



AMITY

The newsletter of the
CCL Alumnae Association

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We are pleased to re-launch AMITY – the newsletter for CCL Alumnae. “Amity” means “friendship” and through the newsletter we hope primarily that contact can be maintained with, and between, those who have been sponsored in their secondary education by the Commonwealth Countries League Education Fund. It is hoped stories and news may be shared with contributions written by members and others with an interest in education and women’s affairs. Also, hopefully you will be encouraged to mentor and befriend girls in your own community who are struggling to achieve an education. However we can only produce AMITY if you help us by getting in touch and telling us your news! So please contact Jenny Groves or Sheila Kennard at ccl.aa@btinternet.com or by writing to Sheila Kennard, 13 Capel Place, Wilmington, Dartford, Kent DA2 7PU, England.

The newsletter will also contain items of more general Commonwealth news and we start with the celebration of Commonwealth Day in London on 9th March attended by HM The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Charles and Camilla Duchess of Cornwall and Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge. Also present were High Commissioners, the Commonwealth Secretary General and other representatives of the 53 Commonwealth countries, leaders of different religious faiths and 1,000 schoolchildren.

The theme this year is “A Young Commonwealth” recognising the impact and contribution young people can make and in her message to the Commonwealth the Queen spoke of the need for continued dialogue between nations in an uncertain world. *“One simple lesson from history is that when people come together to talk, to exchange ideas and to develop common goals, wonderful things can happen. But, as we are often reminded, the opposite can also be true. When common goals fall apart, so does the exchange of ideas. And if people no longer trust or understand each other, the talking will soon stop too.”*

So let us continue to communicate with and learn from and about each other in our own small way through AMITY and the CCL Alumnae Association “Facebook” page - which is a secure site.

TANZANIA

We start with a story from this country in East Africa. There are over 100 tribal languages in Tanzania so although Swahili is the national language and used in primary school, it may not be the first language for many, especially those in rural areas. Secondary education is in English meaning an extra challenge especially for those who have not had access to good schooling. In addition, lack of money for school fees and



The photograph shows some of the CCLEF girls in their traditional dress at the graduation ceremony.

also cultural practices mean some girls face particular challenges. One such group are girls from the Maasai community.

The Maasai are mainly pastoralists and girls may be “married off” at the age of 13 in return for a bride price of cattle, a sign of wealth to the Maasai. The Emusoi Centre seeks to educate and empower young Maasai women and through the Centre the CCLEF was able to sponsor 12 girls. Six girls have now joined the Alumnae Association. Here is the story of one of them told in her own words.

My name is Nashipui and I come from Manyara Region. My father has 3 wives and my mother is the first. My father and mother up to the moment I started primary education both agreed to take me to school. I accomplished my primary studies in 2009 and stayed at home waiting for my results. I helped my parents in different stuffs like working in the farms, doing cleanliness at home and taking care of the youngs.

At the end of November the results were out and I was among the students chosen to join a school in secondary studies. I and my parents were happy but my family was too poor to be able to take me to school. So what they did was to start looking for money. My father went to his friends and relatives asking for help. But they gave him bad advice that he was poor and still wanted to be more poor by taking me to school. They told him if he wants to be rich and live without disturbing himself I should get marriage so he can receive bride price which means a lot of cattle.

After one week my father was back with nothing and his mind was changed. He told me he does not want to hear me talking about school. When it reached the time my father went to call the person to whom I was supposed to get married but my mother went to tell the priest and he told me there was a chance at Emusoi Centre. At Emusoi I was happy to meet other Maasai girls and to be told I would stay there for pre-form 1 studies. When I went home I found there was misunderstanding between my parents because I went to the school without my father’s permission.

I came back and in January 2010 I was taken to a school which is found in Mkuu Rombo. We had twelve subjects and most were hard due to the fact that I did not know proper English. So what I did is to study hard. I thank God because the school I was taken to was good in academics and morals and I was able to get the school average and even above. I am staying at Emusoi because after graduation I hear my father is still complaining about my studies. I have to thank very much the Emusoi members together with the people of the Commonwealth for their great support.



UGANDA

Josephine has completed her degree in nursing and is nearing the end of her internship after which she hopes to study for a PhD or Master’s if she can find the necessary sponsorship. However, in November 2014 she had the marvellous experience of attending the TUFH (Towards Unity for Health) Conference in Brazil. TUFH is a global network committed to improving the health of people and their communities and this is very much where Josephine’s

interest lies. She wrote that much of what she learnt about health policy and community health affected what she now does. As the African students' representative of TUFH's Student Network Organisation, she is now working with other leaders in organising the 2015 TUFH conference which will take place in South Africa. One of her aims is to have a team visit children in very rural schools as well as working with teenagers.

