

Deaf Ministries International

Issue 50 | February 2024

*Taking the Gospel
to the Deaf*



Short term missions change lives

A team from the Berwick Church of Christ, headed by Chris Hennequin, visited our Bicol Deaf Action school (formerly Fishermen of Christ Learning Center) in Ligao in January. For two weeks, fifteen men and women worked to replace the roof of the grade 7 classroom - the sole remaining building in the school with a thatch roof - with galvanised iron.



The team have done more than physical work though. They have made a significant contribution to the students' learning opportunities by providing the school with 20 laptops, iPads and a projector. They replaced 100 chairs (that really needed replacing!) with new ones and bought 100 new chickens for the farm with enough feed

for them all. They have also spent time building relationships with the staff and students - precious friendships that will last a lifetime. What a wonderful service to and with our Deaf friends in Ligao. A big thank you to the mission team members and all those at Berwick Church of Christ who have been supporting

them and Bicol Deaf Action!

Of course, the wonderful and slightly mysterious thing about all this is that the work of the mission team will not only change the lives of those at the school, it will profoundly change their own lives, too.

More mission trips are in the making. Contact Kay at kay.vannamen@deafmin.org if you're interested in joining one.

Before and after:



*Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name;
make known among the nations what
He has done. Psalm 105:1*

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DAVAO - Churches

The closing of the school in Davao last year threw the Davao Deaf church into disarray. We're pleased to announce that the ICDP church in Davao has relocated, finding a permanent (rented) home in which worshippers now meet and Pastor Glenn and his family now live. The first service of the year had 25 members. The new premises are big enough to hold 50 people.

The church wasn't able to transfer furniture and equipment from the old location so services began, undeterred, in a sparse environment with congregants sitting on the floor! Supporters in Norway, however, quickly came to the rescue providing tables, chairs and a TV to help services function well. Church members are so thankful for their new premises and furnishings and look forward keenly to services each week.



A second church for the Deaf in the Davao area is meeting in Tagum, about an hour's drive north from Davao city. Pastored by Carl Reyes, it has 9 members meeting there each week.

KENYA - School Excelling

Our school in Kenya has been integrated for 2 years now and is excelling in every area. There has been significant improvement in the academic performances among the Deaf and the hearing students. Many hearing students are becoming proficient at signing and are able to help their Deaf friends in class and their Deaf siblings at home.



Despite the financial hardships the whole country is enduring, the school has continued to deliver its core mandate in serving the Deaf and less fortunate children in the community. The result is heartwarming. The community has embraced the school like never before. Since we started this program, the school has grown to become one of the most loved and appreciated institutions in the community. Our Deaf students really appreciate the integration as they continue to make friendships and create bonds amongst their peers.

The new farm is doing extremely well. In the first season of planting, we managed to harvest 10 bags of maize which enabled us to save around KSH36,000 (US230) in food expenses. The land is fenced to keep the neighbours' animals from munching on our crops, including the maize and beans which have already been planted for the coming season. The students recently got stuck into weeding the fields and are looking forward to a bumper harvest.



Our Poultry project at the school is in good progress. A supply of 200 layers and 100 broilers has been received and they are already starting to grow nice and fat.

Our school Director Wesley notes, "The integration program has come with some challenges. We had to hire more teachers, change our school registration to an integrated school and embrace a new integrated curriculum. We have also had to complete teacher refresher courses to equip our teachers on the new developments in an integrated program. The cost of living has doubled in the last 18 months. Life is just too expensive with frequent fuel hikes. But we are not complaining. We thank God for everything.

Our school - the Immanuel Integrated Christian School - has been recognized as the top model school for providing an integrated program; a school that is giving back to society by providing quality education that is affordable to the Deaf and vulnerable.



