



# le chéile AFRICA

"Le Chéile Twasonga Mbele - Together We Move Forward"

April 1st -  
July 31st  
2020

Issue 9

LE CHEILE AFRICA

IN THIS ISSUE

## Le Cheile Africa Newsletter April To July 31<sup>st</sup> 2020

This is our 2nd newsletter of 2020 and we are a few weeks late with it so we will do our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> newsletter as one in late December, It has been a very unusual few months here the world over re the Outbreak of the Covid -19 pandemic

Has been a hard few months were our Projects had to be re-evaluated to help the Community cope with the outbreak of Covid 19 and the Restrictions in place to curb the spread of same.

(Apologize in advance for spelling mistakes) Le Chéile Africa

Le Cheile Africa Nakuru CLG,  
Reg

Number 633699

"Le Cheile Africa was established as a non-profit organization NGO

Reg No in Kenya , OP.218/051/17-250/10860 / Charity No. In Ireland RCN: 20204974

Together we are working towards a better tomorrow. A better place for the children of Kenya to call home, a place where people are supported despite their medical needs, a place where people are safe and able to provide for their Families. A place where no child cries in hunger or pain.

We are working, learning together and moving forward with local communities.

Our four-pronged approach to this is as follows;



- \* Encourage community participation.
- \* Build healthier lives by enhancing the dignity and quality of life.
- \* Identify projects, resources and assist in their coordination.
- \* Enable self-sustainability to all we assist

Our programs include:

\* Provision of quality healthcare services through medical clinics/outreaches, mental health clinics, physical and occupational therapy,

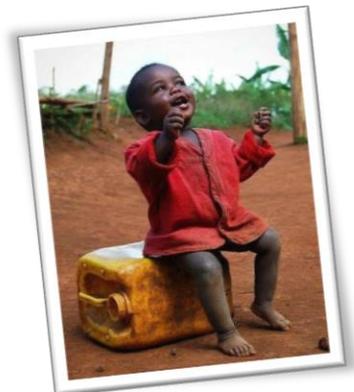
Wellness programs (Yoga & Mindfulness), mother and child care, Immunizations & HIV/AIDs support programs.

\* Education for disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

\* Disability care programs which entails early intervention programs for children born with disabilities, physio and therapy services, social groups, home visits and carer to carer training sessions.

\* Reproductive health & menstrual health management: Family planning, menstrual health education. Youth friendly services and counselling

\* Community development projects like environment conservation, de-worming programs, micro-loans, sustainable IGAs, WASH programs, community sports activities, peer education and mentorship programs for children.





## Clinic /covid 19

Covid19 sadly is on the rise daily with our Curfew extended today for another 30 days along with additional restrictions in place .All these are needed but sadly no support is offered to the communities ,in reality no work means no money ie no Food So its very hard to know how that will develop here as hardship ,Illness, .poverty, Malnutrition is on the rise daily One could get stuck on all the negative aspects of life here but we have praised ourselves to see the positive in every situation 'Life itself is a Blessing each day we arise to new challenges with the aim to,make a positive difference to all in the Communities we work in.

Some facts by WHO 1 in 4 in Africa suffer from, HIV/AIDS 2 in 4 suffer from underlying health conditions To sum it up 50% of the population is in the high risk category re Covid19 That's a fact. So we really are trying to be as proactive as we can. We started distributing posters in early March re what to do not to do. Washing hands etc.. So this left us with some hard decisions we had to make but it's better to be proactive than reactive glad we were pro

action seeing developments over the last few months

By Mid to late march Kenya went onto a semi lockdown ,Curfew in place I this n reality meant a lot of work places were forced to close due to the restrictions put in place to curb Covid-19 . But here people don't get support , if one has no work means no food here is the ever increasing challenge.

Sadly this week has seen Covid19 caes escalated here with more restrictions put in place .the

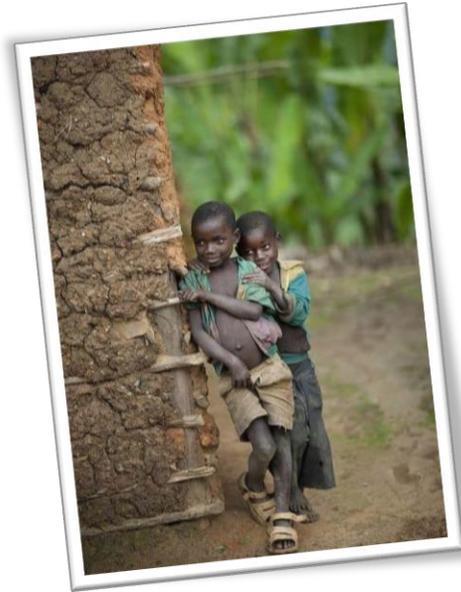
The clinic itself is operating as normal but with increased awareness, measures in place to deal with the uncertain times we are in. The clinic we know will see an up surge in clients. We have already from March 1st when we introduced our Free Health Care to all and must say has really had a positive impact on the community. And had to Discontinue our Doctor home visits to the elderly, infirm and those with long term illness as per Government restrictions

