



CONTENTS

Welcome

Celebrating International
Day for Persons with
Disabilities 2023

Special Feature - Leo

Focus on - Child
Empowerment Program

Fundraising

Contact Us

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of Nicky's Foundation newsletter.

In this edition we have shared some of our successes of the past year along with a spotlight on the Child Empowerment Program.

We also have a special feature on one of our beneficiaries, Leo, as he talks about his personal experiences of living with a disability.

We would welcome feedback from our readers on ways we can improve the newsletter and if you are planning to hold or have held a fundraising event on behalf of Nicky's Foundation and would like us to share it here then please get in touch.



Trainees from our inclusive Livelihood Training Centre joining in with the celebrations on 3rd December

Celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities – 3rd December 2023

Nicky's Foundation is always very proud and excited to be part of this International Day of Celebration for people with disabilities.

We work with other stakeholders such as schools, and humanitarian organisations along with the Ministry of Social Affairs to ensure the day is given a high profile within the community.



Trainees from our graphic design department produced the banner to raise awareness of the celebrations.

It is always the perfect opportunity to raise awareness of the help and support available and to celebrate the successes achieved throughout the year. None more so this year than the success of one of our trainees with a visual impairment and currently attending the music studio in our inclusive Livelihood Training Centre took the opportunity to launch his first recorded track which has since been uploaded on YouTube. This is the link if you would like to listen to the whole track:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73dQ1wFFi3M>



Our trainee, who has the professional name Magic Flow, took to the stage as part of the celebrations which attracted a large audience.

For the first time our team in Mamfe combined the celebration with a fundraising opportunity of their own by collaborating with Maxy Manorh, a Cameroonian artist originally from Mamfe who took to the stage to entertain the crowds raising some much needed funds for the livelihood centre.

Nicky's Foundation would like to thank Maxy, his team and all who supported this fundraising concert.

Special Feature - Leo

Meet Leo, one of Nicky's Foundation's beneficiaries.

My name is Leo and I wish to share how nature was unfair to me in the past. I was born with a severe deformity known as bilateral clubfoot with both legs tilted at the ankles. I grew up with these deformities right up until I was a young adult when it was corrected. You know, growing as a child with this disability, I went through a lot emotionally, psychologically, and physically and I had a lot of limitations when carrying on with normal life.

I was never happy when growing up because when I looked at the family, I was the only one with funny legs and so I had a lot of thoughts running through my head like... 'my mum shouldn't have brought me into the world looking like this'; 'God has been unfair'; 'is this what God's image of me should be?'. I felt that I was and will always be a burden to everyone around me and I heard all kinds of horrible words spoken about me like... 'I meant nothing in this world and to my family'; 'I am nobody and just a burden to my family'; and other things you couldn't even imagine.

I also felt so much physical pain when I was walking as well as not being able to walk and wear shoes like a normal person. You know, with the way I was walking I felt that all eyes were on me each time I was out of the house especially when I was walking to school. Everyone would be looking at me and laughing at the funny way I tried to wear slippers so that it wasn't so painful to walk. I received mockery from friends and people feeling pity for me. I could never put on shoes as a student and some people asked me 'why am I studying?' 'No government organisation will employ someone in my status'... I hated seeing photos of myself and would tear any up that I saw.

With all this going on I pretended that nothing was wrong but inside my heart was bleeding and I would go home with all these thoughts inside and weep.

I couldn't date a girl because of my disabilities, no girl wanted to have a date with me you know. I couldn't do sports despite my passion to try. I hated involving myself in parties etc because even if I could dress up and I couldn't put on shoes and also I'd have all eyes on me again staring at the way I looked.

But then my story changed. Nicky and Thomson saw me walking home from school and recognised the uniform I was wearing. They came to the school and asked permission from the teachers to meet with me. They talked about a treatment where my feet could be straightened and left information about Nicky's Foundation and a phone number to call if I wanted to find out more. The next day I called Nicky and asked if I could try the treatment. It wasn't easy, the treatment was at times painful, but Thomson and Nicky supported me through it, encouraging me to continue and with my own determination and perseverance and prayers, over some months my legs were straightened.

I want to thank everyone who assisted me financially and emotionally to get through this process. My life was changed.

Since then, I passed my A levels, graduated from university as a teacher and now I teach computer science in a Government Secondary school. I am still in touch with Nicky and Thomson and the work of Nicky's Foundation and hope to give back to them in some way



Focus on - Child Empowerment Program

Nicky's Foundation works in partnership with the Cameroon Baptist Health Services to deliver a Child Empowerment Program which covers educational, health and social components. This program is perfectly aligned to our vision and by working with other like-minded local organisations we can maximise impact and create efficiencies when delivering services to children with disabilities.

During 2023, our community-based rehabilitation staff identified 135 children with disabilities and reached out to help improve their educational opportunities and their rehabilitation potential. We are also striving to raise awareness of the help and support available to people with disabilities which has become increasingly more difficult in light of the political crisis and ongoing civil war.



