

## All I want for Christmas...



**Milngavie Work Team**

Yes indeed it's that time of year again, when most of us will turn our minds to giving gifts and catching up with friends and family around Christmas, New year and various other festivals in our annual calendar.

What to buy, what to give, particularly when everyone seems to have everything already? Well for one group of people their hope quite literally is to give a new home for forty children in the beautiful high Amazon jungle of Peru. Back in January 2008 a member from St Paul's Parish Church Milngavie in Glasgow returned from a Vine Trust Vision Trip with the idea that she would like to do something to help. Little could we have imagined that just 18 months later this "idea" would have resulted in enough money being raised to build a new children's home for abandoned street children. Members and friends of St Paul's Church enthusiastically got behind the vision and have raised enough funds for the construction of a home known as 'Kimo.' Through an intense programme of fundraising events including concerts, a Christmas tree festival, and talks to local interested groups over £60,000 has been raised.

A tremendous amount of money but for the children who will be given a permanent place to call home, when the centre opens in January 2010, the value is priceless.

In addition members of St Paul's and other willing volunteers spent 2 weeks in Peru this July to see the project for themselves and assist with the construction.

Located in the high jungle its quite a trip, 8 hours by bus and even when the bus arrives the adventure is not over.. Kimo is located on the opposite side of the river from the road and the only means of crossing is in a 'Huaró' (a cage suspended on wires above the river). But the 'Indiana Jones' style crossing is worth it when visitors are rewarded with stunning views of jungle covered mountains as far as the eye can see.



**Kimo, Peru**

The group put in several hard days work, clearing the land, collecting sand for concrete, and hammering on the timber cladding, all under the watchful eye of Jose, a skilled carpenter who is managing the build.

The group then went on to spend a few days in the Sacred Valley visiting one of SU Peru's existing children's homes that is already operational. This gave the group a good idea of how Kimo would be run and the need for a new home when they heard about some of the tragic situations that the boys had come from.

One such story is of a boy who has been at the home for 5 months. In that time He had already run away 5 times, each time Hector the house father went to look for him, found him and asked him to return. Each time the boy returned and he now seems much more settled but it is easy to understand why the boy has been so unsettled when you hear something of his background. At the age of 6 he witnessed his mother kill his baby sister. His mother then taught him how to steal and put him on the streets to fend for himself.

With many other tragic stories, it is great to hear of the children doing well in their studies and it will be fascinating to hear what some of them go on to achieve in the years to come.

..... All we want for Christmas is to see construction at Kimo completed, ready to begin receiving another 40 children in the course of 2010.

Oh and if your not sure what to buy yourself this Christmas or for any other special occasion for friends and family do look at our **GIFTAIDCARDS** details of which can be found on the back page.

*Willie McPherson*

## A Wonderful Experience and Unforgettable Journey

When my daughter qualified as a Doctor this year and asked me to join her on a working trip to the Peruvian Amazon on 'The Amazon Hope', I unreservedly said 'Yes'. It was a wonderful experience. I was so impressed with the Vine Trust Charity, SU Peru and their work.

Our British team consisted of two doctors (my daughter Lucie and me), three nurses, a dentist and two dental students. The Peruvian medical team consisted of a 'relief' doctor, an obstetrician and a laboratory technician. Our purpose was to give the Peruvian medical team, who usually run the project, a break and provide by boat the only source of primary medical care to isolated Amazonian villages which had no road access.

The remoteness of the project gave a beautiful working setting. We boarded our ship via Iquitos, the rubber boom town of the Amazon where the heat and light were overpowering. Once aboard and moving we drifted past beautiful scenery and watched pink river dolphins swim past fishermen in dug-out canoes. We saw villages of thatched houses where children played in the river. I rose early, eager to experience the serenity of the misty 'auroras' or sunrises which contrasted with the vivid orange and red sunsets, followed by the parrots' cacophony. There was plenty of quiet reading time.

The ship visited the villages approximately once every three months and had excellent facilities. Our working day started at 9am. We docked, the horn sounded and the empty river banks filled with colourful villagers who clambered across the gang plank. They were all given Mebendazole, unless contraindicated, and the nurses triaged. The obstetrician gave contraceptive advice. We gave prescription glasses to delighted farmers and the dentists worked hard at fillings and extractions. The boat was well equipped with a pharmacy and the Lab technician screened for Malaria.



The medicine was mostly straightforward: gastroenteritis, pyrexial children and dermatology. There were a few challenging cases; malaria, dengue fever, cutaneous leishmaniasis and patients with obvious advanced carcinoma who did not want to travel for any treatment. We had interpreters. I had read avidly about Peru, attended Spanish classes and read about tropical medicine. None of these were a pre-requisite but certainly heightened my enjoyment and interest.

