

NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2022

Dear friends and supporters of Les Amis,



Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. We hope that you will make yourself a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy a quiet moment reading about how all our projects have done this year, thanks to your kindness and generosity. Despite the ongoing difficulties that Burkina Faso has with terrorism, our projects are unaffected. Great work is still ongoing! We cannot overstate the good that you are achieving for some of the poorest people in the world. A thousand thanks from everyone at Les Amis, and from the hundreds of people whose lives you have touched. But let us now hand you over to those friends who will tell you, in their own words, how you have helped

How are your donations used?

THE YOANN FOUNDATION IN OUAGADOUGOU

Written by Brother Harry OFM Cap ([right](#)) a Franciscan Capuchin friar of the parish of St Pio in Ouagadougou



Pax et Bonum! We are delighted to share with you what the Yoann Foundation has been able to do thanks to the funds we received from you. First and foremost, we help the physically or mentally handicapped children of poor families. At present we take care of 22 children, but there are more on our waiting list. They receive financial support for the special medical care they need, nutrition and also for their physiotherapy. For example, one of the children ([left](#)) suffers from hydrocephalus and has undergone multiple surgeries. With your help we have been able to cover much of the cost. As for this little girl ([right](#)), she has a congenital condition of psycho-motor disability. We have supported her and her mother with the purchase of medication and regular physiotherapy sessions. Of late, she has been

showing some improvement in uttering a few words and is able to sit up by herself.



The second area of activity concerns destitute women, most of whom are widows. At present, 18 women are the beneficiaries of this project. We help them by giving them food regularly, and also by financially supporting their endeavours towards financial autonomy. Their becoming self-sufficient means that we can then welcome new beneficiaries. This year, 10 women no longer needed our help. The beautiful aspect of this project is also the fostering of the spirit of solidarity and self-help among these women.

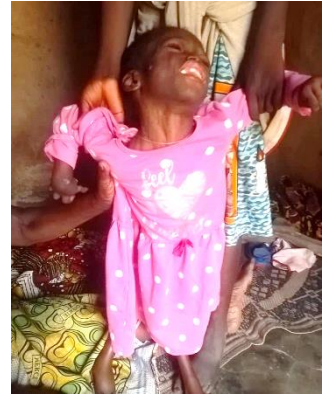


This lady ([left](#)) is one of the new beneficiaries. Her husband was a watchman at a school when he was attacked and killed by armed bandits during the night. As a result, she has been left alone to fend for herself and her children. Thanks to your generous support, she and her children can eat and live with some semblance of human dignity.

Equally poignant is the story of **Cécile**. She and her husband worked hard to make both ends meet for themselves and their family of four daughters and a son. He was a menial worker and she, a peddler of small items like footwear, soaps, etc. After the death of her husband due to illness, she soon became bankrupt. To make matters worse, her house was destroyed by the heavy rains last season. Overnight, she and her children were left abandoned in the streets. At present, she lives in a small hut in a nearby village. She now receives, from Les Amis, provisions of rice and oil which gives her some elbow space to resume her *petit* commerce.



Francine (left), is married. Her husband unfortunately stood on a rusty iron nail and soon developed gangrene of the leg and he couldn't work. Days turned into weeks, weeks into months and months into a year and he lost his job. Thanks to your donations, we were able to come to the rescue by giving Francine the money to buy a hawker's barrow and for the procurement of onions from her village which she sells in Ouagadougou. With your generous help, we have saved a family from abject misery.



I would like to add to our list of beneficiaries this little girl **(right)** who is severely physically and mentally handicapped. She came to our attention via one of our parishioners, who alerted us to her and her mother's plight. Thank you, in advance, for helping us to look after her in the future.



I take this opportunity, to thank each and every one of you, our kind-hearted benefactors, on behalf of **Pélagie (left)** my collaborator, and all our beneficiaries. May God reward you all amply and God bless!

FR PAUL NAZOTIN (right)

The security situation in Burkina Faso, which has been difficult for several years, worsened in 2021-2022. Entire populations have been forced to leave their villages and abandon their trade or fields. Most find refuge in towns and cities which, with more and more people arriving, cannot always provide for them. In the countryside, many schools and clinics have closed, as attacks in these areas primarily target state agents. In this newsletter, I will tell you about a few cases where I have been able to help.



Yasmine is a young woman under the age of thirty. With the jihadists primarily looking for men, her husband fled the village and went to the Koupéla region where he struggles to earn a living. Yasmine, in addition to having to feed and care for her children, suffers from a medical condition which means she needs surgical intervention.

Ivo came to Fada for welding training. Unfortunately, as a result of an effort to pull out a plant, he suffered a back injury. He has been coping with this pain for some time. Thanks to Les Amis funding, he has now seen a doctor, had an x-ray and been able to afford medication to allow him to continue his professional training.



