

# The Link



Sharing news from the Order of St John

## Skills 4 Life for youth from St John Wales

In June this year St John Wales launched an exciting new initiative, aimed at getting young Welsh people into work, through learning first aid.

Skills 4 Life is a two-year project which will see St John Wales address the skills and employability issues faced by many under 25s in Wales. Unemployment in Wales is at extremely high levels with 22% of 16-24-year-olds currently not in employment, education or training. Through the programme, St John Wales aims to turn traditional volunteering experiences into work-related qualifications.



Over the next two years, St John Wales is pledging to train 2,400 11-25-year-olds in first aid – with a number of those going on to gain a recognised qualification. The charity is also pledging to offer overseas volunteering placements to eight young people.

The initiative was launched by adventurer Tori James, the first Welsh woman to climb Everest. 15 St John Wales youth volunteers joined Tori for a 7.5 km hike from Castell Coch to Caerphilly Mountain to kick off the scheme. Damian Thomas, St John Wales' Director of Youth said, "We believe first aid knowledge is the ultimate life skill in every sense. Not only can it save lives, but it also benefits those looking to develop personally and gain recognised, transferrable skills and experience for employment.

To find out more about the Skills 4 Life project, or to become a youth volunteer with St John Wales go to [www.stjohnwales.org.uk](http://www.stjohnwales.org.uk)

## Desmond Tutu's first Investiture as Prior of South Africa

The offices of the Priory for South Africa were a hive of excitement on the morning of Friday 2 August. Staff and Chapter Members alike were buzzing around making sure that everything was just perfect for the 'maiden visit' of their Prior, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. It was the first time since his appointment



as Prior of the Order in South Africa, that he would be presiding over a Chapter Meeting, attending his first investiture of postulants as well as joining St John Executives from across the country at the annual presentation by the Chief Executive Officer, Craig Troeberg. His genuine warmth, cheeky laughter and kind words for each and every-one that he met that day will be remembered long after.

visit: [www.stjohn.org.za](http://www.stjohn.org.za)

## St John Fiji on television news

On St John Day this year St John Fiji enjoyed national TV news coverage as it welcomed the President as its Patron. Although President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau has been involved in St John for 50 years, his role as Patron is new. In this remarkable media feature on national news, the President spoke of St John Fiji highly: "I note with much pleasure, the St John Association continues to compliment government efforts to provide a more defined and focussed approach to providing ambulance services to the wider community through the introduction in 2010 of the national ambulance decree". Emma Bovoro stated that it was a great moment "in the launching of our St John Week and National Appeal 2013. The day went perfectly."



## The St John Hospice in Antigua

*St John Hospice Founder, Agnes Meeker, talks of the people and effort involved in running this remarkable project..*

The St John Hospice facility in Antigua has been open for over a year and, I am happy to report, is running like clockwork. Our Patron, Her Excellency Dame Louise Lake-Tack, Governor General of Antigua & Barbuda, has been instrumental in securing funding and supports us 100%. We've gone through two years in lobbying the Government to provide the Gwenneth O'Reilly Building at Holberton, and a further year in securing funds of \$750,000 to complete the renovations.



*Patron, Her Excellency Dame Louise Lake-Tack, flanked by Council Chair Patrick Henry and Council Member Rosemary Magoris*

St John Hospice opened its doors on January 1st, 2012, and today employs 17 people in the capacity of office, housekeeping and nursing care. We offer 11 beds, nine of which are for the terminally ill, while two are for respite care. We are a Not for Profit Organisation, and the fees charged in no way compensate for the cost of running this facility which, after a year, has proven to be \$550,000 annually.

The community, both business and private, has been fantastic in their support starting with Dr. Raphael Evanson who volunteers his time providing medical services. Our volunteers provide help with preparing meals, office work, visiting and reading to patients, massage, gardening, painting and repairs, fresh flowers and baked goods. Several companies supply us with

weekly groceries and housekeeping supplies, while others donate periodically. Various organisations have held fund raisers specifically for the Hospice and we are working with such institutions as The American University of Antigua, Breast Friends and Ffeines, just to name a few.

Our staff is indeed special in their care for the patients – from housekeeping, who prepare special meals, to the Registered Nurses and Aides who are the backbone of the organisation. Emotionally, it is not an easy business to be in, but a very caring and necessary one, and it takes special people to provide this day in and day out. Because the Hospice is what it is, it has received the backing and support of many. *Picture below: New Hospice garden.*



### A special day in Harare

Sister Dominica Siegel of St John Zimbabwe writes a charming account of Certification Day on 6th July at the St John Headquarters in Harare..

*“What life might hide behind each one of these faces? All I knew was that each one of them had lost some close relation or other to the AIDs pandemic”*

They all were youngsters who had done a week’s full time course in the various townships or resettlement areas. Preparations for public functions are always a bit worrying for me: Will it all work out? Will the deliveries come on time? Did the invited guests receive the invitations? Etc. So it happened again a few days ago when we were getting ready for one of our “Certification Days”. This is a celebration for the young people to receive their certificate of competence as nurse aides. The food came one hour late; the 300 chairs even later. But most of the youngsters who were told to arrive

at 12 noon came at 8 or 9 o’clock!!! At last we are ready to start. A sea of faces, young faces, smiling faces, anxious faces, hungry faces, attentive looks, expecting looks, serious looks. What life might hide behind each one of these faces? All I knew was that each one of them had lost some close relation or other to the AIDs pandemic. A few women also looked on with great interest; they belonged to a group of mothers nursing their AIDs children who are at the same time physically challenged.



