

August 2003



## Open Arms Infant Home

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### AUGUST NEWSLETTER. OPEN ARMS, BLANTYRE. MALAWI

Dear Friends,

There have been many developments and changes in Open Arms since we last communicated in December. We currently have 40 babies and for a while we had 42 but our newly increased workforce has managed these numbers with relative ease. In the early part of the year famine relief dominated our outreach programme as we endeavoured to make sure that grandparents and elderly relatives caring for our returned children and their equally vulnerable brothers, sisters and cousins were spared the worst. Our thanks go to Malawi Hunger Relief in Amsterdam, Scottish Relief International and Scottish International Relief, the Nchima Trust and Judith Mapanje and her group in London who between them donated approximately 150 tonnes of maize which we were able to distribute to targeted communities. In addition the donation included '150 starter packs' which consisted of 20kgs fertilisers and 2.5kgs of hybrid maize seed. These packs were given out to our needy families and the fruits are now harvested. On average 850kg bags of maize have been gathered by each family which is enough to feed a family of 6 for 6months.



Ladies awaiting food relief at Takiwa



Receiving their starter packs

#### Statistics

Since December we have admitted thirty three babies ten of whom have died. Fifteen 2+ year olds have been returned and are now being visited on our outreach programme where possible. Two have been fostered with a view to adoption via the Social Services Department Brenda Kumwenda was admitted to the SOS Children's village in Mzuzu (her home district 300 miles away) and was visited by Rosemarie and Neville last month. Twins Joseph and Maria are likely to follow.



Hells little angels!



Gladys on arrival with siblings  
Not one adult relative survives



### Volunteers

We said a sad farewell to Valerie and Peter Tyler in April. Val had been at Open Arms for six years and had become completely responsible for the organisation and administration of the stores. She and Peter were very much part of the Home. We are still in the throes of missing them and wish them both well in UK. Her job has been taken over by visiting volunteers, first Rosalie and now Clare. Rosalie was with us for three months followed by Tim and Amy and finally and now Tony, Emily, Amy & Roberta. The volunteers house is seldom empty and has become the source of some very useful regular income.



Val with Jeff & Daud & grandma  
On the twins last day at Open Arms



Volunteers and their friends!

### New Unit

The most significant development has been the beginning of the work on the new unit that we have been talking about for quite some time. The construction of this has been enabled by a tremendous appeal run by The Harrogate Advertiser, the local newspaper in our home town in the north of England. Last week we heard that the target of £25,000 had finally been reached. We salute The Harrogate Advertiser and it's readers for this fantastic achievement. We are already up to floor level and hope to have the roof on before the rains begin in late November. We would like completion early next year. The new unit will house up to 12 two to five year olds who cannot be placed elsewhere. The building is to be called 'Harrogate House'.

### Donors

We have received visitors and communications and donations large and small from all over the world including Malawi. People have climbed mountains, run marathons ridden bicycles and walked many sponsored miles for us. Children have denied themselves chocolates and percentages of their pocket money. Very elderly grannies have knitted woolly jumpers for tiny babies. Anonymous donors drop bags of maize and rice on our doorstep. A businessman in Blantyre who insists on anonymity drops off a large cheque every month. We thank you all.

### School Visits

Students from Wyoming Seminary in Pennsylvania paid us a flying visit. They brought with them about half a tonne of equipment. In two short weeks they managed to completely repaint the classrooms of a nearby school for the disabled, visit a National Park and teach some lessons in a school where they paid for the roofing of two classrooms. We enjoyed having them and they are returning next year we hope.

Ashville College have just departed leaving an incredible two and a half tonnes of equipment both for us and local hospitals. Leeds Girls visited and made a wonderful donation towards our running costs. Kingswood Bath have also expressed an interest and we believe Clifton College of Bristol are undertaking a sponsored bike ride for us.

### Staff news

To bring us in line with responsible employees we have implemented a brand new pay scale and saving scheme for everyone of our 40 employees. This has added 30% to our monthly wage bill but the Board of Open Arms were firmly behind the revision. We believe our ladies and gents are happy with this new arrangement.

May we just take this opportunity to thank the countless people around the world who make it possible for Open Arms to continue with it's work.