

Phoenix

Phoenix Community Care Newsletter - Issue 7 - Summer 2013

Shine Bright like a Diamond

So far 2013 has been a pretty exciting year for PCC.

Our Foster Care agency has welcomed several new foster carers and children have been placed regularly, we've hosted visits from the UN and staff from the UKBA chief inspector's team, and have recently been re-awarded the prestigious Investors In People certificate.



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WELCOMING..
New staff and other news

Following the departure of a few loved members of staff, our team continues to grow with individuals who are passionate to see a change in their local area and overseas. Turn to the back to meet our newest arrivals!

We are extremely excited to announce PCC's new patron Shara Worden (photo at top right). The 'My Brightest Diamond' star has taken a keen

interest in the work of the charity for many years and has been looking for an opportunity to support and promote what PCC does. Shara says "I am so inspired by the work of PCC to provide hope and love to children all over the world. They are compassion with caring hands and elbow grease."

Hailing from Eldorado, Arkansas, Shara is a classically trained musician who fuses rock, cabaret and opera to create her music and brings a quirky theatricality to her performance. As well as being a very successful international artist herself, she has collaborated and toured with a number of singer-songwriters including Sufjan Stevens. Currently, she's writing an opera which she is performing in Antwerp, Belgium.

We feel privileged to have Shara as our patron as she is as passionate about making a change as she is about making and performing her art.

FRIENDS OF PCC

We love friends! Not the TV show (although we do quite like that), but people to have fun with, who you support and support you and with whom you share common interests. We always want to find the fun in the work we do, but we are only able to do that work with the community of many friends. If you, like us, are interested in helping others in the local area, the UK and overseas, then we would love you to be our friend. Of course, we always need money to make possible a vision for a better, more caring world, but equally there are other ways you can help us by keeping in contact, volunteering your time and resources for PCC's various projects.

To become a friend of PCC please visit phoenixcommunity.org or contact us at 21-23 Bath Road, London N9 0JX | T - (020) 8887 6888





Busy Nakuru

For those who are new to what we do and care about it, PCC loves the poor and disadvantaged in a number of countries. In 2000, PCC met Sammy and Millie Nawali, the creators of Sure 24 orphanage in Nakuru, Kenya. Through their work Sammy and Millie have housed, educated and fed children who have been abandoned - often through civil war, poverty or disease. They now run **Rain Edge International** whose projects include Sure 24, a Saturday feeding programme and a rehabilitation centre.

In February this year, several PCC staff travelled with adoption guru Paula Coates – our 2013 centrefold - to visit Rain Edge. One staff member has given their impressions below.

“It was a privilege for me to see with my own eyes the work Sammy and Millie are doing. Their selfless commitment to making a difference and changing lives was beyond inspiring. Each child at Sure 24 has their story to tell of how they have ended up in the home and it is hard not to cry when you hear them. The home caters for boys and girls in separate dormitories. It has basic provisions but the friendship and warmth each child receives makes up for the lack of possessions and equipment.

They also have an on site borehole, paid for by a British organization and used by the whole community. Before, the villagers would have to travel up to 7 kilometres to get water.

The day school run by Sammy and Millie currently provides the opportunity for 250 children to progress through Pre-school, Primary and Junior education. The students are doing so well that they are now passing the national tests to enter High School. Bearing in mind that most of these children come from extremely poor or orphaned backgrounds they are not expected to amount to much and so these results give Sammy and Millie real assurance that they are making a difference.

Many people have visited Sure 24 and donated practical support, staff and resources, which all contribute to what you see there today. However, they still struggle with the same issues as other Kenyans. Neither health care nor secondary education are free and so basic health needs often go unmet and the majority of children stop studying after Junior level.

At the orphanage they say that, in spite of their struggles, their faith helps them to trust that everything they need, and can't make, will be given to them. Having said that, they are incredibly enterprising and use all means at their disposal to make ends meet. They welcome everyone with a smile and are always grateful for whatever they receive. I would urge anyone to support them in any way they can!

PCC Staff Member



At **Rain Edge International**, we have had amazing progress on the ground! Sure24, Living Fountain Academy and the feeding program are all growing and there are many still on the waiting list. We have also started a new programme called Aquasure24, bottling fresh water which has been taken from the borehole and treated through Reverse Osmosis. We use the profits from this project to support Sure24 and now 27 of our kids are being funded through High School!

This 31st of March, we held a special Sunday celebration and invited the people who are considered the lowest class in our community to come and spend the day with us. Street

kids, alcoholics, matatu crew (drivers of local public transport) were all invited by personal invitation. We also hired a few matatus to bring in street families from town. We wanted to dance, eat and drink with them and then share some goodies with them before we let them go. It was a moment for us to give back to others.

We would like to thank PCC for partnering with us, without your help we would never have come this far! We still have a deficit and if you can help in anyway we would really appreciate it.

Sammy, Project Manager.



Interview

Paula Coates



Tell us a little bit about yourself..

I am a full time mum of six adopted children. I am someone who loves to gather people. I was always surrounded by brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces. After a whirlwind romance of 6 weeks, I married my best friend Al.

Why adoption?

Al has always had adoption on his heart and after trying for a baby for ten months we decided to go ahead and adopt. Since then we have adopted five children and recently a sixth, a beautiful baby girl. Some people think we're crazy adopting another child having five fantastic kids already, but when we heard that the birth mum of our youngest two was pregnant again, we decided we would also be willing to adopt her so we could keep the sisters together.

What is your connection to PCC?