But From August the 1<sup>st</sup> to ease the suffering in the Community especially with the old/Infirm/ Those with terminal illness we are resuming our out Reach Clinics but with a difference due to Covid 19 .Here we will do home visits up to12 aday 4 days a week

ensuring every one has access to our Health Care initiative

I know it's no different to Ireland but here the lack of access to basic necessities i.e. food, clean water, soap etc. is not helping.. I will say it again No real government support / if one has no work means no food here is the ever increasing challenge. . Been a trying few months here poverty, sickness on the rise something like I have never experienced in my life Heartbreaking, Frightening really. Rainy Season is upon us Ever increasing cases of pneumonia. Malaria ,Typhoid etc. with this as All are house bound every night from 7pm to 6am re the Curfew it also brings more cases of domestic violence , Worry is having a severe mental effect on people as well along with other issues etc. The lotus invasion in North Kenya over the few months has had an effect on everyone with food prices increasing example a tomato has gone from 5 cent to 25 cent each mad when you think the average daily wage is 2euro.not people are working for 1 euro such is the hardship

they find themselves in Now add in this virus I really believe if it spreads seems it is and based on other countries it will./ it is already slowly as only a few tests done here daily Without a doubt it will have a devastating effect on life here especially in rural areas like ourselves. How does one self-isolate when up to 8 family members live in a one room mud hut. Add in the fact now we are in the mist of Rainny season and a wet one it has been too with flooding wide spread all over Kenya destroying Homes ,Crops etc. adding to the hardship of Life Here.. We just don't have the systems in place like Ireland to Cope. That's our challenge worry on how we help without excluding anyone because of lack of resources etc... So do keep us in your thoughts and thanks for your support.



## Disability Program

Our Disability groups have been suspended due to Covid19 restrictions from March 1<sup>st</sup> But we are glad to say all are getting ongoing support for there Disabilities be it Consulant fees ,There Meds ,Therapy etc from Le Cheile

On Top of this we also support them with Food parcels etc. as It is a very Difficult time for members of these groups as having a disability here on a normal day is an uphill battle put in a Worldwide pandemic that has put further necessary restrictions in place makes life even harder

We are in contact will all members regularly to ensure everything is okay,

We also have plans on lifting of Covid 19 restrictions to change how the groups work putting them into smaller groups all reporting to their respective elected board in doing so giving them responsibility in working on life skill projects etc. all overseen by Le Cheile and our Neutral expert Caroline who we will continue to bring out each month to oversee all actives in these 2 groups ,



## Whistle Day Care Unit

Is still closed due to Covid 19 restictions

Now this project started last year around May all thanks to the support of Whistles. Without whose support this Centre would not exist.. Its more than a building. This offers families hope a place where there kids with disabilities (forgotten about by society) a place to be equal a place to have fun learn all the while we are helping them life a normal life as possible. Yes it takes time. But by being at the center it's allows the kids parents, guardians do a day work, giving them some breathing space. As some of these children need 24/7 care so really has an impact on the whole family While at the day center kids also receive 2 meals a day a real drawing point as poverty let's just say is the norm here. 1st phase of an amazing dream now a reality thanks to Whistles A long road ahead of us but a road we are looking forward to conquering with Whistles by our side every step of the way. The real winners here are the Children who attend the Day Centre. A chance to dream, hope the impossible is possible..

Thankfully with the support from Whistles all the Kids and their families continue to be supported throughout this Covid19 Pandemic via Food Parcels .Therapy and each case as per there specific requirements

## ETTORE ISCARO Kenya Program"

This program was started earlier this year in memory of Ettore Iscaro whose family have contributed hugely to this program in his memory.

This is an Education and Livelihood program that benefits the most vulnerable in our society in Solai.

Currently this program sponsors 10 vulnerable children's education and various families especially women with a livelihood support.. ie Food / Health etc now helping support our Food Security Program.

It's a program we aim to grow slowly over time as funds allow.

Ettore ISCARO had lived an exemplary life: honest in his work, loyal to others and loving towards his family, especially with his four nephew.

Has always assisted those in need.

He supported a reception center for single mothers and homeless people and helped the community of his Church in Salerno ( Italy ). For his infinite humanity he was loved by everyone.

A special word of Thanks again to our Friend Francesco and family for supporting this program. His compassionate and kind spirit lives on both in Italy and Kenya...

