

Newsletter

A-Z Children's Charity

www.azchildrenscharity.org

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Welcome to the third edition of the **A-Z Children's Charity** newsletter.

The aim of this short and simple newsletter is to keep A - Z supporters informed about all ongoing activities in Ireland and Uganda, and of upcoming events that might be of interest.

If you have anything that you would like to feature in the future, a fundraising idea or event, or want more information contact info@azchildrenscharity.org or lisanicole.dunne@gmail.com. The aim is that this will be a quarterly update. If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, just drop us a line too.

A great night's work? Hard to call it work when it was so much fun!

A - Z Children's Charity Ball was a huge success

The A - Z Charity Ball at the Hilton Hotel, Malahide Road, was a great success. More than 185 people showed up in style for the lavish ball on May 25, and between this group and other generous contributions over €16,000 profit was made.

without which the great work carried out in Uganda, would not be possible.

Check out

www.azcharityball.blogspot.com for more info and photos of the ball.

Every girl's dream, the custom made shoes prize achieved €1200 at Auction, and the lucky recipient of the prize Elaine Foley (treated by partner Richard McDermott) was the envy of all the female guests.

The U2 caricature donated by Niall O'Loughlin also achieved a fantastic €1000, and Shay Hannon has this in his pride of place now.

In addition to all the generous bids made by attendees, a phenomenal €4250 was raised by raffle donations. This is astounding as everyone had already contributed greatly with their ticket purchase and attendance. Thank you so much to everyone for your generosity,



A special thanks to the entertainment on the night, Kim and Brian (pictured), Rock-a-Hula Baby with Grainne Brookfield, DJ Steve O (provided by Hugh Scully). Also special thanks to Jenny Buckley, for all her support and to all contributors.



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The 4 Peaks in 48 hours Challenge



How do you get 20 people to climb the highest mountain in each of the 4 provinces in 48 hours? That was the question that JP Canning, (The 4 Peaks Coordinator) and Brian Iredale, were asking each other. They knew Focus Ireland did it in 72 hours, so was it possible to do it in less time? They hired a 30-seated bus for the challenge, as this would create a good atmosphere amongst the group.

The challengers came in all shapes and from varying backgrounds. The group included 3 nurses, 2 accountants, 4 bankers, 1 archaeologist, 1 engineer and 1 social worker. Luck had to be on their side and everybody would have to be on their toes for the whole weekend as time would be against them all the way. The AA route planner informed them that the bus Journey between Mweelrea in Mayo and Slieve Donard in Down was 6 hours. This, along with weekend traffic meant that if the bus journey was delayed in any way they would not be able to complete the challenge. Also, if any of the group were particularly slow the rest of the group would have to wait for them as we had only one mode of transport.

By chance one of the challengers, Bridi Mc Hugh got a contact number for the Air Corps a few weeks before the challenge. A request was put in writing to them. With only three days to go before the challenge, they called and asked a load of questions. The day before the challenge was to begin they confirmed that they could give a one helicopter ride between Mweelrea and

Slieve Donard. This could not have been timed any better as it meant that the slowest eight people of the group could get on the chopper while the others left by bus.

Donagh Richardson of Phoenix Maintenance was support driver. He was driving his Land rover Defender with 12 Foot trailer in tow. He had brought everything you could ever need for a weekend away with 20 people. In the trailer was the following: - 80 Litres of stew and beans cooked by Michelle Ryan, 90 litres of drinking water donated by Tipperary Water, 160 chocolate bars donated by Cadbury's. 1 crate of apples, one crate of oranges and one crate of bananas donated by Sea View Wholesalers. Donagh also had a generator and two gas stoves to cook the food. He also brought water, teabags, cutlery, cups, plates, tables, chairs and everything else necessary for a slap up meal!

The group left Dublin on Friday evening of the May Bank Holiday Weekend and arrived in Killarney late, only to be greeted by the annual boy-racer festival!

They pottered about the next morning, having a cuppa and saying a few prayers! They then headed out to the foot of Carantouhill, where the challenge began at 1pm on Saturday:

Continued on the next page...



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Over €14,000 was raised in total from this challenge... A big thanks to all involved.



Brian's Diary of the Climb:

Hours 1 - 6.5 Climb number 1 - *Carantouhill*. It quickly transpired that there were varying degrees of fitness; a quick group and a more realistic group (based on age, etc.). Funnily enough I was in the latter group. It was only when we got to the top of the mountain that we broke it to the slow group that they would be getting the chopper tomorrow. Needless to say they were delighted. At the foot of the mountain, Donagh had the table set-up with stew, fruit, teas and coffee, which we enjoyed after each mountain.

Hours 6.5 - 12.5 Drove from Kerry to Mayo, arriving in Delphi adventure centre at 1.30am.

Hours 12.5 - 17.5 Slept

Hours 17.5 - 19 Breakfast and drove to Silver Strand to start the climb

Hours 19 - 22.25 Climb number 2 - *Mweelrea*. Weather awful and by far the hardest of the 4 climbs.

Hours 22.25 - 23 Snack and change

Hours 23.25 - 24.5 Helicopter across Ireland, arriving in the Slieve Donard hotel, beside Royal Co. Down. Great craic! A few idiots were taking photographs, thinking we were famous; only to be greeted by a group of hikers with walking poles intact.

