

Reaching Out



*Peace, Health & Happiness
this Christmas to our many
Generous Supporters*



Peace at Christmas

We look forward to Christmas. As children was it the thrill of unwrapping presents and the family celebrations? As we grew older was it also the hope of relief from the year's work and the promise of holidays? The star of Bethlehem over the Christmas tree is a symbol that gives me still a special lift.

That hope is what our partners in the work of the Foundation bring to so many less privileged. Thousands in developing countries can access health support as a result of your generosity. The provision of education is central to giving the means to communities to develop the capacity to lift themselves from poverty and hopelessness. The Foundation with your support does this for very many in different parts of Africa and Oceania

It is in giving that we receive. Let me express on behalf of our less privileged brothers and sisters deep gratitude for your ongoing generosity throughout 2011. May the blessings of Christmas be many for you and your families.

Bill Wilding cfc
ERF Board Chair

Edmund Rice Services – Philippines

Br John Moodie shares with us the story of Anna Rose in Kabankalan City.

Anna Rose was the first pupil to arrive at the Edmund Rice Learning Centre in November 2007. She was 7 years old with an intellectually and physically disabled brother 11, a 4 year old brother and a one year old sister. Her father laboured on construction sites. Mother looked after home in a 'squatter' area.

We were gathering from the squatter areas children who had 'dropped-out' of formal school with a view to tutoring them and enrolling them again. The reasons for dropping out are varied but all related to poverty. On those occasions when mum managed to get a job, Anna Rose had to stay home to mind the other children.

However, her mother agreed she could

enrol. She proved to be a very diligent student and was accepted back to formal school with the Brothers taking up all expenses. Anna Rose's mother had given birth to another boy. Just twelve months later she died at age 38 leaving Anna Rose mother at 10 years of age.

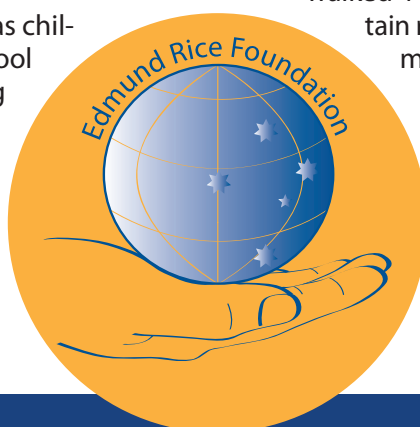


Anna Rose and family outside their home

Her father decided to move to the mountains where his mother lived, who would drop by occasionally to check on things, but Anna Rose was in charge and still is. Her father returns home once or twice a week.

Each morning Anna Rose prepares breakfast and lunch for the children. The elder boy 15, little sister 4 and baby now 2 remain in the house until the other brother 8, returns from a local school and Anna Rose returns about 5pm, having walked 4 kilometres to and from school over a mountain road, rain or shine. She prepares the evening meal, spends time with them, especially the baby, and gets them all to bed.

After one of our school visits we walked to our car and Anna Rose followed with another girl. She introduced her. "This is Apple, my classmate, she cannot read the board. Would you be able help her?"



Mary Rice Centre – Kenya

The Mary Rice Day Care Centre (Nairobi) assists children with physical and intellectual disabilities living in the Kibera slum. Following, is a typical story.

David

David, the eldest in a family of three, was born into poverty in rural Kenya. His father was charged with robbery with violence and has been in jail for 8 years, leaving David's mother with 3 young children and David with cerebral palsy.

Struggling to survive, the family moved to Nairobi. At the same time they were under pressure from the father's family to return to their village and live with their in-laws. This proved untenable on account of David's condition so the difficult decision was made to return to Nairobi in search of support for David.



David with friends at Mary Rice Centre

On returning to Nairobi David's mother learned of the Mary Rice Centre where David was accepted. It was an enormous relief that David could participate in programs with other children and be involved in therapy free of charge. Nevertheless, the struggle to pay rent and buy food remained. Eventually, she managed to find a job. However, this meant carrying David to the Mary Rice Centre and then walking almost 13 km to her place of work, where

she was paid 2000 Kenyan Shillings (about \$20 AUD) per month. Her employer halved her wages because she was reporting late for work and leaving early to collect David. By this time David's grandmother had moved in with the family. In order to support her daughter and grandchildren the elderly lady took on work as a laundry woman. Recently, David's mother obtained employment with the Christian Brothers. She continues to visit her husband and lives in hope that one day the family will be reunited.

The Callan Club

On the 1st of December, 150 past students of Christian Brother's Queensland Schools will gather for the inaugural meeting of the Callan Club. The purpose of the Callan Club is to build the profile and the fundraising capabilities of the Edmund Rice Foundation. Each of the 150 past students has committed to finding at least 5 other past students to become regular monthly donors to the Edmund Rice Foundation. Eventually, we hope to establish Callan Clubs throughout Australia.



