

Trustees' meeting with Bendon Bursarians.

Kololi, The Gambia Wednesday 15th November 2023

Present: Marilyn McMenemy (Chair) Jane Gay (Trustee), Robert Simpson (Secretary), Lamin Njie (Aidgambia CAT), Alieu Jada-ma, Nfamara Sanyang, Naffisatou Saidykhan, Maimuna Njie,, Fatoumatta KONTEH, Binta S Colley

A big thanks to you all for making the effort to come. It was great seeing people again and meeting a few for the first time

Chair Introduction:

Chair welcomed those present and thanked them for the time and effort to attend. She gave a summary of the Charity's existence for the benefit of newcomers. Its formation in 2013 and then the 5 year Tallinding Medical Centre Project where the Trustees met Chernor and Lamin who in turn have taken on the role of Clinical Advisors to the Trustees (CATs) to offer advice and guidance on health matters. She explained how the Charity has focussed its attention on The Bendon Bursary to support students pursuing health-related studies or professional development after the death of Chris Bendon, a founding Trustee, in January 2017. She announced that Binta S Colley is the 10th person to benefit from a Bendon Bursary and how previous beneficiaries were doing so well in their medical careers. She detailed how the Charity has supported two Youth Health Cup events in 2021 and 2023 to highlight the benefits of exercise and healthy living among the young. She was happy to refer to the recent Health Fair matched funding project held in Yundum in collaboration with the Japalleh Foundation organised by Lamin Njie.

Introductions and updates:

Each person present took their turn to introduce themselves to the group and confirm their course of study, the date they started and due end date. Consequently, the xls database records could be edited. It turned out that there are five of the current seven Bursarians due to complete their courses in the summer of 2024 (Inshallah). Chair also congratulated Chernor H JALLOW on securing government sponsorship to study his MSc in China and pointed out how having successfully secured a bursary can enhance one's CV. Lamin (CAT) reported the success of the Health Fair held the previous weekend in Yundum. 112 patients were seen, 60% being women. There were health talks on topics such as Mental Health, Hypertension and Diabetes. He explained how he is hoping to extend this outreach activity to visiting schools via mentorship programmes. Chair reminded Bursarians this could be an excellent initiative to which all could contribute in the future.

What next?

Chair picked up the idea of outreach activity and emphasised the need for the Charity work to be as self-sufficient as possible and this required input and ownership from Gambians. She acknowledged receipt of 'Our Stories' from Alieu, Maimuna, Fatoumatta and Chernor. The group was encouraged to send in their story so we could produce a pamphlet in the UK and bring it out in January. This would help outreach work and any future mentoring in schools. In addition, it would assist fundraising in the UK.

Presentations:

Binta and Fatoumatta both received laptops reconditioned by TK of Revive My Device. Secretary was able to circulate a photo of TK. The Trustees then gave out the 23-24 Bendon Bursary money to the group and it was noted that the exchange rate could be as much as 80 Dalasi.