Hours 24.5 - 26 A light snack and went to Slieve Donard car park

Hours 26 - 30.5 Climb number 3 - *Slieve Donard*. A climb that goes up gruelling steps at the end of it. Completed in 4 hours forty minutes! As we were coming down we were greeted with what can only be described as a pack of wolves charging up the hill. Unfortunately the bus driver had relied on his satellite navigation system too much and had taken one too many turns for the fast groups liking. They did not stop for pleasantries but cursed the bus drivers name as they stormed by. The bus driver had taken 7 hours and 20 minutes for the journey. As a result the fast group only started the climb at 18.50. This meant they would surely be doing some of the climb in the dark, as it got dark at 21.20. At 20.50 I rang Bridi to let Donagh and I know when they got to the top. I nearly dropped the phone when she told me she was nearly back down! The whole group had practically run up the mountain and back down. As a result they all did it before darkness descended. They did it in exactly half the time of the slow group, an amazing feat.

Hours 30.5 - 33.5 Change and fed

Hours 33.5 - 38.5 Drove from Newcastle, Co. Down to Glendalough Hostel (arrived at 3.30am)

Hours 38.5 - 42.75 Slept

Hours 42.75 - 44.25 Light breakfast and travel to Glenmalur

Hours 44.25 - 47.93 Climb number 4, *Lugnaquilla*, completed by the full group with 4 minutes to spare. Should have been a lot better but we got lost in the mist on the peak and headed off in the wrong direction..... *Challenge completed!*

If this is something that would interest you for next year, register your interest with Brian info@azchildrenscharity.org



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The things we take for granted... Establishing a new reading culture beyond Nansana

Meabh Galavan returned to Nansana this Summer with A – Z. This was her second year working in the school and on other projects. Speaking with Meabh on how things are going in Uganda this time around, here is some of her comments...

Our biggest contribution to date this year is the introduction of a school library at jet valley and the establishment of a reading policy.

Books are very expensive so the school does not have a policy on reading. Whilst A-Z has a library, it is too far from Jet Valley for the children to walk to. The teachers have therefore organised that Jet Valley receive a box of books on a weekly/fortnightly basis. To help develop a library there, A – Z teachers in Nansana are providing Jet Valley with their own set of books. The aim is to have 30 readers per stream initially and this is definitely something that will be continued in the future, growing this reading culture.

Updates from the Summer Volunteers



Special Feature: News from A – Z Uganda

By James Kimbowa



A-Z hosts 30 Irish volunteers in Uganda –

The experience on Uganda community projects has a lasting memory for the hosts and the Irish volunteers involved in the A-Z Children's Charity volunteer projects.

- This has been my first project that I really feel accomplished and believe will benefit many children in the community here, says Caitriona Bergin, as she smiled at the swings, goal posts and volley ball poles she had worked on during her three week volunteer project in Uganda.

Together with another Irish volunteer, Niamh Houlihan they were involved in setting up a mini play ground at the A-Z Children's Charity Library premises. The volunteers simply used timber from the A-Z land, old car tyres and sand to change what was bush into a play ground. The Library is located in Nansana, 6 miles from Kampala city. Nansana has a population of over 100,000 people but does not have any community children's play ground. The football pitches available belong to schools and religious institutions, this restricts children on times to play on them.





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For A-Z the idea is to provide a child friendly environment and a play ground which can also attract more children to using the library facilities that have been established. The reading culture in Uganda is quite low, due to a history of not having many people accessing education, the study curriculum not encouraging a



reading culture after school and reading material being expensive for most families.

Uganda which has a population of about 27 million people has 21 government recognized public libraries in major urban centres and 7 community libraries in the rural areas. These are open to the general public the rest are private or institutional libraries which are normally not open to the public.

A-Z Children's Charity in the 2007 summer hosted 30 Irish volunteers who worked on different community projects which include two health centres, four primary schools, the A-Z Community library and farm projects. This is an opportunity for the Irish volunteer to share their experience and potential with the Ugandan community. While for the Ugandan hosts as they share their experience they also learn new alternatives of working on their projects. The exchange also gives Irish Volunteers an opportunity to experience the daily life in Uganda and in the long run both groups grow to appreciate what they have. One of the culture shocks for the Irish people is the presence of security personal with guns in banks, supermarkets, pay phone companies, on the streets and in some homes. But at the end all volunteers had some experience and good memories to bring back home.

For the Ugandan hosts they all look forward to having other Irish volunteers next year.

- All four schools have shown interest to host more volunteers in 2008, this is mainly due to a harmonious integration of the teaching methods the Irish volunteers used in teaching physical education, art and English. Also two other schools are applying for volunteers says Deborah Sheeran 2007 coordinator of the volunteer teachers.



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Want to join a great team and do something really fulfilling?

A - Z are still looking for more fundraisers, sponsorship managers and assistants with lots of different areas...

You may not even realise what you can offer, and even 2 hours a week can make a major difference.

If you think this is something that might interest you, please contact ...

See for yourself...

This Summer Niall O'Driscoll headed out to Uganda to film some more about the A - Z activities there. Check out the new video footage on A - Z Children's Charity Website, to see the difference that is being made there in a number of ways.

Plus check back for more photos and news that will be available shortly.

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Charity of the Month...

Over the past few months A - Z Children's Charity has received media attention, with Brian appearing on Ireland AM, TV3, and featuring in Irish Tatler as the Charity of the Month. There was also a lot of coverage around the Ball. If you have media contacts and think you might be able to help get the A - Z name even better known, please contact Lisa-Nicole on lisanicole.dunne@gmail.com

**In the next edition:
The Summer Volunteer Diaries**

Upcoming Events

A - Z in the news...

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