We thinking of all our Italian friends during this Global Pandemic #Covid19



## Clean water project which is kindly supported by Sisters of Bons Secours Ireland.

We distribute water Monday to Saturday mainly in the morning time and have had to put a few measures in place re COVID-19 just to be on the safe side as per WHO guidelines.. This project supports 45 plus families weekly with Free Waterb

Not Only are people struggling to find work, to make money to buy food. In reality no work no food. But in thinking they don't even have water. Yes water a source we take for granted in the western world.

Think about it your hungry, thirsty and have nothing to eat not even a glass of water to drink.. Now for whatever reason it hit me this morning on the struggles people have on a daily basis to survive and I mean survive one has to experience the poverty here to really understand it... It nothing like we experience in Ireland the western world... Frightening at times and does get to us.

But thankfully to our projects like our clean water project we really are having a positive impact on the community and making a difference in improving the quality of life one step at at time.

Some times it important to value the simple things in life. Even water. That gives life itself This project supports 35 plus families weekly with Free Clean Water ,

As you now we invested in a Generator to ensure we could provide water without any disruptions yes this does bring additional running costs but had to be done as Electricity here lately is off more than on the joys of rural Africa and rainy season where you get unreal Thunder showers mot nights

## Zero Graze Demo Farm Unit

The final Pieces of the jigsaw are almost complete in Phase 1 of the zero graze demo farm unit..

We now have 5 cows on site all settled in nicely  
Annie is kindly sponsored by the Milligan family and was our 1st cow to be sponsored.. A local breed  
Our second cow Daisy she is a pure breed one to build the project on over time this cow was sponsored by the Farrell family  
Our 3rd cow now sponsored by Pips (Edward O Connell) named Hope

♥♥♥♥♥

Our 4th cow named Dóchas.♥♥♥♥♥  
Sponsored by Tadgh, Ber McMahon and family

Our 5th cow named Bó sponsored by the Quinlivan family ( Deirdre and Aoife)

The cost of a good cow to our shock once we began our search is more expensive than we taught its €1400 but that's a cow like Daisy a pure breed that you will have for life and help build the project on, So if you can help us in any way in getting our last cow which will be an Aysire all going to plan costing around the 1k mark

Daisy's arrival really summoned the official start of this zero graze demo unit Now with Annie, Hope, Dóchas and Bó we are almost there..

To our delight the demand has out seen our supply of milk especially as we sell the milk at a very affordable price ensuing those that need it most have access to same.. Can you Help us, make this dream come True by Sponsoring a our last cow or part off

The Zero Graze farming unit will be a training / Demo unit and also a way to help us become a step closer



to self-sustainability allowing us maintain our Vital projects ie Free

Health Care Initiative & Food Security Program on the ground here in Kenya especially now with all of our upcoming Fundraising events Cancelled re Covid19 pandemic

We wish to start with 6 cows, The cows breed will be a local breed, pure breed and a cow with a traditional higher milk yield such as an Ayrshire our next goal.. Approx cost 1k..

.So we are looking for your help in sponsoring the last cow.. As we have 5 cow already sponsored..

There is a ready made local market for Milk as it's in short supply every day as we have seen already and we would also use milk from this project towards our Food Security Program

Now Can you help us make this Self Sustainability Project a reality by Sponsoring a Cow or part off.. You can even name it..

This unit is also home to Hillbilly, Ella and May our 3 goats who have arrived this week also and ever increasing number of chickens.

Remember the cows become part of our family, they are very intelligent loving animals, they love classical music and will be with us hopefully for 12 years plus. O we even set up,

a sound system for the zero graze unit where we have classical and relaxing music playing at milking times to help the cows feel, right at home..

So if you're interested in sponsoring our last cow just drop us a pm..🇮🇪



Don't forget we need someone to help sponsor our last cow.in Phase 1



Thanks sgain for all your support over the last few months been a tough time ,here - world wide with Covid19 etc.. Thanks to Pips, Tadgh, for running fundraising events for us we really appreciate your efforts and help..

Also to the Quinlivan, Milligan and Farrell families for there support towards this project and there support in all we do.

Making A Real Difference In Real Lives.



## Rebuild a Home, Rebuild a Life



An opportunity to see Africa the real Africa and really make a difference in peoples lives  
Plenty of time to think about it especially after the year we all have had re this world wide Pandemic Covid19

This Project has been Deferred till March 2021 (Prov Date) due to Covid 9 travel restrictions world wide

We are looking for 10 plus people from all walks of life to help us launch this project as our first pilot poverty eradication project "Rebuild a Home Rebuild a Life"

Its will be a standalone project and will Only happen if we get 10 people at a minimum to sign up This pilot project "Rebuild a Home Rebuild a Life" aim is to improve the living conditions of 5 families in 2021 if successful we will do it every year

It will involve the following ( will vary from home to home)

Building the 1st of our two community houses, plus everything from Painting, building houses, plastering, furniture repair, mosquito nets, beds, smokeless jikos etc. What ever needs to be done for each home.