Pauline and Adrian Hawkes came to speak in the north of England many years ago and all I can say is, after talking to them over a meal, Al and I were never the same again. That weekend our lives changed forever. Listening to Pauline and Adrian share their journey lifted our eyes and our desires off us and onto something much greater. We loosely kept in touch with the Hawkes until 2010 when I decided to put on an adoption event called 'Living Stones' and asked Pauline to be involved. Since then we knew our shared concerns for children in the care system would keep us in close contact. Al and I love the journey we are on with everyone at PCC and know that there is mutual support through the good times and the bad.

You recently went on a trip to Kenya to visit Sure 24, what were your first impressions?

It was a wonderful privilege to meet the children at Sure 24 and to see Sammy again. He had stayed with us at our home last year and invited me to come to Kenya, something I had never ever considered before! It was a new beginning. My first sights whilst driving along were seeing children walking to school as early as 6am, passing baboons and zebra's on the way - it was amazing!

What will stay with you the most?

Meeting the children at the orphanage was something I shall never forget; their faces, their smiles. One of the best times was having a meal with Sammy, the staff at the orphanage and all of the children. Sharing my story of hope and being able to give each of them a precious stone to represent their own journey had me in tears and still does every time I think of it.

What is the next step for you and your family?

Even though we are about to adopt another baby just at a time when things have got easier for us, I still would like to return to Kenya again and not just Kenya but other places. I know I have a story of hope for the orphans and marginalised.

Al is just about to qualify as a social worker and I want to see therapeutic help being readily available for adopted children and families, as I believe this makes it possible to come to terms with the past. We feel our time to move on is coming, but we're not sure where yet, and I feel in a way that our lives are only just beginning. We want to thank Pauline and Adrian for believing in us, and including us in their journey.



New Jaffna school...

After ten years of incredible dedication and hard graft, the staff at the Paalam project, a school we support in Wattala, Sri Lanka, are set to open a second school in Jaffna in the north of the country. In April this year 29 new members of staff were trained up ready for the school's opening in September 2013.

Bridget Boulton, a trainer from Swindon, gives her account of the Sri Lankan people and what she found there.

“There are obvious things like the gorgeous bright colours and the dignity of the ladies wearing their fine array and the sweltering heat that moistens your mouth and eyes. Then there are the more peculiar things, like the toothless, funny, little man who took us on a guided tour for a hour or so and was so deaf that no amount of animated yelling could extract an answer to our questions... And then the surprising; endless stories of people looking so adjusted and integrated,

only to find out that they have been rescued from the horrors of poverty, abandonment and war. And now their lives are bearing stable fruit into the next generation, rebuilding the possibilities for wholeness and freedom in life. Within the obvious to the surprising there are so many lessons to learn about giving – not just the easy spare change but the substance of time and effort that we seem to have missed.

Are the young people in Paalam International School and Children's Home poor? I am not so sure. I would think that they are rich indeed!”

Huge thanks to ...



Matrix kitchens in Knightsbridge have auctioned a kitchen and given all the proceeds (£4,500) to the new Palaam school in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. We would like to say a big thank you to Matrix Kitchens for their generous donation. Visit their website at www.matrixkitchens.co.uk

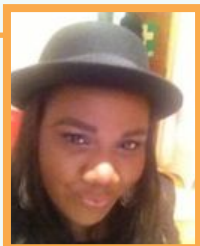


New Staff...



Rochelle

Rochelle is a Sociology graduate who is about to begin a social work masters degree.



She has replaced our primary social worker, Blair Mortimer, who moved on to Camden social services after eight dedicated years with PCC. She works with manager Joy Ezzine-Stennett and Miri Burnett in the Foster Care department. Previously, she worked for Connexions on their Young Peoples' Partnership Board. During her five years there, she vetted the activities and events Connexions funded, a role she describes as being like a "mystery shopper".

"I am enjoying my new role at PCC and learning so much. The whole team has been really supportive and encouraging and it's been really nice getting to know the carers and their children."

Miri

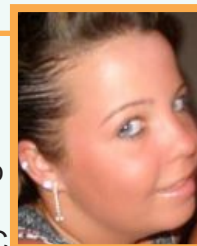
Miri joined the charity in June 2012 and is a trained social worker. She currently divides her time between Foster Care and key working with some of the under-18 clients. She is also helping to devise a drama piece around the issues of asylum with the children at Phoenix Academy.



"It is a fantastic opportunity to see both sides of the coin; children in care and young people moving on to independent living. I hope that being able to draw on the young adults' experiences will help us to remember the long term needs of children in care and how best to prepare them for the future ahead."

Lauren

Lauren is a social work graduate who first experienced the delights of PCC in 2012 working alongside Gena Areola at LTC. She decided to return in March this year to replace the former key worker for the over-18 clients living in PCC houses.



"I work alongside Carla Mayer key working with young people in the supported housing we provide. On the whole, my role is to make weekly contact with the clients in the housing, to encourage integration into the community, to attend appointments with them and offer them any support or guidance they may need."

No autographs please...

She may not be taking interviews at the moment (and we did try to get one!), but Malala Yousafzai is still inspiring people globally to stand up to injustice. We wanted to honour her courage and her fight for children's education in disadvantaged nations, a cause that is close to our heart. Malala we salute you!



PCC in da Haus....

Indie rock group **Haus** have been on the scene for a wee while now and PCC are very honoured to be sponsoring their first EP 'Bless'!



Look out for 'Bless' updates on twitter @haus_band or www.facebook.com/hausociety



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

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