Public Relations & Marketing Centre - Ruben

Ruben Centre – Nairobi, Kenya

24,000 clients attended Ruben Clinic in the first half of 2011. New services added are ultra sound testing, occupational therapy and cervical cancer screening and a purpose built computer program is helping to deliver and monitor all activities at the clinic. Since the new clinic was built by the Edmund Rice Foundation, Ruben Centre has been in partnership with MEDS (Mission for Essential Drugs Supply) set up by the Catholic Church to provide essential drugs.

A recent initiative has been the opening of a Public Relations and Marketing Centre. A young woman named Roda has been employed to interface Ruben Centre with the local community and industries. Products of the Anti-Child Labour Women's Group and garments/uniforms made by the Ruben Vocational Training Class are displayed for purchase. Low interest loans can be negotiated and free advice is available for business, financial planning and insurance.

A Personal Story - Thomas

My father worked in a company in Nairobi so we moved there. We moved to the Mukuru slums because he lost his job. I joined Ruben Primary school that year.

Life in Mukuru was tough. Sometimes just 2 meals a day. However, at school we were provided with lunch. School was almost free and I was able to go even if my father was not working regularly. The Brothers came in 2000. I was chosen to attend the first Edmund Rice Camp. It was really an experience of a life time for us brought up in the slums to have a whole week of fun and good food and a trip to the National Park.

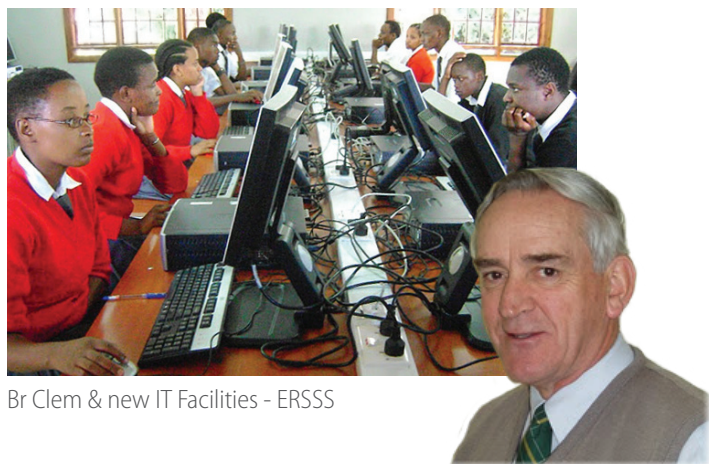


I sat for my final primary examination in 2004 in class 8. Luckily, I got a scholarship from the Christian Brothers to Tala High School. Being in high school was one of the best experiences, boarding away from the slums and meeting new friends. After high school hope of going to college faded. Then I got a job at Ruben Centre Library as an assistant. This year Br Frank O'Shea offered me an opportunity to study Library and Information Science and I am studying part-time while working at Ruben Library. I look at friends who were not able to get these opportunities. Shattered hopes and dreams are the normal scenario in the slum.

Edmund Rice Sinon Secondary School

It has been announced at ERSSS (Arusha, Tanzania) that Br Clem Barrett will be finishing a four year period as Headmaster at the end of this year and that Br. Francis Nkwabi will be appointed as the new Headmaster from January 2012. After the Christian Brothers took responsibility for the school in 1994, ERSSS became a primary focus for the Foundation's fundraising for many years. This has enabled the development of a very fine school which has achieved a high degree of sustainability, enabling the Foundation to direct its efforts increasingly to other African projects in more recent years.

Br Clem took over the wonderful pioneering work of Br Frank O'Shea and has overseen ongoing developments. With an enrolment now in excess of 1400, ERSSS provides an excellent and comprehensive education for both local students and many from neighbouring areas. In addition to the growth in enrolments, Clem has overseen the development of the school's Information Technology resources and the administrative restructuring of the school. The Foundation pays tribute to Clem's dedication, commitment and leadership.



Br Clem & new IT Facilities - ERSSS

Callan Services National Unit – PNG

Progress at Callan Services for disabled persons in 2011 has featured: deaf educators' conference; low vision workshops; advanced eye skills training; researching educational needs of young people with vision impairment; exploring strategies to support people with disabilities seeking employment and establishing livelihood projects and investigating approaches to early intervention for children with disabilities.



Pius Norugua

Pius Norugua, Principal of Callan Special Education Resource Centre, Rabaul, is one of many disability professionals in Papua New Guinea who have benefited from the capacity building programs conducted throughout Callan Services.