New whiteboards for classrooms thanks to a generous supporter

EGYPT

Clothing Factory Update



The new clothing factory in Egypt continues to train young Deaf in textile production, provide employment, and produce quality items for sale. The first group started in November and specialised in bed sheets, producing 2,000 bed sheets! The second group has produced quality towels which they are packing as luxury gifts. These are currently on sale in stores and markets. We look forward to the sales reports in our next quarter. The third group will start

their training on February 1. At the time of writing, they are still assessing the market to decide which products for the third group to specialize in. Our ministry partner Sahel from Peace Dove is back in Cairo to oversee the operation and reports that all is going as planned. It's exciting to see this project start so well and make such a tangible difference in the lives of the Deaf in Egypt.



RWANDA

Love in Action

Late last year, heavy rain in Rwanda damaged the home of an elderly Deaf man and his daughter who is also Deaf. In a heartwarming response, some members of the ICDR-Musanze church (Rwanda), led by Florentine, one of our evangelists, visited them, baked bricks and helped to reconstruct their home. The couple were extremely grateful yet as it is more blessed to give than to receive, we're not sure who benefitted the most!



Florence (centre) with elderly Deaf man and his daughter.

Blog Book Coming Soon!

Three years in the making!
50 extraordinary interviews!
170 pages of gorgeous full colour portraits
and testimonies!

This beautiful coffee table book is a collection of 50 testimonies from the fields in which DMI operates. These are amazing testimonies. Yet in DMI, they are common. They tell of lives that have been radically transformed, sometimes miraculously, from darkness and despair to light and hope. They testify to the dedication and endurance of DMI's workers, and they testify to a God who hears, cares and rescues the Deaf.



Tanzania God is on the move



Our churches and congregations in Tanzania continue to grow. We now have 27

churches and fellowships in Tanzania, ministering to a total of over 1,300 Deaf! There was great joy in our Mbeya and Ubaruku assemblies when 9 Deaf were baptised in the closing months of last year. These followed baptism classes by Pastor Umoja.

Pastor Joseph Hizza, who is the Director of DMI Tanzania, is also working to ensure that church members have every opportunity to grow in their faith, in their relationships and in the dignity of their living. He has conducted courtship trainings in 10 of our congregations. These have clearly been effective because they resulted in him officiating at the weddings of two Deaf couples, while Pastors Umoja and Buyinza officiated another!

Many in these areas have never seen Deaf weddings before. It's wonderful to see an increasing number of Deaf people forming healthy and holy relationships, but it has also increased amongst the hearing community an awareness of Deaf people and their value to society. Many testified to the truth of this, saying that it was the first time for them to not only see the wedding of a Deaf couple, but also to see a wedding officiated by Deaf pastors.

Joseph says, "the preaching of the gospel in Deaf churches has seen

the Holy Spirit move, bringing 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness [and] faith' (Galatians 5:22) to members. We saw this in Ubaruku. In this congregation we witnessed the harmony brought by the love of Christ, as some members who had long disagreed were able to come together and renew their friendships and unite the Church in



the process. This was earlier considered impossible."

Church leaders in the Mbeya region have also been working on improving livelihoods. They have been developing a rice farm and have just had 10 bags of seeds and 40 bags of fertiliser delivered to the farm. Development of the farm includes building a shelter where workers can live and house the equipment. Planting over the 20 acres started at the end of January. We look forward to seeing a bountiful harvest!

The gospel of Jesus Christ changes lives. Many Deaf in Tanzania have experienced this change for themselves under the guidance and mentorship of experienced evangelists. We can see this through testimonies of people like Ibrahim Ndolick Guliye.

Testimony from Tanzania

Ibrahim Ndolick Guliye

'I am ready to leave Islam and serve Christ'

Without doubt, I can see that Christ is good. I was very touched by the outreach of the SUN workshop organized by DAT (Deaf Action Tanzania). I believe that one day I will be part of the Deaf Christian church when it is soon planted in Kigoma and I believe that I will even be among the founding leaders."

I was born a Muslim and lived as a Muslim. I joined the Christian fellowship created by DAT in mid-September 2023, a week before the start of the SUN training program in the region. More than 10 Deaf Muslims also joined this fellowship.

My father died when I was 6 and my mother ran away, leaving me and my younger brother in dire poverty and hardship. We ended up being raised by our grandmother who was a Christian. The other members of our Muslim clan rejected us because of this.

