



# COPA news

**Building caring Christian communities**

In response to Sebert and Doreen's letter, which was enclosed with the last Newsletter, there has been a massive response for the Soromudos project. Read about this on pages 2 and 3. Also included are articles on Graduation, the work of our Project Trust Volunteers, youth activities and, on the back page, a special invitation to join a work group from Cricklade to 'Make a Difference'!

**You are invited to the**  
**20th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service**  
**and COPA AGM**

to be held on Sunday, 9th October 2011  
at

Lonsdale Road Methodist Church  
Lonsdale Road, Gloucester, GL2 0TA

**Programme:**

- 10.30 Service of thanksgiving
- 11.45 Coffee
- 12.15 AGM
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 Presentation of achievements and future plans

We look forward to seeing you when you will be able to hear of the difference COPA has made and is continuing to make.

Visit the COPA website: [www.copa.org.uk](http://www.copa.org.uk)

September 2011

## Founder of Specsavers contributes to COPA's Sordomudos Appeal

When Dame Mary Perkins, the founder of Specsavers, heard from Sebert Lane's brother Peter, about COPA's plans to build a school for deaf mute children in Barahona she immediately wrote to say that she wanted to help and enclosed a great contribution of £25,000! Dame Mary, who lives in Guernsey, already supports the charity Bridge2Haiti and has built facilities for the visually impaired and hard of hearing in Zambia.

In her letter she wrote that she looks forward to hearing how our new project for the profoundly deaf children in the Province of Barahona progresses.

This is not the first time Dame Mary has helped COPA children. On previous occasions she has generously assisted some of our poorest children in Bombita who have impaired vision.

## Rotary support for Sordomudos project.

Two UK Rotary Clubs as well as the Barahona Rotary Club are so far supporting the COPA initiative to provide the new school for Deaf Mute children in Barahona.

The Swindon Rotary Club are holding a dinner to raise funds for the project. Following a presentation given by Sebert and Geoff at the club, Rotarian Nigel Henham, Director of DPDS, Swindon made a fantastic offer to prepare all the designs and working drawings, that are needed by the City of Barahona before building can start, at no charge whatsoever.

Sebert and Geoff have also been invited to the Rickmansworth Club to give them a presentation as that club too is interested in adopting the new school as one of its projects.

If your Rotary Club would like a presentation please email [geoff@gandphaslam.plus.com](mailto:geoff@gandphaslam.plus.com) or [sebertlane@btinternet.com](mailto:sebertlane@btinternet.com)

This is a picture of a little girl from Barahona having her hearing tested.



## RAPID RESPONSE TO SORDOMUDOS APPEAL

Thank you to all our readers who responded so generously to our appeal for contributions towards the new school for deaf/ mute children living in and around Barahona. This will be the only school in the whole province for profoundly deaf children.

In recent years COPA has itself been setting aside undesignated donations for future development and this means that with your gifts we now have just over £104,000 towards the construction costs! £67,616 of this has been received or pledged since the end of June. Fantastic!! We now know that a good start can be made and some of the classrooms can be completed! Donations are still being received following our letter and if it has slipped your memory it certainly isn't too late. These should be sent to COPA, Copper Beech Bath Road, Cricklade SN6 6AX. and do please let us know if you would like to Gift Aid it.

An application has been made for a grant for 3 classrooms and, though the school would not be complete, we could admit all the children in September 2012 if this is successful.

COPA is not working on its own. A Dominican Charity for Deaf Mute Children will be supplying the teachers. COPA will be maintaining the school and supplying all the equipment as well as providing the children with the things they need to attend school. That means we need the regular income that comes from sponsors.

Following our last newsletter the first 30 children have been sponsored which means we to need find another 90 during coming months. Sponsorship money we receive before the school opens will be earmarked to buy the heaps of initial stock necessary. Will you try to find a sponsor who will contribute just £1.50 a week to enable one of these children to go to school? Just email [sebertlane@btinternet.com](mailto:sebertlane@btinternet.com) or call Geoff Haslam on 01793 750785 and we will send a form.

