

Dear friends,

I will flying off from KL tonight, Tuesday, 24th April. Am really grateful for this last week spent at home, clearing up a lot of pending reports and accounts, besides spending time with my mum. What lies ahead of us in the next few months in Kenya is an intense program as we start construction of the Emmaus Centre Project (ECP).

Here are some highlights of our stay here in Asia during the past three months.

1. We had set out to raise S\$300,000 to fund TRLF's regular programmes for the coming year, as well as our full administrative budget. Taking into account funds received and pledged amounts, we expect to meet the target **in full** by July.
2. With regard to the ECP budget, to date we have **raised SGD191,185 of our SGD200,000** target. This would not have been possible without the generous support from so many of you. I hope to be able to raise the shortfall of approximately SGD9,000 by May this year. If you would like to make a contribution in support of this project, do let me know. You can know more about the ECP on our blog at www.tanariverlife.wordpress.com.
3. We were also most grateful for the following donations in kind:
 - Sanitary napkins – staff of Crescent Girls School
 - Sponsorship of freight charges for two containers – The Chan family
 - Sponsorship of freight charges for one container – The Wong & Teng families
 - Math Sets/Calculators/Clipboards – staff of Holy Innocents High Sch.
 - Children's stationeries and art material – Catholic High School
 - Laboratory Microscope – Dr. Adeline Ng
 - Nursery school uniforms – Mr. Tang T.Y.
 - Office furniture and PCs – Radiance Communications Pte Ltd
 - Construction of two toilets for the ECP – staff of St. Theresa's Convent
 - All bake sale ingredients – Halia Restaurant
 - All bake sale material – Kitchen Capers
 - Nursery furniture – The Shepherd's Cove
 - Donation of Children's art (since 2009) - The Pang family
 - Fundraising event on 18th Feb, 2012 - Siew Fan & friends at Gallery Helios
 - TRLF brochures and postcards for ECP - Thomas Teo
 - Transport for long distance travel in Malaysia - Vincent Loke
4. Our friends, the team of Mary and Vanessa helped us organize a jumble sale once again, and together with the bake sale organized by the Chung family and Iris Tay, we managed to raise SGD18,500 over the one and a half days. Since the freight charges for the containers were fully sponsored, all proceeds from the jumble/bake sales were added to the ECP fund. I am also grateful to Yvonne Goh for all transportation provided throughout this period, without which we definitely could not have completed packing on time. We also had a lot of fun with KJ, Florence, Agnes, Jayne, Lena, Sock, Esther, Pendeza members, Yeow family, Lucy's family, and many others at the Jumble sale, manning the stalls and doubling up as valued shoppers.
5. We worked with an increasing number of schools in Singapore to share our mission and vision among the youth here. That too has been rewarding as it allows us to shape lives not only in Kenya but also here in Asia. Raffles Institution and Maris Stella High School held separate fund raising events in support of the ECP and we are grateful for their sincere and generous efforts.
6. Fr. Henry of Nativity Church offered yet again faithful and complete support for our work by providing Eddy and I not only working space but also logistical support for the two months we were in Singapore. Eddy proved to be more capable this year and worked largely on his own with volunteers to prepare the shipment of three containers to Kenya containing donations in kind for our programmes. Thanks to HIHS Scouts and Singapore Polytechnic friends for their help.

7. We are very grateful to the Kong family for letting us stay in their house while in Singapore. That certainly helped preserve a lot of precious energy in terms of travel time. With accommodation provided, we could plan out a more efficient distribution of time between Malaysia and Singapore.
8. My ex college-mate, Ms. Iris Tay has kindly volunteered wholeheartedly her support in helping us continue raising funds and publicity for our projects. She will be the TRLF volunteer partner here in Singapore, and also maintains our blog. There is no broadband available where we are in Kenya, and sometimes sending our letters and reports can be extremely time consuming. Together with Iris, we have set up a new email account – tanariverlifefoundation@gmail.com - which we will use for distribution of our letters and reports from now on. Please advise by email if you do not wish to continue being on our mailing list.
9. We received the final tender document for the ECP which was the result of a generous joint effort of friends from AEDAS Pte. Ltd., ARUP Singapore Pte. Ltd., LAC Engineers & Associates and KPK Quantity Surveyors, all performed without charge. Our next step is to call for tenders and hopefully we can begin construction by the end of the third quarter of 2012. Aegis Building & Engineering Pte Ltd has kindly offered to handhold us by sending their engineer to Kenya when we call for tenders right through till the start of actual construction. I intend to put two youth under his charge so that they can be trained in this field. Hopefully we should get better with each phase of construction and be able to handle future construction more independently.
10. A group of students from Singapore Management University called the Pendeza Group, will be visiting Kenya in May for community outreach work. With funding from Accenture Pte Ltd, eleven of our youth from the Youth Entrepreneurial Programme (YES) will attend a training-cum-seminar in entrepreneurship organized by the Pendeza Group in Meru in Central Kenya.
11. We are also very grateful to all friends in the media and broadcasting industry both in Singapore and Malaysia for the extensive coverage given this year on our projects in the print media, as well as radio and television. Links to the coverage we received have been posted by Iris on the TRLF blog. <http://tanariverlife.wordpress.com/tag/media-coverage/>
12. The five students on full tuition scholarship in UTAR in Kampar, Malaysia will be on their semester break in the third and fourth week of May. They will be spending time between my mum's place in JB and Singapore. If you would like to meet them, do let me know. They have requested some coaching for their weaker subjects while in Singapore, namely business law, quantitative theory and programming. If you are able to help us on this issue, do send me an email.
13. Next year, we hope to be able to bring a female student to UTAR for undergraduate studies. We also intend to bring another young lady who is running our nursery in Kenya to Singapore/Malaysia for a month. Like Eddy, Tracy was a former beneficiary of our education programmes from secondary to tertiary level, where she studied Early Childhood Education. If we are able to meet all her necessary expenses, she will be attached to a private nursery in Katong for a month during the morning hours, and in the National Library of Singapore during the afternoon hours. Our intention is for her to get good practical exposure in early childhood education as well as library administration so that when she returns, she will be able to train other teachers as well as implement new ideas she learns from here.
14. Finally, the audit report has been finalized but not yet issued as our auditor suffered the loss of his wife last week. I will send Iris a softcopy next week from Kenya and she will be able to upload it on the blog. Reports for all previous years are now available for download on the same blog.

All in all, it has been enriching, and I do hope we too were able to enrich and touch many lives in big and small ways. Thank you and may each one of you be blessed abundantly by God in the coming months. Let us continue to keep one another in prayers.

Gabriel Teo Kian Chong
24th April 2012, Johor Bahru, Malaysia