I became deaf when I was a child and so I completed my primary school education at Uvinza Special Primary School where I benefited from the help of the school principal who treated me like his own child. He did this after discovering that not only was I a bright child, but I had also come from a very poor background and had been neglected by my family.

It was the principal who also ensured that I enrolled in secondary school, aided by other good Samaritans

(all Christians) who appeared and helped me until I reached form four in the mid-2010s. Since my birth, I have always been helped by Christians, starting with my grandmother, my primary and secondary school teachers, my uncle and many other strangers who sympathised with my plight. So it is not surprising that I decided to fully participate in the recent Christian gathering to learn more about Christianity.

Despite the care I had been shown and the opportunities from which I had benefitted, I was not a happy man because I felt stuck between two religions. Although I preferred Christianity to Islam because of my experiences, my knowledge of Christianity was not satisfactory to make a decision. Before the DAT/SUN training I had many questions which had never been answered.

So the offer to join the discipleship training and workshop brought a change in my life. I was able to learn about creation, Jesus, the salvation of man and things like that. I came to faith. The workshop marked the beginning of my full conversion to Christianity, a decision my uncle and grandmother wholeheartedly supported.

Now I teach the good news I have learned to the Deaf children in my school. I have decided to give my life to Christ and to work at better understanding my new faith. When the Church is established in this region, I believe I will be one of the first believers to be baptised.

I would like to ask for your prayers to ensure that I will continue on the right path toward baptism and church planting.



RWANDA

More New Believers

When Senior African Advisor Sam Begumisa visited Rwanda from Uganda, he preached at the ICDR Kicukiro branch. Following a call to repentance, nine Deaf stood to start a new life of faith in Christ. Pastor Claire prayed over them, and the church is following up with support.

Four believers were baptised in Rwanda in the last quarter, three in ICDR Nyarugenge, and one in ICDR Kicukiro. These baptisms never cease to be a source of joy for all the church and across the DMI family.



Pure joy!

Patrick praying

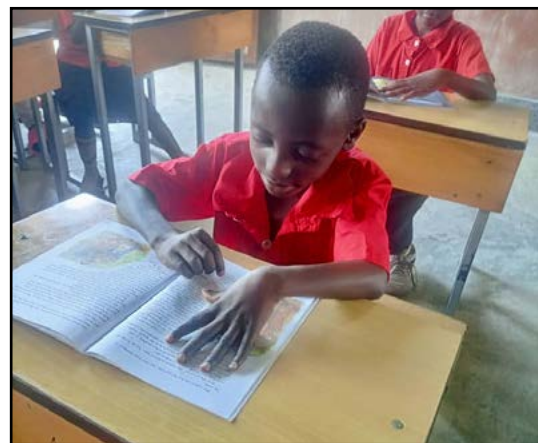
*Baptism candidate, Patrick (Director of DAR)
& (Omar DAR Board Chairman)*

Tresor's first day at school!

Tresor Nsesngiyumva is the first Deaf student we have sponsored in Rwanda. He is six years old and tiny for his age. His world changed when he started at the Umutara Deaf School last September. Born deaf, Tresor had never been to school because his parents couldn't afford it but they desperately wanted him to mix with other Deaf and learn sign language. So they brought him to the Immanuel Church of the Deaf Rwanda (ICDR) which he attends now every Sunday, walking around 3 kms to get from home to church. The church then introduced him to DMI who, thanks to generous supporters, have now provided for Tresor to attend school.

Tresor is doing well at school and started his second term in January. In the first term, he had a score of 76.6% , and is already 4th in his class! DAR Director Patrick reports that during the school holidays in December when he went to preach in the Musanze District where Tresor lives, he noticed positive changes in Tresor's behaviour and outlook. The first time he met Tresor at the Deaf Church - before he had started at school - he was not used to paying

attention to the preacher. He used to make noise and run around in church. But now he is able to focus and follow the preacher at the Deaf Church, and tries to communicate using sign language, which was challenging for him before. We're grateful for these developments and look forward to seeing further progress in Tresor's schooling and life.



