

AQUAID LIFELINE NEWS

FROM MALAWI, CENTRAL AFRICA



John Searle our Co-ordinator writes, In October 2008, Miriam challenged me with the news that in the catchment area of our children's village at Namisu, there are more than 40 severely disabled children. I asked why I had never seen them. "They're kept out of sight," I was told. "They are seen as a disgrace. They don't go to school. They don't see or meet anyone." Miriam herself, a widow of 27, has three children including a five year old son called Blessings, who suffered from Cerebral Malaria leaving him disabled at 4 months. Miriam motivated the parents of the area's disabled children to make bricks for a daycare centre where they could meet and play and learn together. She donated her own precious land for the project and the work began, funded by a gift from a Cambridgeshire lady in memory of her late Mother, whose name was Dawn - and so the "Dawn Centre" was founded.

As the project developed, a borehole was drilled, wash houses and toilets were built, along with a kitchen and chicken house where fresh eggs are produced daily. But some parents were making a daily round trip on foot of 20km, and were soon exhausted, having their maize to harvest, other children to care for, water to fetch etc., so we decided to send our lorry to collect them each morning. But finally it was decided that the sensible option would be to build living quarters. Parents have volunteered to work in shifts, six of them living and sleeping at the centre, one week in six, under the supervision of a trained overseer.



The centre with some of the parents and children



Photo taken May 2010

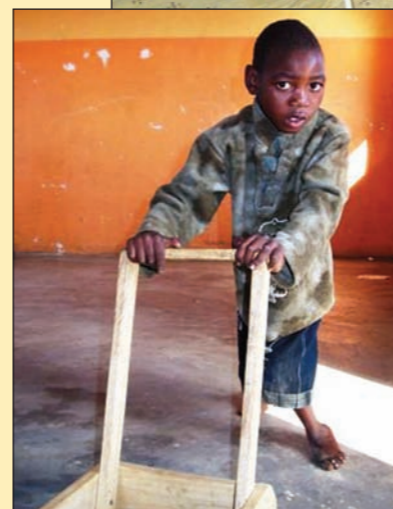
Above is the Dawn Centre accommodation under construction. There will be provision for 15-18 boys and 15-18 girls in separate dormitories with rooms for six adult carers. Solar heated showers and flushing toilets have now been installed, beds have been made at our orphan village carpenters shop. Miriam donated the last piece of her land for this building. The roof is being completed as I write.



In April 2009, a second tragedy struck little Blessing's life. Before we drilled for water at the new Dawn Centre, Miriam had to walk a considerable distance to the nearest borehole. Leaving Blessings in the care of a neighbour, she set off one day to draw water. Unnoticed, the little boy spilled a tin of paraffin on to an open fire, and was so badly burned his left leg had to be amputated at the hip. I first saw him in June 09 in the burns unit of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Blantyre. Miriam had never left his side and slept each night for six months on the concrete floor under his bed. I was pleased to be able to help using funds from well-wishers in the UK. A Doctor friend didn't think Blessings could survive, he was in constant pain and very weak.



Photo taken June 2009



This is Kelvin Willy, one of the most courageous children I have ever seen. We've had some remedial toys made-wooden horses on wheels, push along carts to fill up with odds and ends, Kelvin seemed determined to get up, unaided, and walk!

up with odds and ends, Kelvin seemed determined to get up, unaided, and walk!



Here's Blessings at the Dawn Centre on one of the purpose made swings donated by Cambs. well-wishers. Photo taken in May 2010.



Baby John's mother passed away on the day of his birth. A distraught and penniless Granny brought him to our village for help. John is the 95th baby we have rescued in the past five years. There have been others who have not survived infancy. John was very tiny - however I was able to reassure his Granny that baby John will never be hungry, or in need of clothing or healthcare while the Lifeline exists. Since baby milk costs £4 per tin, poor Granny was deeply grateful.



And so he did! Kelvin and Gift are two of the three boys who have responded to a good diet (Including Miriam's eggs)! and the stimulation of exercise and friendship with other disabled children - and in such a short time. We are full of hope for these children's' future!

In his report dated 1st June 2010 our general manager in Malawi wrote: 42 disabled children are now registered at the Dawn Centre. The children receive breakfast and lunch prepared by the volunteers. The children do activities with those on duty. It has been noted that the health of the children has improved thanks to a good regular diet. Since attending the centre, three children have learned to walk on their own.

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