boundaries, we tapped into a tremendous underground reservoir, which will provide a constant supply of fresh water 24 hours a day for everyone at Mtwara Girls'. It will also bring water for several impoverished farming families, over whose land the pipeline will cross.

Since mid-December, when this huge treasure of water was discovered, many other tasks have been accomplished in preparation to bring the precious commodity to Mtwara Girls'. The route of the pipeline has been surveyed and drawn up. A

pumping system has been designed and sourced. Negotiations with local farmers regarding domestic water availability have been carried out and agreed to. In a formal ceremony, overseen by tribal elders, compensation has been paid to Mrs. Asha Hamadi, a widow who allowed the successful borehole to be placed on her small holding. This fee paid for the removal of 18 cashew trees and assorted cassava plants which needed to be cleared to make way for the borehole drilling. Plans have been compiled by the Mtwara regional electrical supplier to construct a secure power line from the nearest transformer to the site of the borehole for the purpose of running the pump. A detailed, itemised budget for all materials and labour needed to complete both the pump installation and pipeline has been submitted for our examination. Finally, amongst many other meetings and related events packed into my week-long visit to Mtwara during the February half-term just past, discussions have been held between the new Headmistress of Mtwara, Madam Mary Kaguo, Mr. Msaru, and me, regarding necessary renovation of the long-dormant plumbing infrastructure in place within the Mtwara school property.

It has been a year of exhaustive work by a dedicated team spread over two nations set thousands of miles apart. Hopefully, what began as a lovely thought, an impossible dream, the shared vision of two remarkable communities of girls, could become a powerful reality within the next six months. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. We are almost there!

On the last night of my recent journey, a young African teacher made this impassioned plea to me: “I ask that you go back and tell the people of St. Albans High School for Girls that this great thing they are doing is not just for Mtwara Girls’ Secondary School, but for all the people of Tanzania. Please, on behalf of every Tanzanian, give them our deepest thanks for this most vital gift – the water of life.”

Please help us with one final push for funding. As you can see, the money you have donated up to now has been used carefully and has achieved much. I ask that you search your hearts again, and for the sake of every daughter, both here and in Mtwara, please give generously. Help us bring water to Mtwara once and for all.

With many blessings,

The Revd Diane C. FitzGerald Clark,
Chaplain & Community Service Coordinator
St Albans High School for Girls



*Previous Head,
Madam Mshana;
new Head,
Madam Kaguo;
Mrs Hamadi,
who donated the
land for the
borehole;
Site Manager,
Mr Msaru and
his assistant*