Also each of the families will also get support towards a sustainable project.. Ie chickens, dairy, goats, a small shop or any viable business of their choice as a few examples. Additionally each family will be provided with a one year free healthcare plan, sustainable training on workable solutions for



eradicating poverty and a long term loan repayment plan to enable them boost their food supplies, pay school yearly fees for their children Also the Selected Families will give back to the community by planting trees and becoming advocates to conserving the environment and mentoring another family as part of this project

We need 10 people to sign up by December 30th 2020

(Plesse note All dates are subject to Covid 19 stability worldwide)

Prov date for project "Rebuild a Home Rebuild a Life" late March 2021

You will be on the ground for 8 days approx here in Kenya with plenty of down time also..

What one has to do

Well raise €1500 minimum towards "Rebuild a Home Rebuild a Life" project

Deposit €250 that way we can start getting bits in order and putting plans in place re the 1st of our community houses.

Feel free to fundraise once you have confirmed your expression of interest its that simple please note dates are subject to change depending on Covid19.

Book your own flight ( here we will advise on what flight numbers etc to book in January all going to plan ) the earlier we book the cheaper they will be.

Plus contribute €200 towards your keep in Kenya for 8 days. This includes food, accommodation, collect and return to Nairobi Airport,

These families live in tough conditions (less than a dollar/euro a day), work hard but just need that



extra bit of support to move out of the poverty trap they are stuck in. We currently support these families in various ways via our Food Program (malnutrition), Health Care, and Education support, Daycare and disability programmes. So come on sign upto a trip of a life and make a real difference in people's lives.

And get your fundraising on the way giving you plenty of time..

This year so far has shown us all how we are all connected no matter where one lives. We need a helping hand at times now is your chance to make a difference in people's lives.



Rebuild a Home, rebuild a Life. Thankfully Our 1st family have almost finished there mud house extension, delighted we made a small donation towards it's completion and with the generosity of the Milligan family we have been able to get a bunk bed made and get mattresses for same. The family got the bed and mattress last week. Seeing the sheer delight in the Kids eyes we have mattresses to sleep on. Yipeee.. , the bed well was the icing on the cake just made there year.. That night the kids will had sweet dreams. Chatting to them during the week you can see hope ,that smile

coming back into their lives ,giving them the chance to Dream again as kids should,

(To protect privacy of family no photos of the children)

We really do at times take the simple things for granted.. A bed, a roof over your head, a solid meal a day, clean water, something a lot of families here just don't have..



As we said as resources allow we will continue to support and help



families who are part of this Rebuild A Home Rebuild a Life project as well as all those In our food security program and our Free Health care initiative via the Clinic which is open to all the community



**Why Not Visit us and See the real Africa ,Everything from Volunteering on Le Cheile Zero Graze Unit / The Clinic /our Community Projects**

**Or Just come see Africa Where day Trips to the Masi Mara can be arrange**

Come walk with us. ...for the real African Experience

It's as simple as it sounds want to see Africa on a budget that won't break the bank ..

Well book that flight ,and leave the rest up to us. Yip it's That simple .

Will just come walk with us .simple as that really ..On our hikes ,walks ,tours we always use local community guides to empower the community along with Derry or Mary on all Day trips. .

Day trips to the following national parks and local beauty spots all within easy reach from our Base at Eireanns way Hostels in Solai in the beautiful Rift valley Kenya

Mt longonot

Hell's gate

Lake Narvashia

Lake Baringo

Mengai crater

Lake Nakuru

Hyrax hill

Plus also see

Solai Hills ( see life as it really is , breathtaking views)

Solai lake

Nature Reserves

Just a wee sample of what one can do for a day trip..

We also cater for the larger 3 day plus hikes ,trips

Mt Kenya

Mt Kilimanjaro

Masi Mara

To name a few ..

And for those of you who want to finish off the trip by the beach by the indian Ocean.IE Mobassa we can help you with that too ..

So thinking of a holiday with a difference for next year .drop us a

message via email [eireannswaykenya@gmail.com](mailto:eireannswaykenya@gmail.com) or to [lecheileafrika@gmail.com](mailto:lecheileafrika@gmail.com) and we can give you a rough iternary based. On your time in Africa etc. Everyone should really visit Africa once in your lifetime..If you do you will be back again and again ...



