

Ian at TDA

Ian was privileged to address the Tanzanian Dental Association conference in Dar es Salaam in November.



The conference draws together members of the profession from across Tanzania. We are excited that Ian has been invited to speak again this year when the conference will be hosted by the FDO (World Dental Federation).

Who are we?

Bridge2Aid is a UK registered charity operating dental and community development programmes in North West Tanzania. Our community development programme works with the disabled, People Affected by Leprosy (PAL) and the elderly street people of the region – both in Mwanza city and at a disabled care centre, Bukumbi.

Our dental work helps build the capacity of the Tanzanian health care services with dental training. We operate a dental centre in Mwanza which donates its profits to our work and provides free and subsidised treatment to those in need. If you would like to receive the free newsletter regularly, either:

- Contact the office - 0114 232 6030
- Visit the website - bridge2aid.org
- Email - rob@bridge2aid.org



Bridge2Aid • PO Box 4173 • Sheffield • S6 9BW • Tel: +44 (0) 114 232 6030
www.bridge2aid.org • enquiries@bridge2aid.org
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Spring 2007

Bridge2Aid News



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Introducing our youngest team member!

The Mwanza team has another new addition, in the form of a 7 month old baby who has been adopted by Mark and Jo! They met Bethany Asha in October, and she came to live with them just before Christmas.

The family are settling in well together, and Beth is about to start crawling, which will certainly change things in the Topley household!



Small Group Meetings Start at Bukumbi

In the last newsletter we reported on the first ever Bukumbi stakeholders meeting, drawn together to give a joint forum where all interested agencies and the community could discuss the issues. The first sub-committee meeting has also now taken place and was a great success, specifically addressing health needs in the centre.

CDO Visits Mwanza

We were delighted to host Dr Raphael Senkoro, the Chief Dental Officer for Tanzania for a visit to inspect our programmes in February.

The CDO has been involved in planning and advising on Hope Dental Centre, the RCO training and the anticipated schools programme since their beginnings. It was a great privilege and an encouragement for us for him to come and spend time viewing the clinic, meeting with our partners in Magu and giving him a personal update on our plans for the future.

Pictured with the CDO (second from right) are Mark and Ian as well as representatives from Magu District.

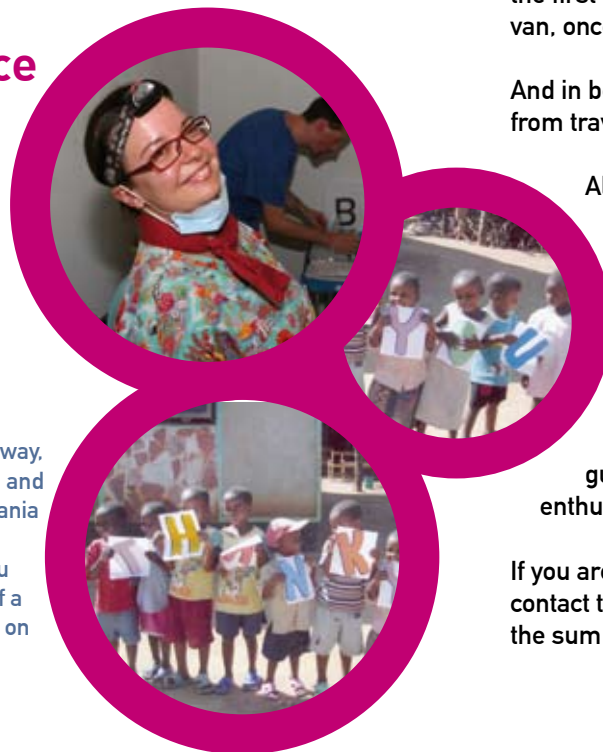


B2A @ BDA Conference

If you are attending the BDA conference in Harrogate in May, come and say hello to Ian and Mark, who will be on the ADEC stand in the exhibition. The guys will be in the UK for a week to attend the conference, meet with the trustees and hold a reception at the BDA conference to promote Bridge2Aid.

Kili - LAST CHANCE!

Preparations for Climb Kili 1&2 are well underway, and many of our participants are busy training and fundraising in preparation for the trips to Tanzania in August and September. There is still time to sign up for the August trip, but not much! If you are interested in joining us for the challenge of a lifetime, please contact Sarah@bridge2aid.org on 01243 771653.



Locums a big support

The past few months have seen a number of locums come to work with us at HDC.

Kathy Wilson returned in early January to cover Ian's leave over Christmas and New Year, and will be back again in June.

Najla Akbarali came for a month in January and carried out free screening at Hands of Mercy Orphanage as well as working in the clinic and visiting the mines.

Cristy Norton came to us in late February and is staying until May! Cristy is from Australia and will be the first dentist in our mobile dental van, once it comes into service.

And in between all those, Lucy Whitby took a break from travelling to work a week in March.

All of our locums are crucial to the ongoing development of HDC and our other programmes. While we continue to work with the government to recruit a Tanzanian dentist, the volunteers who give their time in the clinic allow us to maintain a service, release Ian to develop the dental programmes and also keep the flow of finance from HDC to Bridge2Aid. Thank you guys - we really appreciate your time and enthusiasm.