UGANDA

Muscular Christianity



Our Bible school in Uganda doesn't only produce champion evangelists and pastors but champion athletes as well. Imbuwa Mwenda, one of our students from Zambia, was recently crowned the best player of the season in Uganda. Playing for the Sun City Deaf Football Club, he won the award for top scorer with 17 goals. Recently, Sun City took out the championship with Mwenda the star player in the final. We thank God for giving Mwenda such great skill on the field and hope he has even more success from the pulpit when he graduates from the Bible school.

Fatherheart Schools Impact Deeply

In January, DMI's senior advisor Gunnar Dehli went to Kenya to help lead the Fatherheart B school with his wife Ingrid and Olav and Unni Slåtten. The 'B' school builds upon the foundations laid in the 'A' school, focusing on God's perfect parental love and transformational power. 47 people participated with 22 coming from the DMI network including leaders and evangelists from Tanzania, Uganda,



Rwanda, DR Congo, Burundi, South Korea, Kenya, Norway and Malaysia. The school expenses, including travel cost for the speakers and the participants from DMI, were covered by Norwegian sponsors.



The school was a success! It is always a challenge to see if a combined event for Deaf and hearing will benefit both groups. The feedback from both hearing and deaf participants, and their testimonies at the end of the school, proved clearly that it worked out well. Lots of testimonies from both deaf and hearing persons showed that The Holy Spirit had brought revelations and changes into peoples lives. Unforgiveness, shame and self condemnation were among the things some of them testified were gone. Joy had taken their place.

News from Supporting Countries

Thank you for your support!

MEANINGFUL GIFTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES



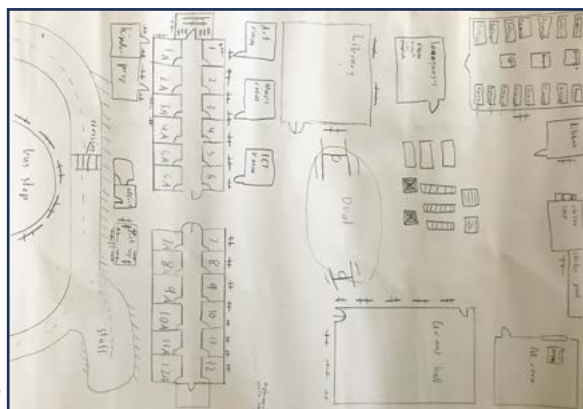
We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all those who purchased a gift through our meaningful Christmas gift catalogue at the end of 2023. Over \$13,000 was raised which will go directly towards practical items for our Deaf communities. These items have such a life changing impact on those who receive them. Already we have been able to purchase a three wheeled motorcycle and a laptop for D.R.Congo, and provide start up tools for four Ugandan carpentry students. What a huge blessing! Thank you!

Welcoming the next generation

After Andrew spoke at the Drouin Baptist church last year, young Eli Grant, aged 12, was so inspired he designed a whole new school for Deaf students! His school design includes an art room, a music room, a library as well as a chicken coop and an oval. It also includes a hall, aptly named 'Grant Hall' for the students to assemble in. Maybe one day we'll see this school come to fruition! Well done, Eli!



Eli's plan



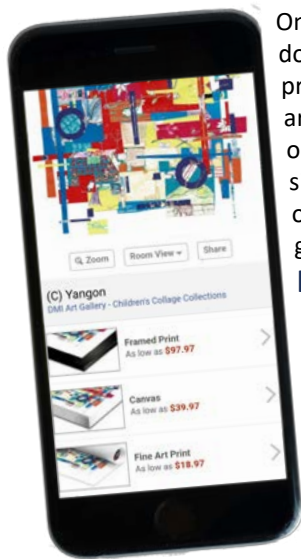
Website Updated

Over the last few months, we have been working hard to update our website. It's looking good and you might be surprised at what a rich resource it has become! The home page has a new look, incorporating Mr. Howard's powerful endorsement video. Under "Our Work/countries" we have updated school, education and ministry projects in every field. We have also done a lot of work to update the Deaf Action page, made it easier to navigate, and included Andrew Fisher's endorsement there.

