

AQUAID LIFELINE NEWS FROM MALAWI 1999-2014..... HAS IT BEEN WORTHWHILE?

John R. Searle, Coordinator of **Aquaid Lifeline** writes, "In June 1999 I arrived in Malawi, Central Africa with the intention of building a village to accommodate needy children orphaned by disease and malnutrition. The idea was simple, buy a plot of land deep in the bush, employ as many Malawian people as possible to help with brick making and build a number of houses, providing shelter, food and healthcare for the children, as well as offering employment to local people in the building, running and maintenance of the village. Malawians are generous, caring and warm hearted people with a strong community and family orientation, which was to prove an indispensable asset. There were, of course, several daunting challenges. I had no personal experience or qualifications of any kind, just a simple faith with the words of James Chapter 1, Verse 27 etched into my consciousness, *'Religion that God our father accepts as pure and blameless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.'*

An additional challenge was finance. We had a little less than **£2,000** at our disposal, and a pledge from my family to support the work through the mineral water business established and run by my Wife, my Sons and Daughter. Each bottle sold would mean a donation to the charity.

Since that day in October 1999, the family business, **Cooleraid Ltd** has donated **£4,000,000** to **Aquaid Lifeline**. Because administrative costs have been kept at a fraction of one percent, virtually every penny donated has gone directly to the point of need. The scrupulous honesty of our executive staff, as well as their efficient and conscientious use of funds, have enabled **Aquaid Lifeline** to build and manage **10** centres. In addition, we have built **5** further centres each of which we manage on behalf of **Spring Lake Church, Green Bay, Wisconsin, St Andrews Church, Arbroath, Scotland, St Marys Church, Hitchin, Herts, Citystay, Cambridge and Aquaid Franchising Cambridge**. We are currently caring for almost **2,000** children, providing shelter, clothing, food and education. In addition, our relief programme caters for **1,500+** elderly and handicapped people, providing food, blankets, roofing materials, seed maize etc. Many Malawian babies are orphaned at birth, especially in rural areas. Formula milk is beyond the resources of the vast majority of Aunts and Grandmothers who inherit the hungry child. **Aquaid Lifeline** has rescued more than **400** of these little ones.

We have built **two** primary schools catering from standards 1-8, where around **1,000** students benefit from the dedication of our committed teaching staff, producing results which have consistently made our schools the top schools in their respective zones. One of these schools named Umodzi was funded entirely by the directors of **Citystay**, a small family business founded and managed by Neil Fernandez and his wife Angela, who is our Daughter. In addition, this couple sponsored Umodzi clinic - the name means "Partnership." We enjoy the continuing support of our **5** partners for which we are truly grateful. In September 2013 we opened our first secondary school and look forward to attaining the same high standards.

All our schools enjoy the cooperation and valuable input of the Malawian Government, for which we are most grateful. We have recently finalised plans to build another secondary school with funds pledged by **Springlake Church, Green Bay, Wisconsin**.

In September of this year (2014) we opened the desperately needed second phase of the Dawn Centre, a facility which cares for handicapped children (*see illustrations*). Two of our centres benefit from well stocked clinics registered and approved by the Malawian Health Authority, these provide care not only for the **500** children and staff on each site, but for local people also. Our nurse at Namisu Clinic is one of our own successful students, a graduate of the **Aquaid Lifeline** scholarship fund.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise that I personally take no credit whatsoever for the almost incredible achievements of **Aquaid Lifeline**. Similarly, my family accept no plaudits, simply insisting that they have only given what they can afford. But I would offer heartfelt thanks to our **200** loyal Malawian staff, especially John Kangombe, our Executive Administrator, and Angus Gaisford, BSc, our General Manager.

Finally, our scholarship fund has provided secondary school fees, uniforms and examination fees for more than **4,600** students, and our vocational training scheme has funded **700** beneficiaries, **70%** of whom are now employed as teachers, nurses, accountants, business administrators, agriculturalists, carpenters, welders, builders etc. etc.



□ In October 1999, in answer to a desperate need, **Aquaid Lifeline** provided funds for the first of many boreholes... was it worthwhile? Water borne disease was a constant cause of sickness and death in Mwalawoyera, a remote region of central Malawi. Above is a photographic record.



□ Mirriam, whose parents couldn't afford school fees, is studying physiotherapy and hopes to qualify next year. Here she is with Isabel at our new centre.



□ Charity, above, suffers from Hydrocephalus but is always the life and soul of any party!

□ John Searle, **Aquaid Lifeline** coordinator writes, "In Sept 2014 I visited Mwalawoyera. I found the borehole still pumping a flow of crystal clear water. Engraved in the cement work is the date: 12th October 1999. It's impossible to compute the number of lives saved by this precious resource, during the 15 years it has been in service.



□ The three stones on the mud verandah represent the kitchen and cooking facilities for the widow, Mirriam Pharoah, who lived with her 3 young children in this tiny mud house. Mirriam's second boy, Madalitso, aged 5 was left handicapped by

cerebral malaria when just 4 months old. Mirriam inspired the mothers of handicapped children in the area to make bricks to build a simple centre where the children could be cared for. She and her mother offered to donate their precious ancestral land for the project. Was this sacrifice worthwhile? The first Dawn Centre opened in 2010 with residential facilities for 36 children, a schoolroom, store, chicken barn and solar powered hot and cold showers and flushing toilets. To cope with a desperately needy waiting list, and inspired by Mirriam's commitment, we drew up plans to extend the centre, the result is featured below.



□ Above are the new Dawn Centre classrooms with some staff members, opened in October this year, with staffroom, physiotherapy and handicraft unit, with 3 special needs teachers provided by the Malawian Government. In addition we have built a residence to house 36 children, a large kitchen, provided a borehole, solar lighting and water heating unit. On site we are presently completing a large multi purpose building for vocational training, dramas, concerts and general recreation. All this began in the heart of a poor Malawian village widow who lived in a simple mud house. Was the sacrifice of her precious land worthwhile....?

The **AQUAID LIFELINE** Fund offers grateful thanks for continuing magnificent support from **COOLERAID U.K. Ltd.** and the many other donors, which has enabled us to rescue so many and offer hope to those who had none. For further information Tel. John Searle, **AQUAID LIFELINE** Fund Co-ordinator, on (01223) 276710