If you are interested in volunteering at HDC please contact the UK office - we have vacancies throughout the summer and autumn.



Bukumbi refurbishment underway

Work got underway in January to refurbish two of the most dilapidated dormitory blocks at Bukumbi.

A record rainy season has meant a great deal of misery for the residents of Bukumbi, whose accommodation has leaking roofs, rotting ceiling boards and windows without mosquito mesh. We are pleased to report that the work on two of the six blocks at Bukumbi is now well underway. One of the roofs is now sound, and work is also complete to replace the ceiling boards and windows. The rest of the work will be completed in April when a team of 16 volunteers from the UK will carry out work on the guttering. They will also fit cupboards, and then completely clean and repaint the interior.

The work so far has been a great boost to morale at Bukumbi and also for us as a team. The residents of these two blocks already have a dry environment in which to sleep for the first time in years. Once the Easter Team have completed their work the first building will be completely functional and suitable for the disabled and elderly residents who live there.

The work so far has been a great boost to morale at Bukumbi

Work so far has cost us over 18 million shillings (around £7,000). We are very grateful to the individuals, companies and churches who have contributed towards this.



Once these blocks are completed, we will push on with raising the funds necessary to complete the refurbishment of further blocks, taking our cues from the community whose ownership and direction of the process is crucial.

Information Evenings

Whether you are a long-time supporter or have only just heard of Bridge2Aid, the summer Information Evenings are a great opportunity to find out first hand what is going on in Mwanza.

Short of flying to Tanzania, there's no better chance in the year to hear from the team about how the work is progressing and how you can get involved.

This year's evenings take place in Sheffield and Guildford, which hopefully will mean there is a venue reasonably accessible for you. The entire Mwanza team will be at both events, and we will also have an exciting announcement to make about a project at Bukumbi which will start in 2007. The dates for your diary are:

- Sheffield - Friday 13th July
- Guildford - Saturday 14th July

Both events start at 7.30pm. Details of the venues will be posted on the website as soon as they are available.

World Leprosy Day

Sunday 28th January was World Leprosy Day, and we held a celebration with the community at Bukumbi to mark the occasion. Groups from around the world came together to celebrate the annual event which seeks to call attention to the continuing impact of this completely preventable disease on many people living in the developing world.

The community at Bukumbi is made up of many groups including a large number of People Affected by Leprosy (PAL) and their families. We were pleased to be able to organise a celebration meal on the day, with the Regional Welfare Officer the guest of honour.



DVP expands to additional area



This year we plan to train 12 RCOs from Magu and 6 from Misungwi, before further expansion in 2008. We'll also be providing a motorcycle for the DDO of Misungwi to enable him to supervise his RCOs.

Another very positive development for the RCO training is that this year's programme has attracted a Tanzanian Government grant. The D3CB scheme is a partnership between the Ministry of Health and DANIDA (Denmark's equivalent of DFID). We have been given funding for one year to build the RCO training, and invite Regional Dental Officers from other areas to come and see it in action.

February saw the expansion of the RCO training in emergency dentistry to an additional district in Mwanza Region.

Misungwi is the district where Bukumbi Care Centre is located, and Jo has built a very positive relationship with the district medical office there. It was therefore a good place for us to include in the training from now on.

We will continue to train RCOs in and from Magu district. Progress there continues to be very positive. The 25 RCOs we have trained already mean that almost half the medical facilities in the district are now staffed by someone trained in emergency dentistry. Dr Samuel is now supported by a dental therapist at the district hospital, which releases him to supervise the trained RCOs, using the motorcycle provided by Bridge2Aid for this purpose.



Pictured are (clockwise from top) Lynda Humber at Usagara, Bob Miller with Anthony, the February DVP volunteers with the B2A Team.



New Vehicle Brings Benefits

We were delighted to receive an amazing donation of £16,000 from Chipping Manor Dental Practice in December! The funds were for vehicles, and we managed to locate the first of two second hand Land Cruisers that we need to buy this year very quickly.

The vehicle was acquired in time for the February DVP, and made a huge difference to the programme.

Pictured with the vehicle are members of the B2A team and children from Usagara area who directly benefitted from the services we were able to provide using the new car.

A huge thank you to Phil & Shaenna and the Chipping Manor team.



Rob joins the team

While Sarah moves to a new role supporting our fundraising challenges, there is a new face at the helm of the UK admin - Rob Weir. Rob made his first trip to Tanzania with the DVP group in February...

"My recent visit to Mwanza impressed me in a huge number of different ways, which creates a problem when writing to a word limit! Firstly it has to be said that the dedication, commitment and vision that Bridge2Aid has for the work here is staggering. I flew out to Tanzania with the February Dental Volunteer Programme (DVP) and was therefore able to see the efficient and effective tool that this has become producing quality and importantly sustainable oral health provision in the rural areas surrounding Mwanza. I also had the opportunity to visit Bukumbi.

"Whilst there it was clear to see that the work on the accommodation blocks that the Easter Team is going to do will have an amazing impact on the quality of life for those that live there. My time here has helped me to see some of the difficulties that the team faces in working in Tanzania - from the bureaucracy to the climate & tropical diseases as well as the brilliant outcomes of the work that is done here. It has also helped me to understand more of my role within Bridge2Aid."