We had a long lunch break and the food was good - plenty of chicken, fish, rice and plantains. At the end of the working day we wandered into the villages amongst the chickens, pigs and drying fish to play volleyball and football. Occasionally we found a village hall with a television. We had a wonderful British and Peruvian team and I shall always remember the kindness and spirit of the Peruvian people.

I very much look forward to my next trip on 'The Amazon Hope'.

*Dr. Angela Kirby, GP, Tetbury, Gloucestershire  
(Vine Trust Medical & Dental Team, June 2009)*

## Schools Update - Summer Report Card

Secondary school pupils from Kyle Academy, Berwickshire High and Eyemouth High School embarked on a trip to Peru this summer. Madeline King, 17 from Eyemouth tells us about her experiences. 'We [travelled] round Peru, from the Amazon Jungle in Iquitos to the high Andes Mountains in Kusi and finally to Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of the Incas in Cusco. Playing catch and snap and other typical children's games soon broke down the language barrier with the children.

At each of these amazing places we met and bonded with incredible people, not only the boys but the SU house parents that have given up everything to give these boys another chance. These wonderful people welcomed us into their homes and taught us many things about their culture and their day to day lives, and allowed us to do a fair bit of Scottish country dancing with them! I don't think any of us will ever forget how incredibly lucky we were. Experiences such as the Amazon Jungle are ones that can never be outdone, everything you can ever

have imagined a jungle to be, this was. Our country has no idea of what real poverty is, yet despite theirs the majority of people you see in Peru are smiling widely and look genuinely happy. They don't know what it is to be spoilt, they have simple lives and are simply happy.' Thanks to Maddie for sharing with us and to all the young people who participated in the trips. This experience offers young people an outdoor classroom taking in the sights, smells, sounds and tastes of Peru.

Our Peru expedition offers a global perspective on issues such as poverty, citizenship, sustainable tourism, and helps pupils make sense of the world and the communities in which they live. They experience the sights and culture of Peru as well as visiting some of the Casa Girasoles centres and our medical project in the Amazon. To get your school booked on a trip, email [michelle@vinetrust.org](mailto:michelle@vinetrust.org) or phone 01875 812252 for more details. Book now for 2011...or snap up the October 2010 trip.

*Michelle Livingstone*

## News from the Homes – An Andean Grand Design

The popular TV programme, Grand Designs, features unusual architectural building projects. If the programme ever visited South America then I believe that the street children's centre of Kusi would not look out of place as one of the featured builds. Crafted using traditional techniques and with an unrivalled location of spectacular natural beauty, it is a project that even Kevin MacLeod, host of the TV programme, would find impressive.



**Kusi, 2005**

This June and July I had the privilege of spending time in Peru with some of our school and work party groups who go to Peru to gain an understanding of the work and to make a practical difference by helping with basic construction work. One of the places that several of these groups visited this summer was 'Kusi' in the mountainous Ancash province of Peru. Kusi is more than just a street children centre, it is also a 'model village.' Peru's answer to 'New Lanark' as one volunteer remarked after hearing about the vision of Kusi. Robert Owen pioneered a new way of living in the Scottish Mill town of New Lanark which dramatically raised the living standards of workers. Our partners, SU Peru, believe that Kusi also has the potential to make a dramatic impact on the local community.

The street children centre is situated right at the heart of the village, thus making a strong statement in a society where street children are often viewed as being at the bottom of the social scale. Like any typical Andean village there is a square or plaza at the centre of the village and this is surrounded by buildings including workshops for the boys to learn skills and a school, run in partnership with the Peruvian Ministry of Education, and which local children can also attend free of charge.

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Kusi has a 'wow' factor that is just not possible to fully capture in the photos. Nestled on the valley side, below the awesome Huascaran mountain, the panoramic views are simply stunning. The build has developed slowly since construction began at the site in 2003. However on one of the trips this summer there were a couple of people who had been on the first work party to Kusi in 2003 and what a difference they noticed in the development of the site, despite the labour intensive building techniques that remain true to the time honoured traditions of the Andes.

If you were to measure the carbon footprint of the build, it would certainly be very small, with most materials being sourced from the surrounding earth - the timber coming from locally planted trees and the foundations constructed with granite boulders that are also found onsite.

Construction in the Andes also makes use of adobe (mud) bricks which have been used in Peru since Inca times. Adobe bricks are fireproof, soundproof and eco-friendly.



**Kusi, 2007**

Kusi children's home is now far more than just a building site, it is as the name suggests an actual home. 42 boys are looked after by dedicated house parents, Angel and Rosa, and their committed staff. Work party volunteers frequently express their admiration for the staff and the boys at the home. Even the cold showers, basic accommodation and hard work could not diminish the group's enthusiasm for what they witness at the home. Children who had been written off by society, now achieving in school, playing games, sharing moments of affection with their house parents who they call 'mama' and 'papa', in short doing what we expect children to do.