A few Fundraising events that have been organized to help keep our projects up and running as all of our planned events had to be canceled due to Covid 19 Thank you all so so much we really appreciate the support and to those that held them Life savers ye really are.

**Andrew Desmonds** Fundraiser was a very novel one and came at a time when our funds were badly depleted and really got us over the line for a few weeks when we badly needed it ,Thanks again Andrew and all who supported same.

It was a simple Challenge he posted on Facebook see post here,,

In a time of uncertainty it can be especially hard on small charitable organisations so I Andrew decided to set up a challenge, with all the free time on people's hand asked people to run, walk anything between 1-5k and record your time if you so want, I decided to donate €10 to LeCheile Africa, don't feel pressured to donate anything as I know it can be tough on people in these times but every penny counts towards the charity for them to continue operating in these devastating times. I'd also ask you tag five friends, family or any you want to continue this challenge. Once again don't feel pressured to donate but please take part and tag your friends as you never know who might donate? Thank you in advance from myself Andrew and the members of **Le Cheilè Africa**



### "Fun challenge Alert

As all of Le Cheile Africa upcoming fundraising events are cancelled. We are glad to say we had teamed up, with CS Claire's hair Salon for this fun challenge Post a photo of your isolation Hair Cut or colour? ( all a bit of fun) Plus Nominate 4 people to take part. Then donate €5/10 (what ever one can spare), to Le Cheile @ You had to like and say done on Claires Hair Salon Facebook page with a screen shot of donation to be in with a chance to win a Fabulous Voucher to the value of €100. (can be used in salon when they reopen or towards products for a lockdown treat)

We are also delighted to see Claires Hair Saloon is now reopen and back to trading in our new normal world one were we just need to be that extra bit careful and considerate of others.

A big thanks to Claire for coming on board here especially when the Saloon itself was closed at the time due to Covid19 restrictions



### 1000k in 10 days

Pips 1000k challenge in 10 days / on the 6th day of this challenge and has completed 1000 km mark , . 🥰🥰

It's some achievement by Pips knocking down 1000 kilometres in 6 days folks. And the challenge was due to start on the 1st of July but as ye know Pips has no. Patience.. If its for to be done less just do it.. He is utterly exhausted and I reckon won't be able to sit comfortably for a while ouch 🥰🥰🥰 ,His daily videos showed the true pain .exhaustion this event had on him..A big thanks to all who have Donated and to Pips for taking on this challenge .Pips also had the honour of Sponsoring one of our Cows he has named her Hope and remaining funds will be used to maintain our current projects



## Headshave in the Ballyhouras

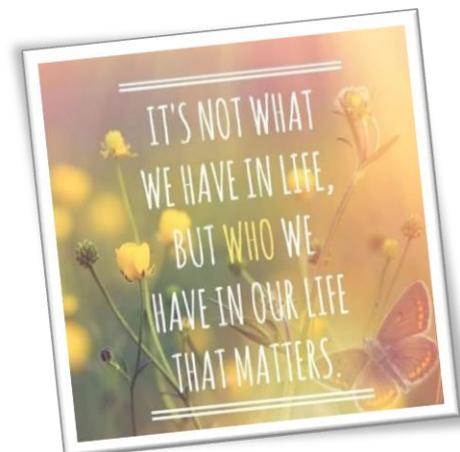
On Sat 18<sup>th</sup> July kindly ran by Tadgh McMahon aided by John Mulcahy

Looked like it was mighty crack and everyone had a great time Thanks to everyone for your support donations and for taking part in event ,we really were blown away with the support here just goes to show how much Tadgh is loved for his and Bobs (Ber) companionate charity work down through the years.

Tadgh was a brave man to go under the razor on a cold mountain and more so with Wesley in control of the razor haha.. .

Funds raised which will be used to maintain our current projects and our 4th cow named Dóchas..meaning hope . Named by Tadgh and Family

It truly is hope we have been given with the support for this fundraising event..



## Our family is getting bigger by the day ,,

It was never in our plans to be Foster parents but at times life throw you a curve ball and you just have to step up and to the challenge we are so glad we did ,,

♥♥ FAMILY ♥♥

So on that positive note we go back to last July 17th 2019 when Nderito and Kamau entered our lives two little boys who when we discovered them with Deirdre were fighting to survive.. Frightening how sick and malnourished they were especially Nderito but his wee brother Kamau was his rock, he fed him, looked out for him. Still does to this day...

