

Hemel Hempstead Gazette's Public Appeal Receives Overwhelming Response Across the County

Following the publication of an appeal for support for Motec's Nutrition Working for Life (NUWLIFE) project, we have received amazing public response across the county. 14 sewing machines have been donated over a period of one week. With five sewing machines collected before the Gazette's article, we now have exceeded our original target of 16 by 3, and calls are still coming in from the public.

NUWLIFE is a project that has been developed by Motec through the commitment of volunteers to the plight of malnourished children who live in one of the harshest environments in sub-Saharan Africa. It evolved from observations made by Motec in the Jirapa District of Ghana, dubbed the 'horn of Ghana' by Motec's President. Malnourished children invariably come from poor homes and hospital intervention is unfortunately required for the children who are 'locked up with their mothers and hospital staff in battles for survival' on the wards for several months, putting family income at the risk in order to save precious young lives. Those who are fortunate to return home face unchanged 'nutritional and economic' hardships and the return of starvation from the basic essentials of nutrition often leaves mothers feeling helpless and hopeless. This undoubtedly leads to 'situations of diminished responsibility' and not much is sacrificed for the benefit of the rest of the 'larger family'. A second hospital visit is marked by a rush to the hospital with almost irreversible medical condition and invariably immediate death.

It has been the objective of Motec in this project to work with the local chief and the community to an income generating training for the mothers and farming practices for the fathers to generate funds for the families while at the same time supporting trees on the farms to reforest the creeping desert in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The key training programmes for the mothers are sewing, local tie and die cloth

designing and printing, training in catering of nutritious food for children, soap manufacturing and for the fathers – improving farming practices that would support the family and generally the community.

Prompted by the desire to achieve our goals, Motec's Welfare Officer elect Linda Bigham and Organising Secretary Kay Bower's approached NEEDLECRAFT in Hemel Hempstead to explain about Motec's NUWLIFE project which led to donation of sewing machines from the public. Michael Meehan was the first to rise up to the occasion. Others who joined (by word of mouth) included Jean Robinson and Joan Newman. It became apparent that our target would be achieved over a period of at least two years.

Nothing prepared us for a dramatic change of attention when Motec President followed up contacts by the Welfare Officer elect – Linda and spoke with our county's newspaper the Gazette which led to the publication of an interview with Motec. The sewing machines have been coming in thick and fast and with passion. Motec's Membership Secretary, Mrs Gladys Ofori-Atta, Mrs Kay Bowers and Mrs Linda Bigham have been on rounds since the beginning of the campaign collecting the machines.

The donations have been made largely from Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamstead, Gaddeston Row and Northchurch. We have seen people donate machines that are in pristine condition and well boxed with original keys in position. Most of the machines have priceless sentimental value with some connection with a wife, mother or grandmother.

Tina Coughtree was the first to donate in the second wave of our campaign. She said: I have one sewing machine for you. I hope it serves the purpose. Betty Dunbar remarked: If this machine can do half of the job it did for me, it would have served your purpose very well. Susan Marshall even took the trouble to find out how the machines she had donated were going to get to Ghana and made a cash donation.

The responses from the public and door step discussions during collection have shown how much people care about children. People seem to be looking for opportunities to support good causes in spite of the economic climate. Some individuals made pledges beyond 'sewing machines' to continue to support humanitarian work both home and abroad which they consider as a way of adding value and meaning to their lives. Mr and Mrs Ofori-Atta re-affirmed their 'take' on life as previously written about half a century ago by Leo Rosten (American of Polish origin): ***The purpose of life is not to be happy- but to matter, to e productive, to be useful, to have it make a difference that you have lived at all.*** Most donors agreed with this long worded description of 'LOVE'.

Our sincere gratitude to the Gazette, Herald Express, the donors, our volunteers and all who continue to help others in difficulty.

P. Ofori-Atta
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