These programs develop the knowledge and skills required to educate children with disabilities and provide support for them in their communities through community based

rehabilitation programs.

Pius has wide ranging experience and a special interest in screening for eye diseases. He is part of a group receiving advanced training in eye screening, refraction, diagnosis and response to low vision difficulties. Training is conducted by Mr Dharma Guragai, an optometrist from Nepal, employed by Callan Services. Pius is a member of a team at Rabaul, establishing an Optical Services Centre that will provide both ready-made and prescription spectacles.

STAR Support Group – South Sudan

STAR supports more than 1300 people living with HIV/AIDS in Yambio region. Raphael, a member of STAR, shares a little of his personal story.

I am the chairperson of STAR Support Group. I have been with the group for four years. I also work with the Brothers in the program. Only people who are positive can be a member so of course that means that I also am positive. If it was not for the support and acceptance at STAR many of our members would have already died. The 300 who have died have been able to live the last few years of their lives with dignity. Stigmatization is common but at STAR all members feel safe and welcome. I know this because I have experienced it first-hand.



Raphael visiting a STAR member

I visit STAR members who have been abandoned. I travel with members who are dying to the hospital that is 15 miles away. The Brothers have a vehicle to transport people and return those who have died to their home communities. I take sugar, rice and beans, when we have them. Sufferers cannot begin medication until their bodies are strong enough to take the drugs.

Over the coming years we hope to lessen what we ask for and to build our own capabilities. We have purchased land to start a vegetable garden to supply some of our more sick members with maize, cassava, groundnuts and beans. The Brothers have taught me much and I have a great desire to pass this on. They always tell us that they could not do any of this work if it were not for their supporters overseas.

Br Beausang Catholic Education Centre

A recent initiative at BBCEC (Embulbul, Kenya) has been the formation of an Environment Club to promote the school's Environment Education Awareness Program. To ensure an environment free from infection, the Club has introduced a hand washing campaign and litter collection. These activities provide awareness raising and essential learning in basic disease prevention for many students who live in impoverished conditions. The Club has been active in support of the Kenyan Government's policy of reduction of bio-diversity loss by increasing the proportion of land covered by forest. On 11 October over 100 trees were planted in commemoration of the late Nobel Laureate, Green Belt Movement founder and environment conservationist, Professor Wangari Mathaai. The Club received a boost when Barclays Bank invited BBCEC to be part of their annual Corporate Social Responsibility program. A tree nursery project has commenced and seedlings will be used to increase the vegetation cover in the school and the Embulbul community.



Environment Club & Barclay's Group at Tree Planting

IMMERSION NEWS

Timor Leste

In September 18 students and teachers from St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, Brisbane, embarked on a 10 day immersion in East Timor in Comunidade Edmund Rice's education health and community programs.

One of the immersion participants, Michael (aged 15) reflects:

When I first walked into the preschool classroom in Railaco Kraic, I was greeted by an East Timorese teacher, Seraphim. We had an amazing time teaching maths in Portuguese to the preschool kids before setting them up with their lunch. Seraphim pulled up a chair and told me about how he was very keen to learn English so that he could go to University in Dili. He was so keen that he had trekked the 4 hours to Dili just to buy a dictionary. He listens to the BBC World News every night to improve his English. Many of the men in his village were involved in a violent attack during a recent period of civil unrest. Seraphim refused

to be involved as he doesn't see this as a way forward. It was inspiring to meet someone so determined to change his life in the face of great challenges.



Gregory Terrace Students in Timor Leste

Philippines

As part of a Yr 10 Immersion Program, St Joseph's Nudgee College, Brisbane, has worked for the past 5 years with Brs Rod Ellyard and John Moodie in Edmund Rice Services in Kabankalan. Two students share something of their August experience this year.

A realisation I had was just how open you must be to new and different things to get the full experience. You must truly open your heart to everybody you meet. The relationships I formed on this trip were truly unforgettable. This immersion opened my eyes, by not just seeing poverty but experiencing it. I couldn't believe how my new friends lived. Each day I gained a clearer and greater understanding of just how lucky and great my life is.



One of the greatest moments that I had was when I watched the children of a deaf orphanage called Anawim. The children danced and sang for us. I was so overwhelmed with emotion that I began to cry. I slowly gazed at the most beautiful and bright faces that I had ever seen. They danced and sang and were so happy. As we were leaving one of the younger girls saw that I had become quite emotional, so she came up to me and offered me one of the greatest gifts that I have ever received, she offered only a simple hug.

*Christmas wishes from the Foundation
Staff & Volunteers: Louise Allison,
Anthony Ryan, Robert Stone,
Margaret Wheelahan & Bill Wilding*

