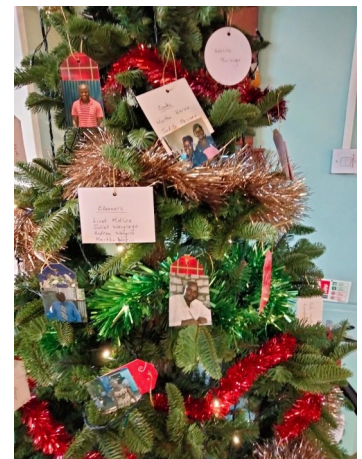


We wish all our supporters a very Happy New Year

Back to school in Mombasa. Students return for the start of the new school year. It's the hottest time of the year in Kenya which may explain the wearing of PE kit.



Christmas Tree and Crib Festival November held on 23rd and 24th November. The Prayer Tree (right) was decorated with pictures and names of all the staff at Unity School. The event raised £530 for our funds. Centre left: Children from River Beach School came to set up their tree and crib.





A message from Carol Groves, on her retirement as Chairperson.

Those of you that came to our 20-year celebration a couple of months ago, will know that I am stepping down as Chairperson and Trustee at the end of January 2024. After a 23-year stint, (20 of which as a Charity Trustee), it felt appropriate to ‘retire’ and hand over to a younger chairperson.

We have always, as a charity, had many supporters, some of which stay on as an ‘associate’, and I will be staying on in this capacity. This means I will still be involved and will continue to help and support Friends of the Mombasa Children as much as possible. However, it will mean that I can take a ‘back seat’ and concentrate more time on my six grandchildren, plus other activities. I will be going back to Mombasa early 2024, and no doubt you will be getting some updates and pictures in our spring newsletter from me.

I would like to thank you all so much for your support over the years, not just to Friends of the Mombasa Children charity, but to me personally. Your support, commitment, care, and love are very special to me.

I read an old Chinese proverb the other day that said this: “Happiness is having something to do, something to hope for, and someone to love”. Someone to love – well I have over 400 pupils at Unity School, plus the teachers and especially dear Norbert, Joash and Mary, all of whom I love dearly.

Over the last 23 years I don’t believe there has been a time when I have not had something thing to do that involved FOMC.

I have always had hope for us and Unity School, even during the most difficult of times. And that hope is no less today than it was 23 years ago.

*Yours
Carol*

Meet our new chair



Hello,

My name is Ben, back in 2007 I celebrated my 17th birthday on my first ever visit to Mombasa. Since then, I have visited another half a dozen (or so) times and we as a charity have; relocated, built classrooms, provided shoes, started a medical programme, installed a well and real flushing toilets! As we have developed our support for Unity Freretown School, I have been delighted to also witness the development of Kenya as a whole. Not that we can take the credit for every good thing in Kenya, though we have certainly played our part and will continue to do so. It was a huge honour when Carol and the Trustees asked me to become the next chair of FOMC.

Becoming chair is a huge responsibility, and I am glad that I too have grown from where I was. As things in Kenya have developed so have I. 17-year-old Ben finished college and university with a degree in Forensic Biology. After which I did some domiciliary care work before plunging head forth into a transformational time of my life working for the church as a youth worker. More recently I moved to East Grinstead to begin my second appointment as a Methodist Minister. Outside of work, I married the wonderful Charlotte in August 2023 who I share a love of board games with. I also enjoy getting creative and the occasional venture into the outdoors.

I hope that gives you a glimpse into this strange new man taking the helm next month. As you can imagine faith is a significant part of my life in both work and play. I am therefore grateful for the faith Carol and the trustees have placed in me by asking me to take up the role of chair and have accepted this with a heart full of faith in God, in our friends and teachers in Kenya but also faith in you, our supporters. Your support allows us to do the work we do, our achievements over the last few years are your achievements and so as I and the trustees look to the future, we know we do so with a huge family spurring us on – thank you!

Dates for your diary

Saturday March 2nd: 2nd Hand Book Sale at Littlehampton United Church . 10.00—3.00pm Free Admission. Refreshments on sale. Over 1000 books and even more Children's books.

Tuesday February 13th Curry Night at Monsoons in Rustington Please contact Carol for details but get in quick as space is limited. (c.groves@mombasachildren.org.uk) The raffle and auction will be there by popular demand..

Saturday April 6th: The Great Sale of Everything at Rustington Methodist Church 9.30—1.30pm Admission is free, so is the car park. Refreshments will be on sale.

Come along and pick up all manner of bargains at this big fundraiser. If you are able to donate items in good condition for the sale please contact Chris 01903 718070 before the event.

We cannot accept furniture, clothes or electrical goods

**Can you help secure our work in Mombasa by
making a monthly donation ?**

**Could you donate the cost of a cup of coffee and a
slice of cake?**



Unity Freretown School has had many struggles over the last few years; the pandemic, pressure from the Kenyan Government requiring Primary Schools to host the lower Secondary classes (with no financial help from their government), having to rent additional classrooms to do this; the older classrooms having to be closed because their structures did not reach the requirements of the education department.

The list could go on, but for us as Trustees, our commitment has, over the last couple of years, concentrated on getting the upper floor of the new building finalised as soon as possible. Three classrooms are now in operation with two more to go. We are also concentrating on rebuilding the older classrooms as soon as possible.

Vital to our progress in achieving our vision of new classrooms together with our on-going support month by month, are the regular donations that many supporters make monthly or annually. Many people rose to the challenge when we launched a campaign, several years ago, to donate the cost of a cup of coffee and a piece of cake on a monthly basis. We thank you for that.

A recent survey by one of our trustees revealed that the average cup of coffee and slice of cake is now £7. (A tough job but someone had to do it!)

This month we are re-launching the campaign. Could you donate £7 per month to support Unity School? That's £84 per year but could increase to £105 if we can re-claim the tax you paid on your income .

We realise that many of you already give towards our monthly standing order giving through your bank to our charity bank, and we are extremely grateful to you. We are asking if you know any friends, family or neighbours who could give the equivalent of an extra coffee/tea and cake to support us..

If you, or anyone you know, can help with this request in anyway, please do get in touch and we can set you up. Please email c.azzaro@mombasachildren.org.uk for more details.



If you scan the QR code you will be taken to our Just Giving page.



Friends of the Mombasa Children C.I.O. is a registered Charity number 1155625

www.mombasachildren.org.uk

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