Corina, another lady suffering from a serious vision problem, received help with the purchase of glasses.

In the spring newsletter, I mentioned a girl **(right)**, orphaned of both father and mother who desperately needed a motorcycle to get to her studies. She had been using a bicycle to cover very long distances. Thank you very much to a gentleman in Lancaster who, upon reading my plea for help, decided to fund the purchase of a motorcycle in memory of his late wife. This young student is very happy to have a motorcycle, of which she has dreamed for years. With this, she will no longer have to ask help of others to get about.



Food aid went to families who did not have a good harvest. This year, the situation will be worse, because the farm workers, who have been driven from their land by the armed groups, have not been able to grow their crops. In addition to this, in some localities such as Fada, the rainfall was irregular at the beginning of the winter season.



There are more people I would like to help, such as this young boy (**left**), who was born with severe deformities in both legs. After an operation, his legs were put in plaster. He is a pleasant, alert and intelligent boy who surprises everyone with his ability to hold conversations with adults. For the moment, he is being taken care of by a religious Sister (**also left**). There is no doubt that, because of his treatment, his mother won't be able to work for some time. I would like to help her and her family and am hoping that, with your help, I will be able to do so.

I would also like to help house two young adult sisters living on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. One had the courage to break up with her husband after years of abuse. Recently, as a result of the heavy rains of this winter, the wall and part of their house collapsed. The vulnerability of many women in Burkina Faso is well known.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to Les Amis for its precious help!!!

FR LAMBERT SAWADOGO (**right**)



Our current situation means that many refugees arrived in Kaya from many places. Amongst the many difficulties, the chief one is food. In our schools, providing lunch for the children is really important to us. Otherwise, children have nothing to eat all day until they get home in the evening. Les Amis has helped us to buy rice, beans, oil and corn to ensure that children have lunch. We have kept the schools open in order to reduce the burden on parents to feed their children. At a meeting with the parents at the end of the year, they expressed their great gratitude for providing food for their children.



At the St Luc centre we help women in literacy and other courses, such as cooking, hairdressing, sewing, embroidery and handicraft. The threat of terrorism was so serious that the centre had to close in March 2022, which was just before the kidnapping of a nun in early April. But from November 2021 – March 2022 the women were able to go ahead with the planned training.



For the past year, five girls (all orphans of either one or both parents) were beneficiaries of Les Amis support for their studies / learning. Here are a couple of examples. Gaelle (**right**), studying Medical Biology, is now studying for her Masters at Ouagadougou University. Candie (**left**) has passed her Baccalaureate (in Pouytenga). Next year, she will go to University or join a congregation of Sisters.



Florine, who studies in Ouagadougou, having visited her mother in Tougouri, found it hard to get back to Ouagadougou. The terrorist threat had meant that buses were no longer running. Upon getting back to Ouaga, she found it too hard to pick up where she had left off, and spent four months learning hairdressing, manicure and pedicure skills. With these skills, she will be able to make her way.



There are many other individuals you have been helping for many years, and who I would like to keep helping. For example, a widow whose children have all left the area. She lives in Tougouri, and has had a very stressful year due to the area now being under the control of Jihadists. You have helped her in her day-to-day life in the skill of cotton dyeing and weaving. Another widow, having received help from you, is now running a small grocery stall.

Abelle (**left**) who has been mentioned in this newsletter many times before, is a single mother of two children, one of whom – the gorgeous Alard – has Downs Syndrome. Having run away from her abusive husband and then given birth to Alard, her family (parents and siblings) disowned her. Life became extremely difficult for her until Les Amis came along to help. Here she is with her daughter, Alard and Fr Paul Nazotin.

It is always a great pleasure to visit these people: they are so humble, so poor, and very very grateful for the help they get from Les Amis. Dear benefactors, it is an honour for me to be your intermediary in passing on your financial help, and also to relay to you their gratitude. The world is in a bad way, but you continue to exercise charity towards us. May God bless you and keep you safe. May he not forget all that you do for your sisters and brothers in need.

PROTECTING AND EDUCATING GIRLS

*Written by Fr Gérard (**right**)*



The money you were able to send us this year helped to ensure the education of 13 girls. For some we paid their school fees; for others we organised training in weaving. These days, our traditional cotton fabric is very popular and weaving it is a good source of income. The money you sent has been used to train girls in Baskouré, Pouytenga and Koupéla, all towns which Gillie knows well. At the end of the training, each girl received a loom and threads to help start them off in business. **Left** is a photo of the girls receiving their looms.