Nicky's Foundation team participate in a weekly local radio programme to raise awareness of the services available to people with disabilities'



Here is one child undergoing some standing practice.

Here is a quick overview of the Child Empowerment Program

- **Under the educational component** and amid the current socio-political crisis which has made access to schools all the more challenging, there is not adequate access to inclusive education or to special schools for children with disabilities in the Mamfe area. With only a few mainstream schools operational in and around Mamfe, many children with disabilities face difficulties getting admission, and subsequently adapting into class settings to fully participate in activities. In 2023 we were able to identify, place and support 40 children with disabilities in schools. However, there are still many children with disabilities out there and our field staff plan to continue creating community awareness by meeting school authorities to promote inclusive education and conducting house to house surveys to identify a target of 50 more children during 2024.
- **Under the health component**, there is very limited access to specialist health services in the Mamfe area and therefore children and their families are required to travel out of the area for specialist assessment, treatment and follow up. We sponsored 9 referrals for corrective surgery during 2023 which requires a high level of supervision from Nicky's Foundation team to ensure the safe transportation of and adequate accommodation for families while the child is in hospital. Parents are often extremely anxious about the rehabilitation process and especially travelling out of their community which for some may be for the first time. Follow up to ensure the rehabilitation plan is carried out following surgery is vital to a successful outcome. This usually involves follow up visits to see the specialist surgeon but also relies on families' commitment. Most assistive devices such as adapted tricycles; crutches and hearing aids needed by children with disabilities are not sold or available around Mamfe. Mostly they are being purchased in Douala and other cities by our team members and transported on behalf of the families back to Mamfe. Along with the high cost of transportation this also creates a risk of damage etc.
- **Under the social component**, Manyu Division is a rural area, where cultural beliefs are still high. There is still a myth surrounding causes of disabilities where it is felt that the blame lies with the parents of the child (they have been sinful to deserve a disabled child) especially in very rural communities where the Nicky's Foundation team are currently not able to reach due to the political crisis. Also, since the advent of the crisis, many families are internally displaced. Most of the humanitarian agencies that do reach the very rural areas do not have adequate knowledge on an inclusive humanitarian response which means that many people with disabilities fail to access most humanitarian programs. This results in families not getting information during the registration period for aid/assistance and also in the aid distribution process either because they are abandoned, or information is not provided in a format accessible to them (Braille, large prints or sign language). Also, humanitarian organisations operating in the field have no training for staff on assessment of rehabilitation needs/assistive devices needed by people with disabilities, or the skills to communicate with them. Nicky's Foundation has been working with such humanitarian organisations for some time to raise awareness and we have plans to reach approximately 10,000 persons in 2024 through weekly local radio programs, schools, churches and other meeting groups with our aim to change negative community perception and to promote a more inclusive environment.

Fundraising & Upcoming Events

Thank you to everyone that supported our annual Christmas Raffle, we raised just over £300 and the lucky winners each received shopping vouchers.

Plant Sale

Preparations are well underway for our annual **Plant Sale**, with so many varieties of vegetables and flowers/bedding plants already seeded and being nurtured, ready for the big day on

Saturday 25th May at
Peasehall and Sibton Methodist Church
Chapel Street
Peasehall
Saxmundham
IP17 2JD

from 10am to 4pm.

There'll be an abundance of plants and many delicious cakes, scones and biscuits for sale too!

We're also delighted to be exhibiting paintings by Dawn inside the chapel. Dawn is kindly donating 100% of sales to Nicky's Foundation. For more information about Dawn's beautiful artwork and also her pet portrait offer, please visit <https://www.com/dawnofsomething/> or contact info@nickysfoundation.co.uk



Quiz & Curry

Another annual event is our **Quiz and Curry night**, which last year raised over £700. The date for this year's quiz is **Friday 1st November** and will be held at Heathlands Community Centre, Woodbastwick Road, Blofield Heath, Norwich. We'd love to see some of you there, it's always a fun night and the curry is delicious! Bring a team or join a team on the night, everyone is very welcome :)

Peddars Way Sponsored Walk

The fundraising team are currently in training to prepare for an epic walk of 49 miles to complete the Peddars Way. Starting in Knettishall Heath, the walk finishes at Holme-next-the-sea and will take place in July. For more details and to sponsor the team, please visit their Go Fund Me page:
<https://gofund.me/7783coe5>



In recent weeks, we've been exploring some new fundraising ideas and different approaches to help raise awareness of Nicky's Foundation. As well as using the Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter) platforms, we now also post on **Tik Tok!** We really appreciate all the follows and shares of our stories, photos and videos as this helps us reach even more people interested in learning about the charity or supporting one of our fundraising events.

Look out for details coming soon about local art exhibitions and sponsored events!

Nicky's Foundation

www.nickysfoundation.org
contact us at info@nickysfoundation.co.uk

Follow us on



Nicky's Foundation Registered Charity No. 1159991

