

HELPING ALL WE CAN...ONE AT A TIME.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Deanna Wallace
AAO Executive Director

We are all so grateful for the wonderful support you've given as we've been dealing with the aftermath of the horrific mudslides and flooding in Freetown last month. The rebuilding and relief efforts will be ongoing for a long time to come, but the children we care for, and our staff, are safe and working to help make things better. Thank you so very much!

It seems, however, that just when we begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel for one crisis, another one looms. As usual, lately, we are lean on our regular operating funds, and don't have the capacity for extra expenses that are now pressing. Many of our children are getting ready to go back to school, like **Mary**, age 14, who is featured here. **Although we have a Pre-K through 6th grade, accredited school on grounds, we also have older children who are in junior and senior high school, and attend a school off-grounds. That means we have to pay for tuition, uniforms, and a myriad of other expenses, such as school supplies and books. Mary needs \$400 for her school expenses now, and there are 24 more like Mary, who need your help.** Mary says she wants to become a lawyer, someday. Please help keep her dream alive!

If you can cover some or all of the \$400 for a child's education, I'll be happy to send you a photo and information about the child you're helping. It will make all the difference in the children's lives and futures!

As always, thank you for making our work possible. You are appreciated more than you know.



Thanks to our first time donors in August 2017:

Branko & Zdenka Grunbaum - Diane Thom - Gitte Zweig - Linda Gould - Michael McGovern - Middleshmertz, Inc. - R S Thomas
Robert & Susan Adriance - Ruth McCormick - Skye Greig - Yoon-Whan Shoe

Thanks to those who gave over \$500 in August 2017:

Al & Polly Roberts - Anis Hassan - Dave & Jen Brauer - Mike James & Majken Ryherd - Mark & Heather Farrell
Sharon Beecham - Stephanie Davis - Zaid Gardner & Claire Molloy

And thank you to our regular monthly supporters, who make our work possible!

SWEET REUNION!

Billy Daly and **Selina Smyth** adopted **Nahla** from the AAO in 2009. In early August of 2017, before the flooding, they brought Nahla back to see where she came from and some of her old friends and caregivers. The Daly-Smyth family (Billy, Selina and 4 children) and their extended family made the trip. As always, their generosity was profound, and so greatly appreciated by the kids and staff! Here are some excerpts from Selina's note to us:

We are finally home after a bit of a whirlwind journey. Firstly, thank you so much to Bockarie and the team for making us so welcome. It was so special to walk back through those doors with Nahla, and she just had the best time ever.

As we walked through the gates, all the kids were waiting for us and Nahla just broke down with emotion. She was very overwhelmed (in a happy way) and took a few minutes to take it all in. Within 10 minutes, she was beaming with smiles and so happy to be back. She went round everyone and chatted and shared her story with those that remembered her. It was an honour to meet some of the aunties that remembered her so well, and she was really pleased to be reunited with Francis (Frankie) who I explained was her best friend for the time she was there. (We have such fond memories of him playing with her and us when we were there for those few weeks the first time we came out).

We handed out loads and loads of toys, football kits, shoes, clothes and thousands of sweets and treats, and every kid ended up with bags of stuff that they were very pleased with. Nahla sat and made loom band bracelets with them all, and the boys were in their element playing football with us all. Our son Logan didn't want to leave as he was loving his time with the boys. We spent most of the day at the centre and then came back the next day. All the kids had made us bracelets and drawn pictures to say thank you. We also purchased new bedding for all the beds which we gave to Bockarie, and the smiles say it all, really.

Bockarie was amazing, and brought Sia [AAO's nurse] to the hotel to meet Nahla before she left with Billy to join me back at Lungi for our flight home. This was really special, and I know for Nahla was one of her highlights, as I have told her so many stories about how Sia looked after her in those early days.

My mum, brothers and Aunty also joined us on the trip (as well as our other children), and for everyone, it was just amazing to share this with Nahla.

All in all, an amazing trip, and we will definitely be back again one day. For Nahla, it really has helped her answer many questions and thoughts she's had in her head about where she came from, and I know she has come away with a sense of peace and closure for her early days.





★ THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT 5 ★

The Kids Are Alright 5 was held in Oxford, on the 1st of July, in aid of All As One UK and another children's charity in Oxford. Our very own **Ettaline Hill** did another wonderful job of organizing the event, with the help of her co-director, **Anthony Kelly** (from The Shapes). Here's what Ettaline had to say about the evening:

CHASING DAYLIGHT



We had a great night! There was a lovely BBQ and raffle. And the following bands played for free to help us raise funds for the kids:

Soul Devotion
Chasing Daylight
The Shapes
Loud Mountains
The August List
The Deadbeat Apostles
Les Clochards
TP@ Woodman
Waterfahl

The event raised around **£2,000** for AAO. It was a fantastic effort by all concerned!

Thank you to all who donated their time and talent to make the night a great success!

SOUL DEVOTION



THE SHAPES

