

Helping one of the poo

The **PANORAMA** *interview*

**BRIAN
McCANN**

interviews...



Jimmy Bruzon

Sierra Leone school Charity
Worker

You're one of the organisers of a charity bingo night that takes place this evening?

Yes, it takes place at the Senior Citizens' Club, Town Range at 9pm tonight.

What is the charity you're raising funds for?

We are raising funds for the Regent School Refurbishment Project in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This is one of AKIN's (Association for Kids in Need - Gibraltar) overseas projects.

How did you come to be involved with a school in Sierra Leone?

I took part in a 4x4 training course which was given to NGO (Non Governmental Organisations) staff during 2006 in Freetown by Bassadone's export company Toyota Gibraltar Stockholdings (TGS).

The company is involved in the supply of 4x4 vehicles to the aid and charity world and sometimes offers these types of 4x4 courses to aid-organisations working abroad.

Is the Sierra Leone government helping at all?

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in Africa and as such depends heavily on overseas aid. The government cannot cope with the demand that exists for even basic needs such as education, health, etc. and as a result the population suffers endlessly.

Are any other groups in Gibraltar working with you on this project?

The staff at TGS have been fantastic; they have actively supported the various fund raising activities and have helped out by storing, packing and organising collections of material which we have sent to the school.

Local businesses and restaurants have also supported the fund raising by donating stationery as well as prizes and vouchers for auction - the response is always excellent.

For how long have you been helping the



school and in what ways?

We began sending stationery items in vehicles which were being shipped to Freetown in 2007 and have also sent many other items such as donated TV sets, video players, DVD players, miscellaneous kitchen items, a small electricity generator, and even sports equipment. Everything is welcome and appreciated.

Are the costs of delivering the goods to such a place quite high?

There are no costs because the goods are sent in vehicles which are destined for various projects in Sierra Leone. Usually international organisations who purchase these vehicles allow us to ship the donations

in the vehicles and they then deliver the boxes to the school themselves at no cost.

Will the school's refurbishment be carried out by a Sierra Leone contractor or by volunteers?

The works will be carried out by a local Sierra Leone contractor which is well known to international aid organisations that have been working in Sierra Leone for many years.

How is the work going to be carried out - are there any groups working with you in Sierra Leone?

We have very close links with two international aid organisations such as the Spanish Red Cross and Medicos del Mundo; they

Best countries in Africa

have sought competitive budgets and will oversee the refurbishment works.

They have also begun an awareness campaign in the school's district in order to improve the population's awareness of a variety of health matters, proper hygiene, etc.

How many pupils attend the school and what is the age range?

There are 450 pupils, and ages range between 5 and 12 - it is a primary school.

The school is not large enough to accommodate pupils and staff comfortably and conditions are very poor.

Will it make a difference to their lives, apart from simply having a smarter school?

The children have to endure bad conditions at best, and even worse conditions whenever it rains because the school gets flooded as soon as it rains - in many cases classes have to be cancelled and the children miss school.

Having a better school will enhance the standards and increase the possibilities of learning for all the children.

Apart from tonight's bingo, are you looking for any other help locally?

We are always looking for ways to obtain funds and to raise awareness.

We welcome any support that groups or individuals may wish to offer and always welcome ideas for fund raising. One of the most popular ways to raise funds is to obtain vouchers from local business which we then raffle or auction off; we welcome any support in this respect.



Is there an entrance fee at the door?

Bingo booklets are priced

at £10 for 8 games and we will have a cake stall and raffles as well.

What sort of prizes do you expect to be won?

We have a variety of prizes such as mobile phones, mobile phone credit vouchers, hampers, wines and spirits, restaurant vouchers and many more excellent prizes.

If anyone wants to help with the school project, or find out more, how do they go about it?

Anyone wishing to help can contact me on 57631000 or visit the AKIN website www.akincharity.org.

We will be holding more fund raising activities during the year and need all the support we can get.

We are confident that with the support of everyone we will be able refurbish the school quickly and in doing so improve the lives of present and future pupils at Regent School. The children deserve a better environment where they can fulfil their potential, aspire to greater goals and have a better outlook for the future.

www.akincharity.org

THE ASSOCIATION FOR KIDS IN NEED (A.K.I.N.)

CHARITY

IN AID OF
REGENT PRIMARY SCHOOL,
FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

BINGO!

4	27	32	55	3
15	25	41	58	75
8	26	11	59	70
13	3	54	62	
43	SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB TOWN RANGE	Friday 21st May 9PM	CONTACT JAMES BRUZON 57631000	