

## News for Friends of Fusi Secondary School in Lesotho



The picture above was taken at the formal handing over of the keys of the new buildings donated by the Japanese government. After many months of building activity, there was great excitement as the school officially took over the buildings, in good time for the start of the new school year in January. Read more inside.

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Elizabeth Dunford worked as a volunteer at the school throughout 2009 and 2010. She is pictured here with the school's teachers during her return visit in September this year. She is wearing a seshoeshoe, Basotho traditional dress which is still commonly worn. The school's Principal is bottom right.

# A Very Personal Visit

## September 2012

When I left Lesotho in December 2010, I knew I would return sometime. Lesotho has a special place in my heart, and a small part of me will always be in Lesotho. I planned to return to Fusi school within two years, so that the students I had taught in Form A would still be at the school, albeit in their final year (Form C) and preparing for their Junior Certificate examinations.

As soon as we drove across the border from South Africa and saw the herd boys wrapped in their blankets we knew we were nearly “home”. We were welcomed by old friends on St Agnes Mission at Teyateyaneng and given the keys to the little house which was to be our home for a couple of weeks. We soon settled into the simple way of life, reminding



ourselves that having no water or sanitation in the house was the permanent way of life for all the villagers in Ha Fusi.

After a day of settling in, we made our way along familiar

roads to Fusi Secondary School trying to avoid potholes and hoping that Avis wouldn't be checking the underneath of our car when we returned it! As soon as we reached the Palace Hotel we saw the new school sign confirming it as an officially registered school – my heart gave a little leap for joy – and as we turned off the road we could see the school across the fields. What a difference! In 2010, we had left behind a classroom block, office and some toilets. Now, we could see what was clearly a whole school complex of buildings. As we got nearer, we became more excited at the sight ahead of us. There were blocks of classrooms, houses, more toilets, and the whole place seemed to be buzzing with

workmen putting the finishing touches to the buildings so kindly donated by the Japanese government. Eventually we reached the gates and were surrounded by crowds of cheering students welcoming us to the school.

I was so happy to be back. The Principal immediately called for an impromptu assembly and I was able to speak to the children – so many of them – and also give each of them a pen and a pencil kindly donated by students from Nottingham Girls' High School.



I spent several days at the school. “Give me a job to do” I said to the principal. He soon had me sorting out the library books in their new home – no longer a squashed corner of the staff room, but a classroom to be shared with computers. How much more accessible to the students they will be. At break times, students turned up to help me, but were so often distracted by the books that they spent more time reading



than carrying – brilliant!

We only stayed a couple of weeks and it was soon time to say goodbye. We had a special farewell assembly and the students sang and danced especially for me. In my speech, I said I would not say “Goodbye” but “Au Revoir”, as the French say “Until we meet again”

Elizabeth Dunford

## Not an Empty Laboratory

It is all very well to have a beautiful Science Laboratory, but with no equipment there can be no experiments and you might as well not have a laboratory at all.

While we were considering how we could solve this problem, David Dunford met Dr Jack Mulder of SACDT (Southern Africa Church Development Trust). Dr Mulder showed an interest in the work done at Ha Fusi and suggested that we apply for a grant. SACDT were kind enough to donate £1500 to the school for the purchase of equipment for the laboratory. Needless to say, Mr Ernest, the Science teacher is ecstatic and is scouring the equipment catalogues for his big spending spree. Dr Mulder is hoping to visit the school in February 2013, so we look forward to seeing the new laboratory fully in action by then.



# Japan Delivers Its Promise - and More ...



Two years ago, after various inspections, meetings, questions and general diplomatic bureaucracy, the Japanese government chose Fusi as one of its recipient schools for a major building programme. A few months later, Japan suffered the devastating tsunami and we held our breath, but Japan never wavered in fulfilling its promise.

Building work began early in 2012 and has continued throughout the year. The Fusi school site is very rocky (hence its availability as it is unfit for cultivation) so pneumatic drills were the first sign of the construction work that was to be a feature of school life for many months. Gradually, buildings began to rise from the foundations and the campus began to look more and more like a well-appointed school.



The original promise had been for seven classrooms and probably a Science laboratory. Imagine our delight, when we were told that, as well as these wonderful gifts, the school would get two staff houses (popular with teachers but also

providing better security on the site), two more toilet blocks (the present ones are already inadequate for the number of



students on site) and a water tower to provide a constant water supply. Wow!



The buildings are now complete and, as can be seen from the photos, are built to a high standard, providing an environment conducive to learning. The teachers houses are so well appointed they are probably the best in the village – there is already a queue in the staffroom. The Science lab is fitted with water and gas supplies.

The water tower was built on condition that the old hand pump was replaced by an electric pump to fill the tank each day. At the moment, the school generator is doing the job.

With the school roll increasing, and all these wonderful new buildings and facilities, Fusi Secondary School looks like a “proper” school and is bound to attract even more students in the future.



Thank you, Japan.

# What the Future Holds

Ntate Ramaqele, the school Principal, is not the sort of person to sit back and live in a comfort zone; he still has plans for the school's development.

## Computers

In September, he managed to persuade the Lesotho Government to choose Fusi as one of its schools for computer development. This promises a donation of a computer network with twenty new desktop computers, two servers and a projector, as well as a paid teacher to teach computer skills to the students. The students were very excited when they were told of this plan.

## Mains Electricity

The one condition of the government is that there is a mains electricity supply to the school. At the moment, the school has only a generator. Providing electricity is a major task, as it will have to be brought all the way from the main road, a couple of miles away and an estimate of £20,000 has been given. However, this would make a supply to the village a realistic goal and this would improve the lives of the villagers enormously. So a benefit to the school could lead to a benefit for the whole community.

## Water

The water supply is also proving to be inadequate for the needs of a larger school, especially in the dry season when the bore hole begins to dry out. The principal would like to pipe water down from the springs in the cliffs overlooking the school. We said he is ambitious, but he knows exactly how it can be done as it is a standard water solution in nearby villages.

## Teachers' Salaries

The main expense of the school is still teachers' salaries. The Lesotho government is now paying the Principal and two teachers. It has promised to pay the other three teachers from January 2013. We have heard this promise before, but it is a new government (a coalition elected in May 2012) and we hope that the promise will be honoured.

## Supporting Students

Now that the school is established, but still only teaching children to Form C, we have been aware of very promising students who need support if they are to continue their schooling to High School and hopefully to university. To enable this to happen, a committee of responsible local people has been established and its remit is to oversee grants to suitable students who wish to further their education. The finances will be carefully monitored and students' progress will be followed. This should be a very exciting project providing opportunities which were only a dream a few years ago.

## High School

But what else can the future bring for Fusi Secondary School? At the moment students who want to continue their studies after Junior Certificate have to travel elsewhere to attend a High School - with all the travelling expenses that entails. However, now that Fusi has all these extra classrooms - and providing the government comes up with the promised grants to pay teachers' salaries - it is ideally placed to become a High School itself. The Principal has this goal firmly in his sights.



**Donation to Rafiki Thabo Foundation (registered charity number 1118430)  
for the support of Fusi Secondary School in Lesotho**

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