



Newsletter January & February 2018

January seems to be the longest month for our staff and children, after the excitement of Christmas and New Year we are back to our normal routine. The rainy season is ongoing and children go from inside a school room to inside their play/study room at La Maison d'Arnaud in a quiet and



Playing games indoors during the cyclone season.

comfortable rhythm that the children are used to. They amuse themselves with stories or dancing and at the weekends they have very popular movie nights where they watch their favourite films on a computer screen. We have combined the news for January and February this time because the house has been so quiet.

Fortunately, as the children become older they grow stronger due to good care and nutrition and the rainy season is passing with very few illnesses, although we know that local hospitals are full of people (especially the very young) suffering from viruses and infections that thrive in this hot, wet climate. The children's good health enables us to focus on education; we are always looking for ways to encourage them to learn, we create ways to support both those that are ready to face bigger challenges as well as those children that need extra help with learning. We have several children with



Working at Home!



Working at school!

learning difficulties resulting from harsh conditions and difficult circumstances in early years. All of our children have a unique past that has affected them one way or another and it is our job to give them the emotional stability, love and education to overcome their past and look towards their future.



As you know our sustainable projects are underway, but because of the bad weather we are unable to do much work in our garden and we are focusing on the chicken project. We have ordered 100 chickens which should arrive at the end of March, in the meantime work is being done on the chicken coop, to house them

appropriately. The staff are looking forward to putting their training into practice, but they are also a little overwhelmed with the responsibility of making this project a success, it is important that we all work together and support each other.

February has brought us two volunteers from Spain; Georgina is 23 years old, lives in Barcelona and studies law and has an interest in international law and human rights, her final thesis was on the rights of children including the regional systems for the protection of human rights.



Marta is also from Barcelona and graduated in Political Science and Administration at the Pompeu Fabra University. She has volunteered many

times since she was 16 years old and has a strong interest in humanitarian work, with experience working with those living with both mental and physical disabilities and with children.

These two clever and dedicated young women are childhood friends, we feel blessed that they have chosen La Maison d'Arnaud to volunteer and share their skills and experience with our children and staff.



Baby Kaylan!

February has also brought us a very special gift, a two-week old baby named Kaylan. Kaylan was born in prison where his mother is currently serving a four-year sentence. We have been supporting the women in prison with special care to those that are pregnant or breast feeding for around 4 years now. We supplement the diet of breast feeding mothers to enable them to keep their babies with them for as long as possible but, despite our efforts, the conditions in prison are so harsh that babies often fall ill, such as baby Kaylan and with the recommendation of officials doctors

and the mother herself it is necessary to remove the baby for their own safety. Kaylan has joined our family but with regular visits to the prison he will always have a special bond with his mother and when the time comes we will make every effort to reunite the family.

Book club.



We continue to run a book club every Saturday in our classroom. The book club serves not only our own children, but also children from the village who come to have fun and read and share stories with one another and our family. Some of the children who have shown a real

passion for reading have been borrowing books from the library to read at home during the week and have started asking for two as they read one in just two or three days. We are so please to support reading for fun in our community and give access to books to those who may not otherwise have had it. We are working hard to build up our library with not just English and French books, but a collection of beautiful Malagasy books for children, often outlining folk stories and celebrating Malagasy culture and environment.

We will be taking advantage of the new volunteers by running activity sessions at book club while they are with us. The first session saw the children learning new games and doing a painting class, which went down well and will be followed up my many more craft activities. Some of the university students from the nearby town have also asked to come and join in on a Saturday, offering computing and other games.

Ballroom Dance workshop

We have had an unexpected offer from a dance club in Diego who would like to organize a dance workshop at La Maison d'Arnaud during the Easter holidays. The workshop would include beginners' ballroom dancing techniques- a form of dance that is very popular in our region with many young people taking it up. Youth clubs often put on demonstrations of popular dances like the waltz, swing, salsa and



Let's dance!

tango during youth events and our children are excited to try it out. As always, we will invite children from the village too- who knows, maybe someone from our home or the community will discover a new talent and passion.

We are so very grateful for your support.

Thank you for giving these children a loving Home and a brighter future!

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