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Dear Friends

In our wish list was a truck, it would not only save us costs transporting building materials, but would also help once the school was opened. And here it is!



When we worked in the refugee camps in Uganda many years ago, we got to know one of the UNHCR truck drivers very well. And Joseph met him after all these years in Juba! He helped vetting the second-hand truck, helped with paperwork, and saved Joseph a trip (and the money!) to Uganda where we had planned to look for a good truck. Wonderful!

Thank you for your generous donations, you have helped us make it possible that the school is about to open. We now have the main buildings, we can employ the teachers and other staff, and we can register the pupils.

The school, named after Joseph's father – the first ever head teacher in Malek – will open at the beginning of April. We are planning a formal opening ceremony, with lots of local people and visitors from England and Switzerland, for the second half of April.

We have been planning the school for so long that it is hard to believe it is actually about to open. But now we can see the eight classrooms, the teachers' offices, the borehole for water, toilet blocks, and the twelve accommodation huts for teachers and visitors. Joseph has been selecting a head teacher, and an administrator, and he will be appointing teachers, male and female. Some of them have been teaching in our school under the trees.

In March he will be registering girls from Malek ready for the first school day. When the school is full it will have eight classes each of 35 girls. He will be selecting girls

aged from 6 years old up to about 11, and they can stay at the school till they are 15. Initially he will not register the full number of 280, because we want to leave room for new girls to come in each year.

Most of the girls will have had little or no education. They will be taught the new Southern Sudanese primary school curriculum, including reading and writing in English and their native Dinka, possibly Arabic as well as arithmetic and subjects such as science. They will start school at about 8 o'clock and finish at 2pm after a lunch provided in the school.

We want to be able to teach them vocational subjects as well, including agriculture and sewing, and hygiene. And we want to be able to start adult education also, using the buildings in the afternoons.

We are very pleased that some of our donors and those involved in the project from Switzerland and England will be able to join the formal opening ceremonies for the school in the latter half of April. They should be able to bring back lots of photographs of the girls and community, their town of Malek, and we will share these with you. Their personal experiences of the school and the town will be the start of our plans to build a continuing relationship between our communities and Malek.

We still have more to do of course. We will need continuing funds to provide the salaries and the equipment to keep the school running, and to provide for effective satellite communication links between the school and ourselves. And there are more buildings to provide: more toilets, a building for the library, the chapel is half built and that needs to be finished, and we need basketball courts and a running track.

Would you be able to help us with these steps?

Is there a school or church you have contacts with who would be interested in knowing of our school? We can offer a flow of information and a visit to talk about the school.

If you could offer a regular donation this would help us to be sure that we had a future flow of funds to pay the regular costs of running a school. A one-off donation would help us with the costs of the remaining construction work. If you pay tax, we can get the additional benefit of the Government's Gift Aid tax refund.

Finally, we now have a new website, for which we are grateful to Daniel Ammann in Switzerland. Click on to www.under-tree-schools.org and see what's there. It's full of useful information.

And of course please ask us anything you would like to know.

On behalf of the community in Malek, many thanks for your interest and support!

God's blessings

Karin and Joseph Ayok-Loewenberg

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