Kamau is now nearly 3 and a half years old and is full of life completely on the road to being a happy, active normal child.. Lives for dancing, music and never stops chatting.. Such a lovely gentle child who loves everyone.and is so egger to help out with the cows .goats etc. Nderito is 4 and half years old. Has come so far its amazing against all odds.. Told would never would walk. Well folks he proved them wrong walking he is.. Was very aggressive and a lost child.. He has a mental disability brought on by his early years of neglect and also autism.. But it's amazing when one is shown love , care a chance in life they can beat all the obstacles in there way Nderito has done that been a very hard road for him, but this wee boy has a will power to be the best he can be. He can now walk he has many hard days here. Speech getting there very very slowly a few words.. But is so happy and really is showing us his brilliant personality as is Kamau.

Then Over a month ago to cut a long story short where do we start We were instructed to go to a house

by local village elders on the request of the father of a 2 and a half month old baby girl

As we entered the house we could hear a baby crying we were welcomed in with open arms by the father. The house a one room mud hut.. The poverty was there to be seen but at the same time was kept very clean, well as possible for a mud house. No window in the room just the door to let in light..

The baby's mother abandoned her at 3 days old.. For the last few months her father has been struggling to mind her... He seems a good man done his best..very very poor the poverty the man struggled with..The wee girl survived on watered down porridge and the occasional cup of milk brought by well-wishers.

..

To cut a long story short after a good 2 hours of chatting to the father, local village elders and chief looking at every option..

We could support child, Get him help to help him out or child go into care.

Family at this time just can't help or don't want too, hard to know maybe there are struggling too as life here is really harsh at the moment After a good 2 hours of discussions the father begged us to take her other wise she would end up in care. Here that's a harsh environment that the very reason he said he want us to call.. So we said let's see a hard decision to make but how could you not help a wee beautiful child who deserves an equal chance to life as every one else.

So on conclusion with Chief involvement etc so we agreed on condition the father see his daughter regularly.. So we are now i suppose foster parents again...

Was so Hard to say no as she is so beautiful.. At times its best to follow your heart and do what is right

Say hello to Barbara, She is now 4 months old.. She was so

underweight, Malurished etc when we brought her home .Honestly the community taught she was going to die she was so sick why would we take a child that was going to die ,,Amazing what love ,care 24 hour attention from Mary especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks or Delighted to say Barbara is doing fine progressing very well. A lovely baby girl so so beautiful she would mesmerise you with her smile so full of life.has us both twisted around her little fingers ,,the way it should be

We have been giving out clothes donated over the last few months but Never taught we would be using baby clothes that were left donated to Le Cheile Ourselves

The fun has begun night feeds ♥♥♥♥♥  
♥♥♥♥♥ Happy Days

We also have a family of 6 kids visit us daily to be fed and looked after a sad long story but are slowly on the rd. to recovery .we do what we can thanks to your ongoing support



## Two year on From the Solai Dam disaster

the second anniversary of the Solai Dam disaster we are feeling worried, heartbroken but remain strong..

The community is recovering slowly but to the families who lost loved ones don't think all the time in the world will help.

The pain is lived every day more so around this time of year.

Sadly to add to the stress the day before yesterday we had our 1st confirmed case of Covid19 in Solai.

The day the shock Solai 2 years ago. . Where our wee clinic became the beacon of hope that faithful night where all the injured where ferryyed to the clinic ( we only open a few weeks)

All down to the leadership, compassion, care and quick thinking of Mary.

A night where Mary really taught she was going to die.. Hard to put into word the events of that night.

So Rather than write and write here a few links to see how events unfolded on that night, do look at them to get a real Insight into the devastation, panic, fear, heartache that unfolded that Faithfull night .

So many died.. So many more could have also died but for the quick actions of Mary and others.

Now more than ever the struggle is real as we try to move on from Dam Diaster we now have to deal with Covid19 on our doorsteps.

Frightening errie times but we will get through this. We have too..simple as..

<https://youtu.be/PYyXzNlZFzs>

<https://youtu.be/-zOyiToLhN8>

<https://youtu.be/tcnLdWhqJUc>

If links don't open just copy them into Google and they will Open from there



We will finish up this newsletter with a piece that was wrote about that faithful night.

Thanks to everyone for your ongoing support, we really do appreciate it .We know times are hard the world so understand how hard it is for everyone Remember no donation is too small be it the price of a cup of coffee every cent really helps “Making a Real Difference In Real Lives “

All we can hope for when this pandemic passes we will all have a more caring compassionate world to live in where everyone has the chance to Dream

Stay safe all

Here is the link to article or just read it here

<https://dailyinspiredlife.com/real-life-hero-story-the-lady-that-saved-many-lives/>

Real life hero story. In one night Mary went from being a shy, unknown volunteer in her community to the "The Lady That Saved Many Lives"

When the police car arrived at the clinic with the first survivor, a one-month old baby boy, I had no idea what would lay ahead for myself and the clinic as the night unfolded.

