

THE Sylvia Wright TRUST

Registered Charity No. 326139

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www.sylviawright.org

Dear Supporters,

31st March 2017

St David, the patron saint of Wales, advised his followers to “be joyful, keep the faith, do the little things and do them well.” Sylvia has followed this to the letter and set us all a great example, based on her simple mix of faith, determination and hard work.

Every year sees more of the same but also changes and the year since last Easter is no exception.

The school continues to prosper and to give a vital and unique service to 200 deaf children. Audiology is going from strength to strength, with 2 more teachers being trained and with the last of the children being fitted this June with high quality hearing aids. Dianne Ward is now turning her attention to speech therapy through UK mentors and local practitioners. IT has moved on to include two digital classrooms and the provision of the first smartboards.

The results are encouraging, even astonishing, and are reflected in excellent exam results and in the numbers of children going on to higher levels of education. Last year 28 out of 32 fifth formers have gone on to some form of 6th form studies and all of the sixth form leavers have gone on to further education, some helped by our Bursary Fund – amazing progress for deaf village children.

The Nursing College continues to run smoothly and each year 20 more qualified nurses readily find employment. As with the deaf children, it is hugely encouraging to see village girls achieve professional qualifications and employment. There is a continuing gleam in Sylvia’s eye as she considers how and when to make fuller use of the staff and buildings by increasing the annual intake numbers to 40. Watch this space.

Elsewhere Sylvia’s story is one of simultaneous expansion and contraction.

The Hospital has for some time been coming under (welcome) pressure, as government provision has improved at last. The poorer patients now have genuine alternatives at free local clinics and the new government hospital in the town. The better off patients have several options through a range of commercial providers.

After much thought and prayer, Sylvia has decided to withdraw gradually from medical services and to hand over the hospital. This will take some time but she has identified a new hospital provider who will safeguard the jobs of the staff and continue an element of charitable work for patients.

Sylvia herself, understandably, feels some sadness at this inevitable development but, at the same time, feels a great relief that this aspect of her journey is nearing completion. She has successfully bridged a gap in medical provision for thousands of sick and disabled people for 35 years.

Over these years there have been many “miracles” surrounding Sylvia’s work and another small miracle is the coincidence of the timing of her new Day Centre for severely disabled children.

This Education & Therapy Centre opened on March 15th and the children and staff moved in on the 16th. They are all delighted. The building itself is complete and offers wonderful facilities. Some work remains in respect of furniture, equipment and landscaping. This will be completed prior to the more formal opening in the Autumn when the weather has cooled. Please see our website for updates.

The Centre will continue its remarkable and humbling service, looking after up to 100 children and will offer more advanced therapies plus some outpatient and outreach services. Some additional staff will be required and Marian Emley has recruited a number of volunteer UK therapists to mentor and develop them over the coming months. There is still virtually no other provision for these disabled children in the district; Sylvia and the Trustees believe that the need will continue for the foreseeable future and we therefore embrace the switch in priorities.

At the same time, the Trustees continue to encourage Sylvia to secure her legacy and take these new opportunities for improvements in local governance, for strengthening management and for planning future succession.

Sylvia will be visiting the UK in the second half of July. We are hoping to arrange a supporters’ get together, offering a chance to talk to Sylvia more personally and hear her views on the future. During her visit, Sylvia will also have a number of slots (between July 15th and 30th) where she can visit and speak. If you would like to invite her, please contact our secretary, John Howley, who is looking after her schedule. Tel 0113 2673936

The Trust and our Action Group – SWAG - continue to give Sylvia moral, practical and financial support and we are fortunate to have so many loyal supporters and help from churches, schools and other groups. Several new volunteers are joining SWAG and more are always welcome. This friendly group meets in Leeds three times a year and is a great resource for many of the tasks which keep the Trust running smoothly. Please contact Tony Hartigan (tel: 01943 851431) for details of our next meeting.

Our valiant speakers are still busy but more engagements to spread the word are always welcome. There is no charge and no commitment. Please contact Anne-Marie Rose. Tel 0113 2685423

Bernadette Barnes and Andrew Lowe have a special interest in promoting our links with schools and in educating and informing young people – even more relevant now with the increased emphasis on education and disability. They would welcome other schools who would like to get involved.

Sadly, Barbara Neale, our Trustee from St Andrews Roundhay passed away in January. Barbara was a faithful and energetic Trustee and guided visitors to India with great care. May she rest in peace.

Our next newsletter will be out in June and will include a full report and photos of the new Centre.

In the meantime I wish you a Happy Easter and, as always, Sylvia and the Trustees send their grateful thanks for your patient and loyal support.

Tony Allinson (Chairman)