

ETAS Teacher-to-Teacher Project 2008-9.

News from Matopo Primary School, Zimbabwe.

Here begins a tale with a happy ending...and the end is just a beginning.

It all started last January at the AGM in Chur, where I gave a slide presentation about our current Teacher-to-Teacher project in Zimbabwe at Matopo Primary School. So many people came up to me afterwards to compliment me on the project and my presentation, and to ask how they could help or get more involved. It was heart-warming to get such positive feedback and the fund-raising at that event broke all the records.

At the apéro, Raymond Rogers, husband of ETAS member Fay, approached me and we started chatting about the project and the general situation in Zimbabwe. Turns out that Raymond, who works for Cargill Inc., has had a bit of experience in the direction of aid projects in developing countries and he had a lot to say about how he thought ETAS should go outside our organization to look for financial sponsorship. You may recall that I wrote in a previous Journal report about how Cargill, through Raymond's help, donated \$1,000.00 which we are using to rebuild the toilets at Matopo Primary School.

But Raymond's advice didn't stop there. He suggested that I write a proposal to the Roger Federer Foundation. At first I thought he was crazy. I was sure such a prestigious charity wouldn't be interested in our 'little' project. But Raymond persisted and supported me through the headaches of writing my first fundraising proposal. "Think of it as an exercise," he advised me when I got discouraged. "It'll help you to focus on the concrete goals of the project and put them into focus." Undoubtedly true, but sometimes I couldn't escape the feeling that I was pouring a lot of time and effort into a hopeless cause. Once I'd finally submitted the proposal, I breathed a sigh of relief and tried to forget about it. I didn't tell anyone anything for fear I'd have to admit defeat.

But as you've probably already guessed, the proposal was accepted. We got the news on July 17th, and I floated on air for a week. My husband Peter, Amy Jost and Jayne Herzog accompanied me to a meeting with Christoph Schmocker, the director of the

Federer Foundation board, and Roger Federer's parents, Lynette and Robert, on August 21st to seal the deal. So, a happy ending... which is just a beginning of many new challenges ahead.

This turn of events will mean a whole new direction for the project. I've always dreamed of expanding our support to include more of the primary and secondary schools in the region, whose plight is similar to that of Matopo Primary School before ETAS began helping there. Now we can do that.

But it's very important to keep in mind that this is still very much ETAS's project, and with the expansion I will need your help more than ever. I do hope that more of you will consider becoming a pen friend with a teacher from Matopo, or even offering financial support to one. These teachers are trying so hard in the face of continuing neglect by the Zimbabwean government. They really deserve our best efforts. Please do contact me (trea@e-tas.ch) if you'd like to be involved.

There will be lots more to tell in my next up-date, after our trip to Zimbabwe in October. I'll be giving the third annual Teachers' Workshop Day and visiting the other schools to begin plans for our work next year. There's going to be a huge celebration. Watch for news as well on my blog, www.matopoprimaryschool.blogspot.com where I make regular posts on what's going on.

A big thank you to Raymond and Fay Rogers as well as to everyone else who made donations this year, large and small. Thanks to you, we are on the way to bigger and better things at Matopo Primary School and the entire region. We've only just begun.