A success story

It has been five years that Les Amis has been supporting Shantelle (**right**). She had been placed with the Sisters in the parish of Koupéla, because her father wanted to force her into a marriage when she was 16 years old. Having found refuge with the sisters, and having benefited from your financial help with her school fees, Shantelle has been able to follow her studies. This year, she succeeded in passing her Baccalauréat and she is going on to higher studies this coming year. Also, her success in the Baccalauréat has meant that she has been able to go back home: her father is now proud of her success and has welcomed his daughter back to the family home recently for a two-week stay. Thank you to Les Amis who enabled Shantelle to succeed and find personal happiness.



Ex-Saint Monique girls and boys, now university students

*Written by Fr Pascal Silga (**right**)*



The academic year 2021-2022 went very well. Les Amis was, again, of great help to a number of disadvantaged or poor students. Thank you for the hope which your financial support gives; thank you for realising the dreams of poor students.

Susanne (left) is orphaned of her father. Her mother suffers from mental ill-health and has to spend much money on medication. Helping her mother as much as she can meant that she didn't know how she was going to pay her university fees, which are expensive. With the help of Les Amis the solution was found. Thank you so much.



Faron (right) is still working really hard and is conscious of the value of the help he is getting from Les Amis for his university studies. He undertook work experience in the laboratory of the National du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics.



Rosine (left) has never seen her father (who went missing in Côte d'Ivoire while Rosine's mother was pregnant with her). With your help, Rosine had the courage to enrol in a course on Civil Engineering. She has finished the second year and will do the third year in 2022-2023. She asks for permission to refer to Les Amis as her dad!

Simon (right) will be starting his third year of Civil Engineering and is very grateful to Les Amis. Simon rightly sees Les Amis's support as a real lever that has allowed him to be able to study.



Jean Pierre (left) is orphaned of both parents. Help from Les Amis has been extremely helpful to Jean-Pierre. He has managed to pay for electricity to be installed in his own soldering workshop. With Les Amis, what felt impossible became possible.

Letya (right) is orphaned of her mother, and was almost kept with her family for housework after her Baccalaureate. The absence of the mother, added to her father's poverty, made it impossible for her to even consider university. Thanks to Les Amis she made it to university where she has just passed a competition for teaching. She goes on to an internship.



Naeva (left), whom you have been helping for some time, attends the university of Ouagadougou. To help make ends meet, she sells onions during the holidays. She is so grateful to you all for making her studies possible.



The Refuge for Girls in Baskouré

Written by Sister Marguerite Marie (below)



Since last year, we welcomed five new girls, all victims of forced marriage. But thanks to God and to you, dear benefactors, we have been able not only to welcome them but to feed them and take care of them. At the moment, we have 30 girls in total. Given that our country is going through a very difficult security situation, and that life has become very hard, food prices have skyrocketed, this is pushing more and more families to give up

their daughters. All the girls, when they arrive, are very lost. It takes time for them to adapt; many cry for days because they see their future upset, especially those who had been in school.

Thanks to you, girls have benefited from going to school (those of school age); others receive training in various skills such as weaving, a profession recognized by the State and internationally.

Last year I put in the report some difficulties that we were experiencing, especially the lack of water. In November last year I wrote to you to share our big concern and ask for help. You didn't hesitate! You said you'd do your best and you've done a lot more. Later that month you sent us the necessary funds to drill a borehole and fit a solar powered pump and water tower. We now have water to drink, to LIVE and even to make the garden and harvest a very good crop (right, the crop of vegetables, and you can just see the struts of the new water tank in the background).



In the coming year, we would like to build a shed in front of the girls' kitchen so that the girls can cook in a better, well-ventilated area; we'd like to be able to raise cattle and sheep. But for the moment, let us tell you about two of our new arrivals ...



I'm **Mae** (left); when I turned 14, I learned that I had been promised in marriage to a man I did not know and that it was my late father who had promised me to this stranger. I found the courage to flee from my uncle's house. I asked some passers-by where the Sisters' house in Baskouré was located. That's when I arrived at the home. I am happy, because not having had the chance to go to school, I had this chance to learn weaving from the other girls who live here. Thank God! Thank you!

My name is **Yani** (right). I arrived at the girls' home in Baskouré thanks to my older sister. My older sister knew that our grandfather had given me in marriage to one of our neighbours (our parents are in Ivory Coast, and it was without their knowledge that our paternal grandfather gave me away). My older sister decided to help me save myself and that's how she was able to bring me to Baskouré. I did not have the chance to go to school like my big sister who just sat her BAC this year. Thank you for giving me the chance to be here and learn weaving.



St Joseph's Training Centre in Fada

Written by Sister Michaelle (below)



This year, although the price of cereals and other things are on the rise due to the increasing terrorism in our country, we have been able to cope with the situation thanks to your help. In this year you have supported seven girls in their training as seamstresses (some of them, right). All of them have been forced from home by a forced marriage, or some other reason which renders them very vulnerable. For example, Clarisse,

who came to us from a forced marriage, had nothing and we were able to provide her with the necessary basics, such as clothes, shoes and shelter.