I looked down at the lifeless body of the child. White foam dripped from his mouth. His breathing was faint. I was shaking, confused.

I had no doctors to call on. The two doctors scheduled to work at the clinic had fled the scene to safety.

I prayed, “Oh God, please help me. Don’t let this precious baby die in my arms!”

I was so scared. That child was in my clinic, depending on me for survival.

The commotion had started that evening around 7pm. There had been a loud bang, a massive blast. Next came an unusual breeze followed by another mysterious sound - like an ocean viciously roaring, banging against a rock face.

I walked outside to investigate the sound. A panicked group of local women and children were gathering. There were more women arriving – terrified mothers with crying children clutched to their backs. With them, they brought the terrible news.

Patel dam, located close to the village of Solai, 190km (120 miles) north-west of the capital, Nairobi, Kenya, had burst. The waters were sweeping away homes and claiming people with it.

The news was devastating. Shouts and screams grew louder. Phones started ringing. People were calling friends, family and neighbors, alerting others of the impending doom.

I looked around the clinic. Inside and out. So many women and children had rushed to the clinic for refuge. What could I do to help them? Could they swim? How was I going to

swim? I don’t know how to swim.

My mind raced, my thoughts tormented me. I thought of Derry. I thought of the Solai community and my family. And what about Le Cheile Africa, and all the efforts we’d gone to, to raise money to open the clinic. We had just opened the doors of Le Cheile Africa five weeks earlier.

Anxiety gripped at me as I prepared for death. My hands shook as I texted my fiancé Derry. I wanted to hear his voice for one last time. I was too terrified to call my parents. I knew my dad would be devastated by what was happening. I prayed silently, “Oh God, please forgive me for my sins”.

I continued to shake uncontrollably. I was having trouble breathing. Was this going to be the end? I took a couple of puffs from my Asthma puffer.

Breath in, breath out. I took deep breaths and then I heard a voice speak from my heart, “Mary, you may feel terrified inside, but you have to be strong. These women and children, and the elderly gathering at the clinic are frightened and desperate. They need you.”

I looked down at the precious baby boy in my arms. A renewed energy engulfed me. I felt a presence guiding me on how to act. Thoughts and ideas began flooding into my mind like the dam waters that had brought this child to me.

I held the baby close to my chest to transfer the heat from myself to him. I started clearing his airways and removed the mud and debris

from his fragile body. I patted him on his back.

I pleaded and begged that child would not die in my arms.

It was dark. The electric lines had been knocked down by flooding waters. One of the local women held up her phone light as I tried resuscitating the baby.

I asked her, "Please, go boil water for us so we can clean the baby. It will be easier to clear his airways". She ran next door to her home and started a bonfire. She placed a big pot on it to boil water.

A few minutes later we completely cleaned the baby. We wrapped him with my duvet and I held him close, cradling him in my arms. Next, the baby came out with a burp. Murky water came gushing out of his mouth. His airways were clear. I wouldn't lose this child.

Slowly, slowly he started breathing and his body temperature returned to normal. I thanked God for this miracle.

Seeing that baby boy come back to life in my arms gave me the energy to keep going. Inside the clinic on the night of the disaster. Our clinic is very small - Each room 9 by 9, so we worked with the space we had. We had children, men and women in their own rooms respectively.

As the co-founder of Le Cheile Africa, I knew I must take charge. Our small clinic, that we'd struggled so hard to get off the ground, would become the rescue place for the community. We must fight for survival as a community.

Within minutes another police car pulled up with another screeching siren. Three more children were rushed into our clinic. Their state was horrifying. They were covered in murk and mud everywhere with no clothes. Two of the children were hypothermic.

I gathered all the courage left in me. I prayed the children be brave and that no lives would be lost.

#### Finding Courage From Within

The community say they saw a totally different Mary that night. Though I had co-founded Le Cheile Africa, I personally, was very much an unknown in the community.

I had always been a quiet person, working in the background. I never imagined I could take on the role of a leader. I was so wrong.

I wondered how it could be possible, but the courage came when I needed it. To the community's surprise, when the survivors came pouring in, I gave instructions with authority. I directed the abled-bodied on what to do. "Please, sister get the boiled water!" "You, brother, please bring the blankets from the neighbors and give them to the families outside." "And aunty, please take this child. Hold her close, keep her warm."

I was shaking, moving with speed. The clinic was like a scene from an ER movie. I watched our clinic supplies fly off the shelves. I told myself that our clinic isn't about the supplies. We are about saving lives. And that is exactly what we did. By the end of the night I'd lost my voice, sense of smell, and I couldn't taste anything. But it was worth it!

Everyone brought to our clinic, left stable and alive. No one died at our clinic that night. We saved lives.

