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## OUR MAY CHARITY

### Reaching Rwanda

*Reaching Rwanda*, and its parent charity *Survivors Fund (SURF)*, will once again be our charity of the month this May. Sam Hunt will come and speak with us on Sunday 14 May to share some of the brilliant work going on there:

- ▶ The building of the new school 'Philly's Place' which should be ready by October;
- ▶ The joy of the children attending the school in its current location;
- ▶ The relationship building between pupils at Sandhurst School and their peers in Rwanda – building engagement for life;
- ▶ The opportunities to join in the work on visits to Rwanda as several in the parish have already done.

As a church we have the opportunity to build a deep and long lasting partnership with *Reaching Rwanda*, providing not just funds for this vital work, but also building relationships with the project, and enriching our understanding of challenging topics such as how we treat people as 'other', the stepping stones that lead ultimately to genocide, and ways we can bring healing and reconciliation in the pain that ensues.

After the 9:30am service on Sunday 14 May, there will be the opportunity to hear more from Brendon, Karen, Martin, and Erica who visited Rwanda last year on how the trip has impacted them personally.

Let us seize the opportunity to pray and support *Reaching Rwanda* this month, and throughout the year ahead.

**Dave Percival, Charity Champion**

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### Reaching Rwanda trip, July 2022

A group of 22 of us, some Sandhurst School Staff, some 6th form students and we 'hangers on' visited the breathtakingly beautiful country of Rwanda, whose population was decimated by war and genocide in 1994 and is still recovering with the help of charities such as SURF and Reaching Rwanda which was set up by Sam Hunt, the Deputy Head of Sandhurst School. Her passionate work to support the survivors and their families has raised awareness in our local community and made a difference to many lives.

### Footy in the street

There's always time for a quick kick about.

### House painting & furniture installation

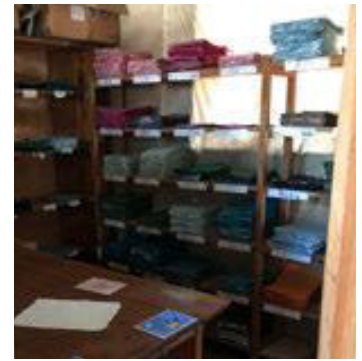
Folk have been so generous in their donations of money towards Sam's *Reaching Rwanda* scheme, and some of the funds have been used to purchase furniture and paint. Some of the houses which were hastily constructed when the people of Rwanda were trying to mend their lives after 1994, have either had



to be rebuilt or at the very least, have major work done to make them safe and habitable. There's always work to be done and we spent a day painting the inside and outside of two houses, and then new furniture was brought in. The residents brought out chairs and sat and watched (with some amusement) the sloshing about of paint, with much singing along to the tunes on Janice's phone and the occasional break for a quick blast of 'The Macarena' and 'Cha Cha Slide' with the local children.



We realised the skill involved when we tried our hands at creating our own. Our lovely instructors were kindness itself but baffled by our lack of talent!



## Philly's Place

This centre is named after Sam Hunt's mum who is a massive supporter – Sam's goal in life is to get the real Philly's Place, a centre of learning and support for children, up and running.

## Sewing Industry

Gosh, we could have spent a lot of money on the fabulous clothes, bags and hair scrunchies!

## Card Making

Rwandan communities are impressive in their enterprise - the small and very basic premises for the paper making industry were turning out some really beautiful cards that were sold in Rwanda and beyond.



During the summer we went to see the site – the building is up but £20,000 more is needed to finish it and fit it out (not a lot compared to what this would cost in the UK, but nevertheless, the money needs to be found.) In the meantime, the centre has temporary accommodation and we went to visit, brought our donated clothes, toys, pens paper, toiletries and these were distributed after we were treated to a song and organised various crafty activities.



## Niyo Arts Centre

We had a very happy time making and decorating 'whizzers' brought by Katie – and also seeing the wonderful art work created in this centre. Did a bit of dancing too... and drumming.



## Goats

Have a mind of their own... but goats and cows change the lives of families and communities and are much prized and cherished. St Michael's Choir donated funds for six goats, beautiful creatures but seriously naughty! And Katie's community donated a cow which had to be sung to and named in a traditional ceremony. The village decided on the cow's name, Imigoza, which means 'Forgiveness' and forgiveness seemed to be in evidence throughout our trip.



## Iminganzima Hostel

*SURF* Charity and *Reaching Rwanda* supports this hostel for older residents – most have no family to care for them because of the slaughter that happened in 1994. Such a joyful community! It was sad that we couldn't get 'in amongst them' because of the fear of Covid infection, but they could see our love and smiles behind our masks, I'm sure.

**Karen Phillips & Erica Kendrick-Thomas**