



Friends of Wechiau Group Charity number: 1113023

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Newsletter

December 2018

Dear Friend,

Seasons Greetings from Friends of Wechiau Trustees

As the festive season is upon us and you will be receiving many appeals from the big charities, you may wish to consider giving to our small charity instead. You can be assured that all your donation will go directly to benefit people of the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary. You can read below the benefits of the scholarship programme following a recent evaluation. We are also still looking for new trustees, so contact us if you would be interested in joining us in this important work..



You can donate on line through our website www.friendsofwechiau.org.uk using Paypal or [MyDonate](#), or send a cheque to the address on the letterhead overleaf.

Recent Evaluation

We have been extremely fortunate to have the support of Dr Aggie Weighill from Vancouver Island University, Canada, who visited the Wechiau Community Community Hippo Sanctuary in 2018 with some Recreation and Management students. One of the students, Kristina Vaudry, undertook an evaluation of the Friends of Wechiau scholarship programme using semi-structured interviews between May to July 2018. The initial findings have been very positive about the scholarship programme, realising the dream we had when we set up the project nearly 15 years ago. Quoting Kristina from her [blog](#) on the VIU Education Abroad website, when asked "How has the scholarship impacted you, your family, and the community?" *"Many of the respondents spoke about the hope and motivation that came from a relative being awarded the scholarship; if an older sibling had won the scholarship, their brothers and sisters would often aspire to do the same. This impact wasn't just localised in families though, it was experienced throughout the community. Some schools in the Sanctuary have hosted returning scholarship recipients, providing motivational talks for younger students promoting the opportunities that have come from education and winning the scholarship. There were additional benefits that flowed to family groups from a young person receiving the scholarship. Families could redirect their income sources to better support the younger children. Scholarship recipients who later attended university and went on to well-paid careers could provide financial support to their families in Wechiau, and in turn subsidise the education of their younger brothers and sisters. Perhaps the most substantial benefit arising from the scholarship has been the development of a pool of professionals who return and contribute to the health and wellbeing of their community and family".* We look forward to the results from the full analysis.



Continuing students



A meeting was held with the scholarship students, their parents and representatives of the Sanctuary Executive, and Savannah Fruits Company in October 2018 where they provided an update on their progress and encouraged to work hard. As a result of the Ghanaian government paying part of the school fees the students were informed that the scholarship amount had been reduced to 500 Ghanaian cedi (80 GBP) for those who started senior high school in 2017. While three students who started their courses in 2016, would continue to receive 790 Ghanaian cedi (126 GBP) as they were not receiving government

funded school fees.

Update on Hassan

We continue to follow the progress of our outstanding former scholarship student Hasehni Vampere (known as Hassan) who obtained a first class honours B.Sc in Disability and Rehabilitation Studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Hassan has been studying for a Masters degree in Kumasi in Ghana since September 2018 and is looking to undertake research to prevent disability through early intervention. He hopes to carry out his studies within the sanctuary communities screening school children for vision and hearing impairment. Hassan is looking for funding to carry out this research so if anyone has any ideas please let us know.

Fundraising

Janet and I spoke about the work of the Friends of Wechiau at the Taunton Branch of the Royal Over-Seas League in October 2018. We were very appreciative of their decision to sponsor Friends of Wechiau as their charity for their fundraising efforts for this year.

You can donate on line through our website www.friendsofwechiau.org.uk using Paypal or [MyDonate](#), or send a cheque to the address on the letterhead overleaf.

Thank you for your continued support,

Ann

Ann Bannister, Chair, Friends of Wechiau Group

[Thank you to R.Y. Abudulai Issahaku, Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary for the photographs and for administering the project locally, the Savannah Fruits Company for their continued support in disbursing the funds and providing a monitoring role and Vancouver Island University for their evaluation and photograph]