

Kidane Mehret Orphanage Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

My name is Geraldine Campion and I am a primary school teacher in San Carlo SNS, Leixlip, Co. Kildare. My sister Patricia is also a primary teacher, teaching in Scoil Mhuire GNS, Lucan, Co. Dublin. In December 2016, a family friend presented us with the opportunity to volunteer in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia during the Easter break. As we are both primary teachers, we were very interested in volunteering in a school or an orphanage working with children. We were fortunate to be placed in contact with Sr. Lutgarda – the director of the children’s home Kidane Mehret, which is on the same grounds as the school of the same name. The orphanage caters for children from new-borns up to the age of 16/17. Below is a picture of the entrance to the orphanage.



We wanted to raise as much money and resources for the orphanage and school as we could and so our fundraising efforts commenced in January 2017 – cakes sales, a bowling evening and online donations via GoFundMe. We are very thankful to all who contributed. We would especially like to thank the pupils, staff, parents and extended communities of our two schools San Carlo SNS and Scoil Mhuire GNS for facilitating cake sales. Further to this, we were very fortunate to be in receipt of The Solidarity Fund from the INTO as we are both union members. Again, we are very thankful to the INTO for their contributions. Collectively, through all these efforts and kind donations, we raised almost €6,000 and we are delighted to say that every cent was donated either directly to Kidane Mehret or used to purchase much needed educational supplies.

Before our Easter trip, St. Lutgarda provided us with a list of items which were in shortage and a priority for the children in their studies. Some of our funds were used to purchase much needed books, pencils, pens, copybooks, erasers, pencil sharpeners, colours etc. We also delivered English school books and story books that had been donated to us by family and friends. We would also like to thank O’ Brien Press for their kind donations of brand new books. The children in the orphanage were so delighted with all the school supplies and the school at Kidane Mehret were equally thankful for the English story books and copybooks.



During our time at Kidane Mehret we spent the majority of the time helping out at the orphanage. It was Easter break at the school and so Sr. Lutgarda arranged for us to work with the older children to improve their oral language. We also worked in the mornings in the Kindergarten teaching the younger children. We put some of the supplies we brought such as the colouring books, colours, pencils and paper to good use here. In the afternoon we spent some time caring for the babies and the toddlers. It was a great experience to get to know the children and the very hard working staff in Kidane Mehret.







We have recently been in touch with Sr. Lutgarda and she has informed us that the funds we donated were put to good use – the construction of a long-awaited computer room to assist the children in the home with their studies.

To find out more about Kidane Mehret there is some information on the following website: <http://www.fcj-kmch.org/> Sr. Lutgarda told us when we were there in April 2017 that they are always looking for people to come to the orphanage to offer any help, support, skills or donations that they can. There are contact details on that link if you wish to get in touch with Kidane Mehret or Sr. Lutgarda. We have very fond memories of our time in Kidane Mehret – a truly unforgettable experience. And once again we would like to thank the INTO Solidarity Fund for their contributions.

Geraldine and Patricia