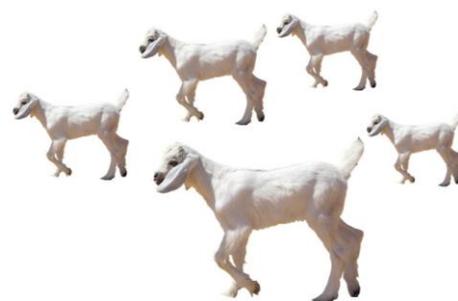


KIDS FOR KIDS

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Dear Friend,

HAPPY 25TH BIRTHDAY

It is amazing to me that Kids for Kids has been transforming the lives of children for 25 years. I still remember the outrage I felt all that time ago that a nine year old should be walking for seven hours for every drop of water that his family needed – when the biggest aquifer in Africa lies untapped under his feet. I felt then that it was unforgivable that, knowing this, no organisation in the world was digging wells in remote villages in Darfur. **25 years later Kids for Kids is still alone in digging and repairing handpumps for thousands of families whenever we get access to a drill and the team to man it.**

I have written a book! It is a look across the years at some of the experiences my son and I have had. Some of them were life-threatening, from ‘food poisoning’ to capture at gunpoint. Some of them are extraordinary and life-affirming. I was so lucky to find the inspirational people we have met along the way. I have learnt so much. I am in awe of the generosity of the very poorest. The little faces of the children in Darfur stay with me: the joy and wonder when they are given even the simplest thing. The little girl who said, in a whisper, *"Is that donkey really for me?"* She had never been given anything before our first little donkeys walked into her village. At our first village Um Ga'al, Ibrahim, that nine year old, is now a father and his children are at our Kindergarten. To me, that is a real 21st century miracle. I've tried to explain how it is that Kids for Kids has survived and succeeded in one of the most remote and dangerous regions of the world.

‘**One Child's Walk for Water**’ is of course being sold to raise funds to enable us to help more children. I would love it to help me buy more goats. Let me tell you about the miracle a goat is in Darfur – right now, when protein is missing from hundreds of children's meals. Its absence is more dangerous than you can imagine. Children across Sudan are stunted. Their heads often become misshapen. Their hair, bones, teeth and, worst of all, their brain cells are damaged. We simply cannot allow this. Just one goat can change a child's life and give them the life-saving nutrition that puts them on a path to health and a better future. Although I am suggesting just £15 as a 'minimum donation' for my book, if you can afford £50, I would love you to donate a goat, and you will get both a Certificate and my book! Just let me know.

Looking back has been an unexpected journey for me. Normally I am forever looking forward, doing all I can to improve things – how we can make sure our projects benefit as many people as possible, trying to make life just that little easier for children who are now facing the fear of violence, and making our events more fun, more special, more memorable.

I have never lost my sense of shock at the almost total deprivation and lack of infrastructure of Darfur. Can you imagine not just the lack of electricity, even of roads, the scarcity of the most basic healthcare, minimal education – and no water anywhere near where you live?

You may have read about the floods that are now frequent when the desperately needed rain comes? Or the searing heat when people have to walk for hours – there are no cars for villagers, just the little donkey to help them – to find wood so that they can cook? Did you know that hundreds of people now have nothing to eat but animal fodder? There is so little in the markets, and when there is, it is beyond their reach.

Looking back has highlighted for me the hundreds of families, of children, whose lives we have together quite literally transformed. Babies are alive because of us. Their mothers have gained status in their villages - at last they are listened to in village meetings or have become leaders themselves. We have given women a voice. Yes, Kids for Kids has done that!

And we have to look forward, right now. Children need us. Please read my book – I think you will be amazed, amused and, I hope, inspired! Please consider what you can do to celebrate our 25th Birthday and send any ideas to Andy Caudell, our new CEO. I am continuing to act as Chairman and to oversee our projects as Programme Director, working with our wonderful team in Cairo and Darfur. Please do organise an event or sports challenge? Perhaps become a Regular Supporter? I cannot begin to tell you what that would mean. I would love you to become a Children's Champion – choosing your own projects to support – and giving us the confidence to plan ahead.

This is going to be one of the hardest years yet as families in Darfur do what they can to survive global warming, deprivation and appalling violence. Even as I write, 1,500 children are going to our Kids for Kids' Kindergartens. They will, I know, be singing at school. And there will be goats waiting to give them their wonderful milk.

Despite everything – let's wish Kids for Kids a very, very ...

Happy 25th Birthday!



**Patricia Parker OBE
Founder**

www.kidsforkids.org.uk

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