



The history of the project

Ruth and Jeff Njuguna suffered the tragic loss of their first daughter, Lavenda Wairimu, during birth. In the midst of their heartache they travelled back to Kenya, Jeff's birthplace. Their grief was compounded by witnessing hundreds of street children in every town – many orphaned, all needing love and a future.

Ruth and Jeff determined to start a project in their daughter's name to provide education, healthcare and most of all HOPE to these beautiful children. In 1997 they bought a piece of land – with no connections to major charities but just the passion to make a difference to these children's lives.

Lavenda Education and Health Foundation was born.

Lavenda is a community development project some four hours north of Nairobi, Kenya. From a school of five children school in 2001, it was providing education, food and clothing for well over 400 children by 2007 and had built homes for HIV/AIDS orphans in Kivuli Houses ('Kivuli' means shelter or shade in Swahili) !

It also:

- Builds water tanks to 'harvest' the rainfall in this dry area
- Provides full-time employment to over 50 adults
- Has planted over 10,000 trees in the region
- Uses environmentally friendly cooking and building methods
- Runs women's community groups
- Runs adult literacy classes
- Runs apprenticeship schemes in carpentry, building and hairdressing
- Has a child sponsorship program

How is QK involved?



2003

- QK became the official 'Sister School' of Lavenda where the two schools exchange ideas and build relationships.
- April/May – QK teacher Melissa Johns visits Lavenda for the first time taking with her books and stationary donated by QK students.
- December – First Lavenda fundraiser at QK during Ramadan raises £1200.
- Christmas – Melissa and Nick Johns visit the project and deliver cheque from QK.

2004

- April – Second fundraiser raises over £1000, Jeff Njuguna visits QK for first time.
- July – Trip to Lavenda by Melissa Johns, Nick Johns (former QK teacher) and Jonathon Lisseman, taking with them 1600 items of brand new QK uniform to donate.
- October – Jeff Njuguna visits QK. Presented with cheque from Nawal (Year 9 student) who had raised over £500 by herself!

2005

- July – Lavenda QK Walk and Summer Fair raises over £2500.

2006

- February – Jeff takes assemblies, meets with staff and teaches lessons at QK.
- April – QK staff Jessica Schembri, Debbie Bell, Peter Smith, Robert Deane, Rebecca Young, Fiona McKay, Nick Johns, Cheri Carrington, David Toyloco, Serena Naidoo and Anne O'Connor visit Lavenda.
- May – Ruth Njuguna visits QK for first time.
- July – Lavenda QK Walk and Summer Fair raises over £2000.
- October and March 2007 – Jeff Njuguna and Melissa Johns meet at QK to organise student trip planned for May/June with.
- December – Year 10 student Amy Ward organises a World Aids Day fundraiser with the help of Melissa Johns. £250 raised goes to Lavenda to furnish the QK Kivuli House.

2007

- March 2007 – Jeff Njuguna at QK for two weeks where he teaches lessons, takes assemblies, meets with staff and does Year 9 Enrichment Day on Lavenda Springs. QK teacher Melissa Johns organises 'African Cultural Evening' fundraiser which is supported by many QK staff and raises £5000 in one evening!
- April - Year 10 students raise £300 with the help of teacher, Jessica Schembri.
- April - Melissa Johns and student Amy Ward secure over £13,000 funding from Youth Opportunity Fund Westminster for QK student trip
- May – A Lavenda classroom is named after QK staff member Shazia Pervaiz after a generous donation is made.
- May/June – 12 students from Year 9 and 10 go to Lavenda Springs in Kenya, accompanied by staff members Melissa Johns, Fran Dix and Jonathon Lisseman. Students run basketball workshops, plant trees and take part in building and plastering work for QK Kivuli House.
- June – 12 'Student Lavenda Leaders' who have recently visited Lavenda take part in QK Community Week activities. They run information stalls, give talks and run Year 10 'Community Day' workshops for their peers.
- July – Melissa Johns and Fran Dix run an 'Indulgence Evening' fundraiser for Lavenda at QK, where people come along to be pampered with manicure, pedicure, massage, reflexology and more. All provided by professional therapists.

QK has also raised funds to build a dormitory to house 50 girls and a Kivuli House for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Several QK classes and teachers sponsor children.

Several films have been so that QK staff and students see what their fundraising has achieved.