Did you know we have a shop? Browse around and buy some gifts there. We also have an online art gallery displaying beautiful collages of our school students' artwork. These, too, are available for sale with all proceeds going to DMI/Deaf Action. We've also updated our 'Donate' page and made that easier to navigate, too. Give that one a go as well!

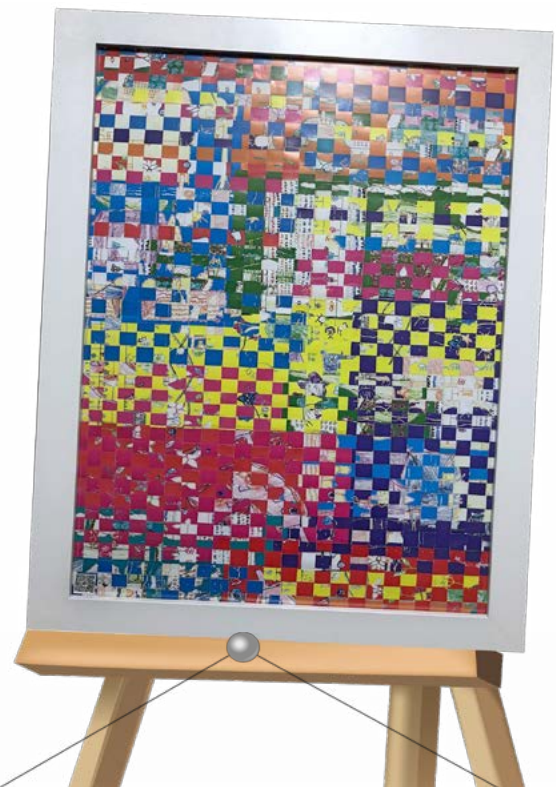


Artwork for sale



On visits to our schools, we ask students to do colourful artwork which we have had professionally made into collages. These are available for sale from our website as original pieces or poster prints of various sizes. They are wonderful mementos of our students and their lives and make great gifts as well.

<https://www.artpal.com/dmi>



SAVE THE DATES

May 9:

Sydney Fundraising dinner

Early July :

Melbourne art exhibition fundraiser

July 25-30:

UK New Wine Festival

August 24:

Melbourne trivia night

August 31:

Sydney trivia night

*DMI artwork exhibition and
launch, Melbourne*

Some of the DMI students' artwork will be shown in an art exhibition in Melbourne later this year. This event will be the launch of new artworks that aren't currently found on our online gallery. The launch will be our major fundraising event in Melbourne for 2024 so we'd love to see you there!

Dates for early July to come but
make a note of it.

2024 Wish List

In our last newsletter we shared a list of all the things DMI would love to achieve in 2024. We are excited to report that, thanks to our generous supporters, we have already achieved some of the goals on the list! Thank you!



Praise and Prayer

Prayer is such an important part of this ministry, and we'd like to ask you to partner with us in praying for the work that DMI is involved in. We may not be able to do much by our strength, but with God, nothing is impossible!!

2024

Pray for godly increase this year: increase in integrity in our fields, increase in prayer partners, increase in churches, increase in funding, increase in outreach, baptisms and discipleship, increase in community awareness and dignity for the Deaf, increase in prosperity through employment, increase in the coming of God's Kingdom through our ministry.

Mission Trip

Give thanks for the members of the Berwick Church of Christ who finished their mission trip in Ligao on January 29.

Kenya School

Give thanks for the recent abundant corn harvest at our new school garden in Kenya. Pray for continued success for the farm to feed students, and give thanks for various academic developments.

Steve and Bing

Let's continue praying for healing for Steve McAllister in Melbourne as he continues his treatment and for Bing in the Philippines as she undergoes more treatment.

Weekly prayer points can be found on our website or sign up to be a prayer partner and receive them directly to your email.

<https://deafmin.org/prayer/>



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