



Stevenage – Kadoma Link Association

SPRING/SUMMER 2007 Newsletter

www.skla.org

Welcome to the Spring/Summer Edition of the Stevenage-Kadoma Link Association newsletter. Since the last newsletter there has been a visit to Kadoma by a small group from Cornerstone and the SKLA Zimbabwe Celebration Day (see report below).

Cornerstone are currently planning a trip to Kadoma in August to celebrate 10 years since their first visit. Watch out for a report and photos in the Autumn edition of the newsletter!

Zimbabwe Celebration Day – Saturday 14th April 2007 (a report from Jan Addison, SKLA Chairperson)

If you believe everything you read, the chances are you would imagine there's nothing about Zimbabwe worth celebrating..... that's not how it was on Saturday 14th April at Grace Community Church, Stevenage, where nearly 70 guests were celebrating Zimbabwe's music, dance and traditional food, and the dynamic spirit of the people!



The celebration was planned by a party from the Stevenage-Kadoma Link together with Zimbabweans living locally, and the day was superb! A gospel choir had people up and dancing - everyone who had either visited Kadoma or who was from Zimbabwe themselves was transported to Zimbabwe in a second, by the sound and the vibrancy of the singing!

We had a contemporary Zimbabwean band (see photo to the right), and at very short notice we were provided with an African fashion show - national costumes from Zimbabwe, the Gambia and Ghana were shown off by both men and women, young and not so young, able commented on by one of the visiting ladies.



We had a wonderful array of Zimbabwean food dishes for everyone to try, including sadza (the staple food of Zimbabwe made from maize flour) okra, rice mixed with peanut butter, beef stew, pigs' trotters, tiny fishes called "kapenta" and even an African delicacy of cooked caterpillars! Liquid refreshment was supplied by the Cornerstone

Bar - amazing alcohol-free cocktails were served by youth leaders from the Stevenage inter-church youth group, Cornerstone, newly back from a short trip to Zimbabwe.





The Deputy Mayor John Lloyd and his wife came to the event where they had the chance to chat with people and enjoy the atmosphere (see photo to the left).

Almost 70 people came on the day, most Zimbabwean, and comments from Zimbabwean guests have been very supportive of the day, including this e-mail –

"Hie guyz. I would like to express my gratitude for your support to my country. I thank you very much for inviting us to ZIMCELEBRATION last Saturday, we had a wonderful time & to be honest I will put all my effort to support any plans you have for the two cities."

Stevenage has been officially twinned with Kadoma since 1989, and the Stevenage-Kadoma Link has been very much a peoples' link. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people from both Stevenage and Kadoma, from all walks of life, who have made the Link what it is – about friendships. Some are friends because of shared livelihoods such as fire fighters, librarians, teachers, actors and musicians, some launching lasting friendships when hosting visitors, either in Kadoma or Stevenage. Many young people have travelled to each others country, learning first-hand about the sameness we share as well as our different cultures.

Thank you, all the people of Stevenage who provide the means for the Link to support nearly 400 children with school fees - children who would otherwise have no chance of an education. Also thank you for the help given to support the many other projects undertaken between the two towns.

Visit our website at www.skla.org. If you would like to become a school fees supporter, contact Pat Akhurst on 01438 235853, Jan Addison on 01462 623148 or the Newsletter editor Nicola Hughes on 01438 743425 for more information.

Partnership Schools

(a report by Pat Akhurst)



Several Stevenage schools have built up a link with a school in Kadoma over the years. Now, with the 3-year grant from DfID that we were awarded last year we can offer proper support and have been able to interest more schools in joining us.

How does it work with all the current problems in Zimbabwe? Well, from the start it was agreed that schools in Stevenage would not be expected to fund-raise for their partners in Kadoma. (The school-fees project is run quite separately). The idea behind these partnerships is to give young people in both towns a chance to learn about growing up in another country. The schools exchange examples of typical school-work, photos, poems, essays, jokes, music tapes, school magazines, reports on matches, outings etc to be shared by their counterpart. It is interesting how similar topics are

discussed despite their different backgrounds and how the same jokes go down well at both ends!

At present we have to rely on the occasional visitors to act as couriers because postage is prohibitive in Zimbabwe and we are very grateful to all those people who add to their baggage allowance for the schools. Jan Addison learnt just how important these school links are when she was in Kadoma last year and teachers mentioned how it uplifted them and their students to know that they had friends elsewhere.

How does it benefit our students? All schools have some form of social education as part of the National Curriculum and having "inside" knowledge of life in a developing country gives them a better understanding of many of the issues facing the world today. The next G8 summit is in June and we still have a long way to go to achieve the Millennium goals so today's young people will be involved in implementing them in the future. We hope that being partnered will give them an insight into the problems faced by the developing world and how people are trying to cope with them.

If you are connected in any way to a local school, why not ask if they have a partner? We are always happy to go and talk about what it entails. In 2007 we have welcomed Gravely Primary, Marriotts Secondary and Barnwell Secondary as new partners. Please contact Pat Akhurst (01438 235853) if you are interested.

Stevenage Day – Sunday 10th June

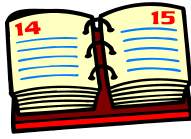
Please come and say hello to the SKLA at Stevenage Day on Sunday 10th June. The event is being held at the King George playing fields in Stevenage and it starts at 1pm. We'll be there with photographs of recent visits, information on school partnerships, plants, preserves, badges, CDs, crochet from Kadoma and much more.

We're always keen to meet people who are interested in the Link or simply love Zimbabwe - so come and introduce yourself!

NB. All proceeds from the day taken at our stall go directly towards projects in Kadoma.



Dates for your diary



Tuesday 19th June 2007 Link Committee Meeting: Will be held at 7.30pm in Daneshill House, Stevenage. All welcome.

Wednesday 14th July 2007 Link Committee Meeting: Will be held at 7.30pm in Daneshill House, Stevenage. All welcome.

Thursday 20th September 2007 AGM: Will be held at 7.30pm in Daneshill House, Stevenage. We do hope that you will be able to attend our AGM this year. It's a great opportunity to hear what the SKLA have been up to during the year. Please put it in your diaries now!

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If you wish to be removed from the Newsletter mailing list, please let me know either by mail (Nicola Hughes, 3 Chouler Gardens, Stevenage, Herts SG1 4TB) or via email on the address above.