Connecting People to Change Lives



Every evening the work party groups shared dinner with the boys in the home. One evening the meal was interrupted to sing happy birthday to 2 of the boys. The younger of the 2 boys, Diego, had been at the home for just 8 months and as he blew out his candles and passed out a portion of the birthday cake to everyone in the room, he had the biggest grin on his face. You would expect this from a boy on his birthday but we later discovered that this was the first time Diego had ever had a birthday cake and he was certainly savouring the moment. It was a real privilege that we were there to celebrate the occasion with him.

At Kusi, there will also be some more reasons to celebrate in the near future. The home has now been open for 3 years and this December the first couple of boys will be graduating from High School and plan to go onto the local University. This should provide the younger boys in the home with a great role model. Despite their difficult start in life maybe they too can go onto fulfil their dreams in the future.

BOOK NOW to join a 2010 workteam. There are still spaces for individuals or the option of creating your own team of friends / colleagues. See [www.vinetrust.org](http://www.vinetrust.org) for details or email [calum@vinetrust.org](mailto:calum@vinetrust.org)  
*Calum Munro*



**Kusi, 2009**

[www.vinetrust.org](http://www.vinetrust.org)

## GIFTAIDCARDS

Our **GIFTAIDCARDS** scheme first introduced last Christmas continues to grow in popularity. Birthdays, Weddings and Anniversaries to name but a few have generated almost £3,500 in the first 8 months of 2009. Many thanks to all who have supported this scheme. This year two additional cards have been added along with a pack of 10 note cards.

100% of the income raised from **GIFTAIDCARDS** is sent to Peru to help support our Street Children and Medical Programmes. Full details are available on the website, where an order form can be downloaded.

### Can you HELP?



Would your Church, group or workplace be willing to promote the **GIFTAIDCARDS** scheme? Boxes with 50 of each card can be delivered to you to display (and sell) at your local fair, coffee morning, weekly meetings etc.

To find out how you can help or to arrange for a box to be delivered to you, please contact Robert Alexander ([robert@vinetrust.org](mailto:robert@vinetrust.org)).

## Focus on Fundraising



*An early cheque from the Lions.*

We are constantly encouraged by the lengths our supporters will go to in order to raise funds to support the work in Peru. Great imagination and initiative is often taken, along with unquantifiable effort.

Our grateful thanks this quarter go out to Ted Rockley and the The International Association of Lions Clubs District 105-BN who have recently concluded a 3 year project of fundraising events and have donated the much appreciated sum of £12,315.04! This money is being used to subsidise the medical necessities such as medication which the Amazon Hope Medical Project requires.

We are extremely grateful for all the fundraising activities that The International Lions Club Association have embarked upon on our behalf, the latest being a 75 mile sponsored walk! Well done to all.

There are many ways you can fundraise. For example, why not use fundraising to mark a wedding, special birthday or anniversary? Many of our supporters have done this, raising invaluable funds in order to touch the lives of some of Peru's most marginalised people. If you would like to find out more about how you can help us raise the funds necessary to support the work of the Trust in Peru, please feel free to contact the office and we can send you out our fundraising pack.

For more information please contact Lynsey Orbegozo on 01875 812252 or email [lynsey@vinetrust.org](mailto:lynsey@vinetrust.org)

## LAST CALL Vision Trip 2010

Tuesday 9th Feb – Friday 19th Feb  
Cost £1,650

Places are still available for this opportunity (first offered in the previous edition of Connections) to see at first hand the work of Vine Trust and our partners SU Peru in the Street Children and Medical programmes. Applications must be received before the end of October. For further information on this visit to the Andres, Amazon and coastal regions of Peru.

Please register your interest by contacting 01875 812252 or email [admin@vinetrust.org](mailto:admin@vinetrust.org)

### SPEAK UP!

During the course of a year, Vine Trust will arrange in excess of 120 presentations to groups and organisations, across the country, about the work of the Trust.

We are extremely grateful to our army of volunteer speakers who speak of the work of Vine Trust and in many cases of their personal involvement in a Work Party or Medical / Dental Trip to Peru.

If your group or organisation would like to find out more (or to get an update) of the our work then please contact Robert on 01875 812252 or email [robert@vinetrust.org](mailto:robert@vinetrust.org)

### From 12th October.....



You can now order and pay for **GIFTAIDCARDS** and CALENDARS on line and make donations for the work of the Trust.

Workteam and Medical Trips will also be able to apply and pay on line shortly thereafter.

Visit [www.vinetrust.org](http://www.vinetrust.org)

## Vine Trust 2010 Calendars on sale for £8.