Another group belonged to an organisation that is completely run by HIV positive people. This group not only helps their fellow sufferers physically but also opens up support groups where HIV positive people meet to share their experiences and support each other.

After opening prayers, the National anthem and introductions, the premier of our Home Based Care film “Caring for those you love” started. It had taken over a year to produce the film professionally. The aim is to demonstrate the course

content visually before practicing the procedures. The actors were exclusively members of our Brigade or others who themselves had done the course before. They acted with amazing skill and great conviction. Our Guest of Honour, the director of a most generous organization who had donated the grant for this film by pressing the right button opened the show. It was gratifying to notice the riveted attention of our young audience. Before that, we had been a bit anxious whether the film would capture their interest. It certainly did.

Later, our Guest of Honour had to shake almost three hundred little hands and at last give the certificates to the leader of each group. For most of them it was their first certificate in their lifetime, as most of them, because circumstances at home, could not finish their schooling.

After singing “Ishe Komborere Africa” (God bless Africa) dollar notes were given out to the new “nurse aides”. They had to make their way to their homes or little shacks by commuter bus armed with their certificates before the Zimbabwean winter sun set.

### New Chief Executive joins St John Eye Hospital

The new Chief Executive of the St John Eye Hospital, Brigadier Tom Ogilvie-Graham, took over the reins from Rob Bull on 2nd April earlier this year. The Brigadier has worked on various humanitarian projects, such as re-establishing water supplies in Kuwait after the Gulf War and instigating EC funded public health programmes in Bosnia. He was in the Army for 30 years during which time his duties outside of operations involved being an international liaison officer. Tom was made an Officer of St John in 2004 for his humanitarian work.



Tom joins the organisation as the Hospital receives Joint Commission International (JCI) Accreditation. JCI works with health care organisations, governments, and international advocates to promote rigorous standards of care and provide solutions for achieving peak performance. Tom said “We are the first hospital in East Jerusalem to achieve this accreditation. It is clear that all the staff, administrative as well as clinical, have worked really hard at achieving the standards set by JCI and it is a big step, lifting us onto a level that is recognised worldwide”. visit: [www.stjohneyehospital.org](http://www.stjohneyehospital.org)

# News in brief....

## Chari-tea anyone?

In a unique effort to raise funds for first aid training, St John Ambulance Sri Lanka has partnered with St. Clair's Tea, creating a special St John line of tea. All funds raised will support national organisation aims, the bulk providing free first aid training within Sri Lanka's poorest communities. In fact, the sale of



just five boxes will raise enough to train one villager, who may go on to save a life.

To learn more

about this novel charitable initiative visit [www.stjohnsri Lanka.org](http://www.stjohnsri Lanka.org).

## News from the International Office

*Programme Managers, Sherona Parkinson and Pippa Hoyland are busy promoting the growth of St John around the world...*

1. September brings a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) workshop with 5 St John Associations of the Caribbean in Barbados - The workshop will bring together a strong base of information to feed into a future St John regional DRR Programme in the Caribbean.
2. New Monitoring and Evaluation tools for the Mama na Mwana programme were introduced during workshops with the St John Associations of Malawi and Zambia.
3. An Asia Pacific Regional Summit in Fiji is planned for November to bring St John Establishments together for collaboration

## St John Scotland donate ambulance to mountain rescue team

A new rescue ambulance was presented by St John Scotland to the Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team on Sunday June 2nd. The vehicle is a specially converted long wheelbase VW Transporter, 4x4, to which the Order contributed £20,000. As well as carrying people and equipment, the vehicle will be used as a mobile control centre and will be an invaluable supplement to the team's Land Rovers.

Chancellor of St John Scotland, Douglas Dow said: "Like all mountain rescue teams in Scotland, the Arrochar team consists wholly of volunteers, and provides a rescue service for those in difficulty on our hills 24/7, 52 weeks in the year". Mountain Rescue team leader Mark Leyland said: "On behalf of the team, which has thirty members, I thank St John Scotland once again. I can assure you that we will make good use of this ambulance vehicle."



visit: [www.stjohnscotland.org.uk](http://www.stjohnscotland.org.uk)



### Did you know...

**..that most baby deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa can be prevented with simple community based solutions?** Choose today to save lives, support Mama na Mwana, our mother and child programme in Africa on:

[www.justgiving.com/orderofstjohn/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/orderofstjohn/donate) or contact the International Office for more information

## Grenada Mourns

Sir Paul Scoon, former Governor General of Grenada and St John chairman has passed away. St John's Sylvan McIntyre speaks highly of him "By all opinion, Grenada's best Governor General, who represented Her Majesty the Queen so very well, a foundation, and St John pillar". Tillman Thomas, former Prime Minister of Grenada, said that Sir Paul had created constitutional history and played a pivotal role in restoring Grenada's democratic institutions. May he rest in peace.



Log onto the private area of the Order's website today by visiting [www.orderofstjohn.org/members-area](http://www.orderofstjohn.org/members-area). Contact [saffi.jones@orderofstjohn.org](mailto:saffi.jones@orderofstjohn.org) if you need the username and password.

## Dates for the Diary....

- 15th October - OHAC submission deadline for the quarter
- 13th-15th September - Caribbean DRR Workshop, Barbados
- 19th-20th November - Steering Committee, UK
- 21st November - Reception and Investiture of Knights and Dames, UK
- 27th-29th November - Asia Pacific Regional Summit, Fiji

If you have any stories you would like to be covered in The Link or you would like information on any of the news featured in this edition, please contact Saffi Jones at the St John International Office at [saffi.jones@orderofstjohn.org](mailto:saffi.jones@orderofstjohn.org) or ++44 (0)20 7251 3292