**DO YOU KNOW ANY CHURCH,  
SCHOOL OR ORGANISATION  
THAT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A  
PRESENTATION ABOUT COPA'S  
WORK?**



This remarkable story now spans 20 years and several thousand children have benefited from receiving an education, not available to them before COPA arrived in this part of the Dominican

Republic. Between now and next summer presentations will be taking place in various parts of the country. Please let us know if your organisation would like to be included.

## The Project Trust Volunteers

Our thanks go to last year's Project Trust volunteers, Sadie, Catherine, Alice and Josie, who have now returned to the UK after working for COPA in the DR.

During the last year they have taught English and Art at the schools and also held English lessons outside of the school day and once the school year had finished they took on three more projects before they left for home. First was a month long tutoring program for students who needed extra help with reading and writing. The program was a one on one tutoring situation based on reading stories, answering questions orally and written and also some free writing. This was well received in both schools and attendance was good.

They also organised a drama for the kids in Bombita, who normally do not have anything to do during the summer months. They chose to perform the Wizard of Oz. The PT girls, with the support of Amanda, held auditions for roles, translated a script, organized dance and music, created background scenes, props and costumes, and held rehearsals twice a week during the entire month of June. The children performed the drama in both Bombita and La Hoya, with great success, and everyone had a lot fun.

The third and last project was at the request of Maribel. A new mural was painted at the entrance to the school in Bombita. Maribel wanted something that represented the community better, so Alice and Josie spoke with various members of the community, and came up with a wonderful scene involving the metro, the cane and cane workers, the creek, animals, children, and many other things. All day each Friday through the holidays was devoted to the painting of the mural. Children and adults alike stopped to talk and offer help, and they all seemed to like what had been done. One little girl said she approved because all her favourite colours had been used! (We hope to have a picture of this mural for the next edition of the Newsletter.)



Sadie and Catherine present certificates for English and Art at the end of term in La Hoya

## The end of term celebrations

The Partnership school which Germania runs now has 24 Haitian students. An end of term party was held and they all wore their clean 'Sunday best' to attend. A celebration cake, decorated with much cake frosting, was shared by the children, which meant they weren't so clean when they went home! Nevertheless, the party was enjoyed by all and each student was able to take home at least one balloon. *Pictured below—some of the children about to say grace before eating the cake.*



The La Hoya final assembly of the year, pictured right, was held on June 3rd. Each teacher had chosen one student in their class to receive the Meritorious Student award.

The PT girls gave awards at various levels for their subjects: Sadie for English and Catherine for Art. Mauricio awarded three students in Information Technology with certificates and gifts.

Ruber and Tomás recognized all the teachers for their hard work, including Adalina for counselling and Nairobi for her assemblies.

The assembly finished off with several dance and drama presentations by the pupils.



## “FUNJOPRODE”

This is the name chosen by a group of young people in Bombita who have come together to help the community. FUNJOPRODE stands for 'Fundacion juvenes proyectados hacia el desarrollo comunitario' (Foundation for youth projected towards community development) and the group hopes to deal with a wide range of challenges affecting the community. Rachel, our Administrator, writes:

“For months I had been in conversation with Arky (a COPA-scholarshipped law student who has helped Amy extensively with public health projects) about different problems he sees in the batey (village) and would like to change. I encouraged him to find others interested in working on these issues and after much planning and discussion we began meeting with a group of youth. I have participated as an advisor but encouraged them to not depend on COPA for anything but rather see COPA as one of many resources on which to call.