With your support, they not only enjoy training in the making of clothes, but in the raising of pigs (left). They are comfortable in that they each have a bed and the necessary means of cooking for themselves (right). Also, they have done well in learning to cultivate the land; we intend to involve them in the growing of their own vegetables.



They are aware of the help you are giving them to enable them to build a strong home for the future. We give thanks to God for the lives of the benefactors and all their work on behalf of the needy and so many others. In my own name, on behalf of the community of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Fada and more particularly on behalf of the girls, I want to thank you.

Refuge for girls in Ziniaré



Sr Irène (left) used to run the St Joseph's Training Centre in Fada. She was then sent to Ziniaré where she runs a similar facility for girls.

All the girls greet you (there are currently five). I am still in Ziniaré, and I am really hoping to continue to receive your financial help, which would be very welcome. Amongst the girls, three should be in school, but I have nothing to make this possible, not to mention looking after them. Thank you with all my heart for thinking about helping these girls. Here they are together (above).



Cora (left) is orphaned of both parents. She lost her mother when she was three, and not long after, her father too. The family has abandoned her and her older brother, saying they are bad luck. Her brother went to the gold mines and Cora found refuge with us. Your help was used to pay for her schooling.

Taira (right) is an internally displaced person from Dedougou. In that area the girls are kidnapped. She fled and came to Ouagadougou in search of refuge. And it was from Ouaga that she came to Ziniaré.



Fanet (left) is also internally displaced, and has been with the Sisters since May last year. She benefited from your help in the training of weaving, which she has just finished. She is now looking for ways of establishing herself as a weaver by way of making a living.

Carla (right) was being forced into marriage to an old man. She was going to be the old man's third wife. She had just gained her CEP in June 2021 when they forced her to marry. After two months with the old man, she was able to escape and find refuge with the Sisters in March 2022. She is 14 years old. With help, I intend to register her at school for 6th grade class at school.



Tasha (left) has been orphaned of her father. She is the eldest of a family of seven children. After the death of her father, her uncle took possession of the property, leaving the children and their mother in misery. In addition, the uncle spends his time beating the woman and her children, causing the children to leave the house to seek refuge with the neighbours. This is how Tasha fled to come to us. She had dropped out of school for lack of means. Thanks to your help, I was able to pay for her schooling and she returned to school. She is still counting on your help to continue her studies in second grade.

Thank you for your support.

WE WOULD LOVE TO GIVE MORE TALKS



A huge thank-you to Cranleigh Mother's Union for inviting me to give a talk to them in May. It was absolutely wonderful, after a two-year absence, to be able to talk directly to a large group of people. There is no doubt that showing pictures and talking about our work, and giving everyone the opportunity to ask lots of questions is the very best way of securing interest in our work and, therefore, the support we need to enable us to carry on funding our many projects. If you are a member of a group, no matter how small or big, do ask us to come and give a talk. Here's how you can get in touch with us:

01483 208432 or **07792 654798** or **lesamis@btinternet.com**

A personal message from Gillie ...

You will have read, in the account given by Father Paul, of the young student being provided with a motorcycle, thanks to a benefactor from Lancaster. I think that one of the best things about this particular charity is that, because I personally know the people on the ground running our projects for us, it is 100% possible to ensure that money / help goes exactly where it is needed. Our benefactor from Lancaster read our Spring Newsletter and decided to buy the motorcycle for the student in loving memory of his wife. From the arrival of his donation to the bike being bought and given to the student was a matter of a couple of weeks. What a fabulous outcome!



Over the course of the last year we have also benefited greatly from the kindness and generosity of people who have asked that, in the event of their death, friends and family use the occasion of their funeral to raise funds for us. We are so thankful and deeply honoured by such thoughtfulness. May their souls, and the souls of all the departed, rest in peace.

Any changes to your circumstances that we should know about?

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Have your circumstances changed since you started making donations to us? If you are no longer able to Gift Aid the donations you make, then please don't forget to let us know.

Our continued and heartfelt thanks to **Headline Design & Print** for printing this newsletter for us. They do a fantastic job, and we are very grateful to them.



The Trustees of Les Amis-Burkina Faso: Gillie & David Nicholls and Jude O'Mara-Spicer

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The poor will never cease out of the land;
therefore I command you to open wide your hand
to the needy and to the poor. (Deuteronomy 15:11)

In so far as you did this to the least of those brothers of
mine, you did it to me. (Matthew 25:40-41)

“If your father’s family and that of your mother have rejected you, God’s family welcomes you with joy. Dry your tears. All will be well.”

100% of money given is passed on to the needy. Yes, 100%!