Milly is teaching in a rural school in Uganda and Cynthia is personal secretary to her area Member of Parliament. Sonia, who was outstanding in mathematics at school, went on to study economics and banking and is now working for Forex. These are just a few of the girls in Uganda who, through the combination of their hard work and CCLEF sponsorship, have succeeded in building a future for themselves and contributing to their own communities. A Uganda Chapter of the CCLAA was established in 2007 – see website.

KENYA

There has also been much good news from Kenya – Sara has completed Business School and is a project manager, Beatrice is a Clinical Officer, Nancy is working as a part time nurse running a dispensing chemist, Cecilia is teaching and Benti and Rebecca are working as lawyers. Nancy C who, having refused to undergo female genital mutilation in her own village, now campaigns for women's rights and the eradication of FGM. We hope to have an article written by Nancy C in a future edition.

GHANA

Missi was our first Alumnae member from Ghana. She has completed her two years' national placement with the University of Ghana Personnel Division and is endeavouring to contact other girls formerly sponsored by CCLEF. And this is where you can come in – please spread the word among your former school friends if you can and ask them to contact us – details are given at the end of this newsletter.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Moving to a different continent, **Papua New Guinea** is a mountainous country with very little infrastructure except on the coast. Many of those sponsored by the CCLEF live in the Highland provinces where students often have to walk considerable distances through difficult terrain to reach school. Their parents may never have been to school but over recent years primary and secondary education has expanded rapidly. The government, however, is struggling to finance this increase and some promises have not materialised, resulting in disappointment for many students trying to access further education. The success of some and disappointment for others was reported by Alumnae member Opuruta. A number of previously sponsored girls have gone on to a variety of careers – Matilda is a secondary school teacher, Jessica is a policewoman, and others have gone into health care. Mary successfully completed university and is working as an environmental scientist and Rosylen is a lawyer. Unfortunately, however, some have had to drop out of university because their families have been unable to meet the shortfall in fees following changes in government funding. One of those is Opuruta herself who had hoped to complete her medical studies but had to withdraw last year from university. It is hoped sponsors may be found to enable her, and the other girls, to continue their studies.

SRI LANKA

From Asia, we have also recently welcomed five new Alumnae members from Sri Lanka. Their interests range from athletics and dancing to reading and drama to organising events. However, now school is “out” they are considering what their next step in life will be – we look forward to hearing their plans for the future.

Other Commonwealth news

Sierra Leone – Over 3,500 people in Sierra Leone have died during the Ebola outbreak leaving many orphans and single parent families with little or no support. The outbreak has also killed much needed health workers in the country, one of the poorest in the Commonwealth. Doctors and nurses from many countries have gone to work in Sierra Leone and it is believed that the worst of the outbreak is over. Farmers are being encouraged to return to the land and schools re-opened in mid April. However, as we go to print the CCLEF has not been able to contact girls to find out if they are well.

Vanuatu is one of the smaller states in the Commonwealth and is made up of over 60 low lying islands. On 15th March Vanuatu, which is situated in the Pacific Ocean, was struck by a cyclone which caused devastation in many areas. Support has been sent by a number of Commonwealth countries as part of the wider relief and rebuilding operation. Three girls are currently being sponsored in Vanuatu by CCLEF.

We plan to produce the next edition of Amity in July and look forward to hearing from members willing either to share their experiences since leaving school or who wish to contribute an item of general interest. However it should be noted that articles may need to be shortened and items which the Editors feel are not suitable for publication will not be included.

Commonwealth countries by region: Those in bold print are where the CCLEF currently sponsors 481 girls: the number of girls sponsored and the countries may change throughout the year, as girls complete their secondary education and new applicants are accepted.

AFRICA: Botswana, **Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi,** Mauritius, **Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe*.** **ASIA:** Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, **India,** Malaysia, Maldives, **Pakistan,** Singapore, **Sri Lanka.** **CARIBBEAN & THE AMERICAS:** Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, **Belize,** Canada, **Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines,** Trinidad and Tobago. **EUROPE:** Cyprus, Malta, United Kingdom. **PACIFIC:** Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, **Papua New Guinea, Samoa,** Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, **Vanuatu.** **formerly Commonwealth.*

There are currently CCLAA members in Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga and Uganda. We hope eventually to have members from all the countries where girls have been sponsored.

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