The first project was a mass clean up of Bombita as there is a significant garbage problem. It was great success with over 175 volunteers participating. The event gathered support from the local government, the ministry of the environment and the health department. There is still quite a bit of follow-up to do and the garbage problem persists but the group has had its first success and hopefully this group will continue to strengthen itself, becoming a positive opportunity for youth to involve themselves in the community and for Bombita to address its many challenges. “

## BANI YOUTH CAMP (July 10-13)

*A report from the COPA volunteers.*

Summer camp at Bani, a coastal town about an hour from Bombita, was a lot of fun and it was great to see familiar faces on the work team who had travelled from the USA. We had a team of 15 come from Brandon, Florida to do activities for a joint camp for the youth of Bombita and La Hoya. There were also 5 cooks (2 from Bombita and 3 from La Hoya) and some COPA volunteers which, including the young people, made a total of 112 people! We overcame the challenge of a nation-wide strike on the day the group was supposed to travel to camp and were even able to give them an extra day at the beach. The annual camp aims to encourage co-operation and team work and each night there was a church service with music, dramas and dances.



## Graduation Day

On July 8<sup>th</sup> a Graduation Ceremony was held for the students who had passed 8<sup>th</sup> grade and were graduating from La Hoya school. The ceremony was very special, as all the students and their families marched through the village, following a large Dominican flag and a marching band, dressed in their very best clothes. The students were addressed by Ruber, the Headteacher, and others and were congratulated on their accomplishments



before they received their diplomas. It was a proud day for all as for many families in La Hoya, these students were the first members of their family to graduate from school.



Rachel, our Administrator in the DR, attended the Licateba graduation in June and was very proud to support COPA students in their achievement.

Pictured here, she poses with the four students from Bombita who graduated after studying for four years at Licateba.

Left to right: Casandra, Arelis, Rachel, Marilenny and Joselin.

## Contact names and addresses for COPA UK:

### **Treasurer:**

Mr David Rush  
Flat 98, Block B,  
The Paragon,  
Boston Park Road,  
BRENTFORD,  
Middlesex, TW8 9RP

### **Sponsorship Secretary for both La Hoya and Bombita:**

Mrs Sandra Samways  
57 Pauls Croft  
CRICKLADE  
Wiltshire  
SN6 6AJ

### **Treasurer:**

### **COPA Guernsey**

Mr Peter Keeling  
Les Poplairs  
Rue du Felconte  
ST SAVIOURS  
Guernsey  
GY7 9QD

### **Guernsey Sponsorship Secretary:**

Mrs Margaret Keeling  
Les Poplairs  
Rue du Felconte  
ST SAVIOURS  
Guernsey  
GY7 9QD

Registered Charity No. 1027117

## AN INVITATION - MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

You are invited to join a Cricklade COPA Work Group hoping to go out to the Dominican Republic next summer from 18th June to 2nd July 2012.

Volunteers are desperately sought to help complete the proposed new building by painting and landscaping the brand new school and campus for the profoundly deaf in the centre of Barahona.

We need people with all kinds of skills to help get everything ready - painters, gardeners, teachers, carpenters, pavers, etc. It would also be good to have a small team run a week-long summer camp for children either in Barahona or Bombita.

Please join us to help make a difference in the DR next summer. More details are available from Geoff Haslam on 01793 750785 or email [geoff@gandphaslam.plus.com](mailto:geoff@gandphaslam.plus.com)

**OBITUARY** We are very sorry to report the passing of Mrs Rosemary Ricketts. Rosemary and her late husband Brian were two of the very first to sponsor one of the children in La Hoya 20 years ago. She was a member of Lonsdale Road Methodist Church where COPA was founded and a good number of COPA sponsors were present at her Memorial Service, held at Edge Parish Church, Gloucestershire on Friday, September 2nd. A packed Church remembered Rosemary whose life was marked by her service to others. Her wish was that donations should be made to COPA in lieu of flowers.

## Sponsorship Letters and Cards



The address for your letters and cards is:

**Child's name and sponsorship number  
Escuela de COPA (Bombita or La Hoya)  
Apartado 42  
BARAHONA  
Dominican Republic**

Please could you write your name and address on the reverse of the envelope. This will help the volunteers when they are delivering the letters and cards to the children.