#### When I Feel Like Giving Up

While those that sought refuge in the clinic survived the dam disaster, so many others didn't make it. People I had treated previously at the clinic were no more. One family who I dearly cared for, lost all their four children.

It was not easy mentally. We spent every night and day offering counselling and psycho social support to that family and others that needed it.

I was breaking into pieces and fell into a spate of depression. I had no one to release my emotions to, bar my finace' Derry, who kept me sane with his loving advice and counselling.

Even now, there are times when I feel like giving up. Running a small organization can be draining and stressful. Le Cheile Africa is still on its baby feet with no source of funding or support except for friends and family. It's difficult going back to the same people for support all the time.

In my day to day journey I see much poverty, suffering and disease, and that motivates me to keep helping those that are in dire need. When I feel like giving up, I look to them.

I personally, have been through much suffering in my life. In a way, my character and inner person have been shaped by these experiences.

I know the taste of poverty, homelessness, bullying, unemployment, sickness, being a family breadwinner at the age of 18 years old, looking after my dad and siblings. In experiencing these sufferings, I have vowed to myself and God, to always do good, treat others the way I would want to be treated.

My desire when starting the clinic, was to see it grow and impact the community in Solai. The clinic is living up to its dream and making a difference in people's lives.

We continue to support the survivors of the dam disaster, through healthcare, counselling, disability and mental health programs and also empowerment programs through small micro loans.

### A Big Surprise - A Call From The Governor

Two weeks after the disaster there was mass for the victims. Entire communities gathered and the event was attended by high-end politicians including the president of Kenya and his deputy.

I received a surprise call from the Governor, "Mary, will you be in attendance at the mass prayers? We'd like to recognize the clinic's efforts on the night of the Solai disaster."

I never imagined, I would be called by the president and awarded for Distinguished Service Rendered to the Country with a Head of State Commendation (HSC) award.

It still feels like a dream come true. When I was saving lives that night, it never crossed my

mind that I might be recognized for my efforts. No, no. In my opinion, I did what was humane. That is all.

There were many heroes who did amazing work during the tragedy. Many risked lives for others.

People from different regions set aside their differences and came together. They shared compassion, supported one another.

There were men helping in the rescue mission, pulling people out of the deep waters. Women carrying children on their chests-kangaroo style. Others looking after the elderly and keeping them warm as people fled their homes. Many others spent the night looking out, to watch if waters were heading in our direction.

In my opinion, the whole community gathered as heroes that night. The way we all worked together was a testament to humanity.

### Our Dream Expands

Since the official recognition, I have become a hero for the Solai community. I feel so humbled. Many people come to the clinic looking for help, others come to see the lady that saved many children. With more people coming to the clinic for support, we need more funding to expand.

It is our intention to expand the clinic to include a maternity and in-patient ward for children and adults. We have some equipment and hopefully, we will get well-wishers that will support us with

badly needed monetary donations.

We also want to build a community centre that will house a library, computer room, sewing room, day-care with therapists for disabled children and adults and counselling for children and adults suffering from trauma. We are also looking to do fun sport days for kids to help with trauma, escape their daily harsh realities for a few hours, and at the same time learn social skills

We need funding, partners, more friends, supporters and volunteers to help us realize this dream.

There are big lessons in experiencing uncertainty and calamity with a sober focus - the most chaotic moments are the ones from which we can learn the most. I myself have learnt so many lessons ...

We are so much stronger and courageous than we can ever imagine

Humanity is full of compassion and ready to help where there is a need

With hard work & determination, we can leave the world a better place than we found it

That it is through many failures, you eventually find success

Today, though there is still so much to do, I thank God for the miracles that night. I'm so honored and humbled that the clinic saved so many lives. And I pray we will save many more in the future.

# Some Random Photos



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## Tadhg's mountain-top 'buzzer' raises funds for Le Chéile Africa

Proud Scan Moylan Park man Tadhg McMahon, wife Ber, family and friends travelled to Kildorrery last Saturday morning for a climb of the Ballyhouras, and when the group reached their destination, Tadhg sat on a stone wall and had his lockdown locks shaved to raise funds for Le Chéile Africa. It was a mighty day and everyone had a great time, but more importantly, over €2,550 has been raised (so far) which will be used to maintain the charity's current projects and also allow for the purchase of a fourth cow which was named 'Díchas' - meaning hope - by Tadhg and family. Tadhg was feeling a little lighter in the head on his descent from the Ballyhouras, but a fine sum of money was collected for the worthy cause, and Tadhg and Ber would like to say a sincere thank you to everyone for their support, and if you have a couple of euro to spare, you can still donate by going to Tadhg's page on Facebook.

Tadhg having his head shaved on the Ballyhouras.

