

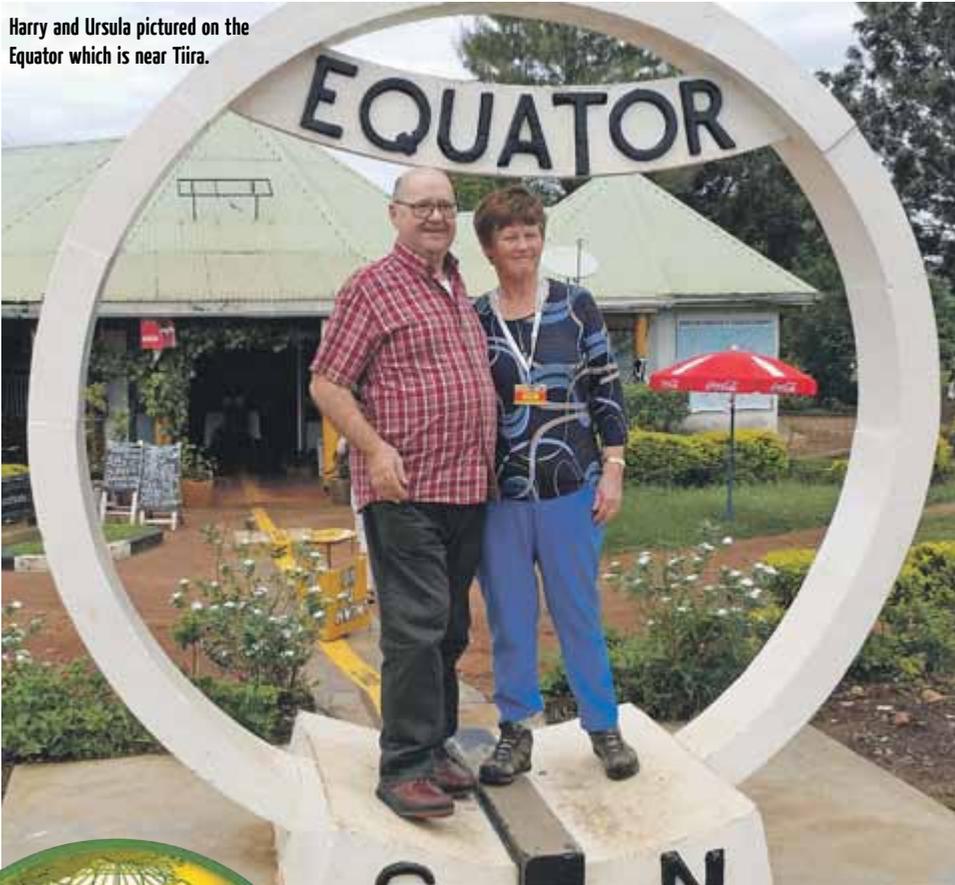
FOLEY
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FILE

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Local charity brings opportunities to Uganda

Harry and Ursula pictured on the Equator which is near Tiira.



ALTHOUGH they are thousands of miles apart, a village in South Kilkenny and an African village are developing close links.

Kilmacow and the village of Tiira in Uganda are becoming closely intertwined thanks to the efforts of Harry and Ursula Knox.

Harry, who hails from Kilmacow and still resides in the area, taught at De La Salle College for 26 years and was a director of Waterford Teachers' Centre for 18 and a half years.

After retiring at the end of January 2016, Harry, who is also well-known in Toastmasters circles, embarked on a whole new adventure along with his wife Ursula.

'Opportunity Knox' is a registered company and is designated as an officially recognised and registered charity by the Charities Regulator.

The charity was officially launched at a special event in the locality in April 2017.

Prior to that, Harry and Ursula had already achieved a significant amount through their endeavours with this hugely worthwhile initiative.

For many years, Harry and Ursula have been sponsoring a child in Uganda through World Vision.

When World Vision organised a trip to Uganda so that people could see their work first-hand, Harry and Ursula decided to embark on the expedition.

In 2015, they travelled to Uganda and visited schools, clinics, farms, and observed the daily life of many impoverished Ugandan people.

A key moment in the formation of the idea for 'Opportunity Knox' was when they met a local man called Wmima John Kennedy.

World Vision had helped John achieve his goal of becoming a mechanic.

"John was very articulate and showed us his little shop. He told us all about the help which World Vision had given him," said Harry.

Harry and John remained in contact and 'Opportunity Knox' began to take shape.

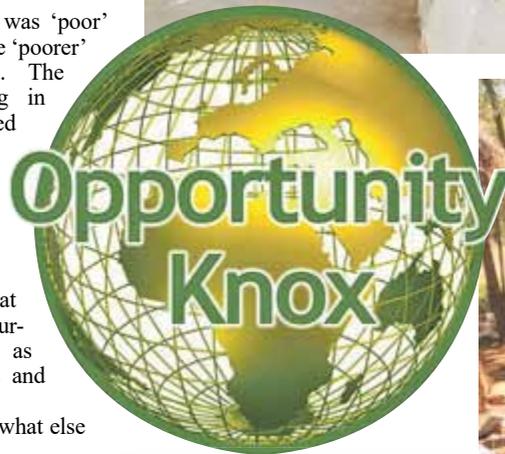
Focusing their efforts on the village of Tiira near Busia town in Eastern Uganda, Harry asked John to locate and make a list of the poorest families in the village.

"He said that he was 'poor' but that there was the 'poorer' and the 'poorest'. The majority are living in mud huts," explained Harry.

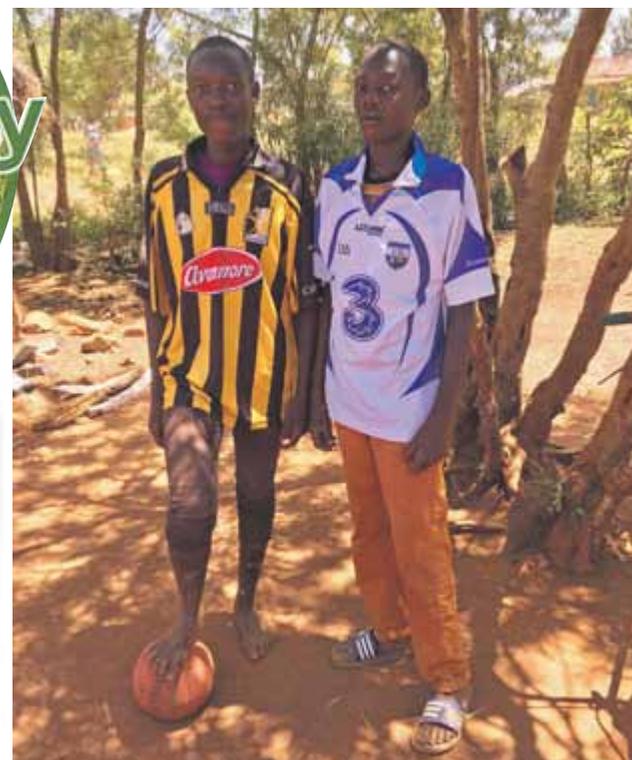
After John did a survey, Harry and Ursula returned to Uganda in April 2016.

As a result of that visit, they began purchasing items such as blankets, mattresses and porridge.

"When we asked what else



A recent cheque presentation to 'Opportunity Knox' by students at Templeorum NS. To date the school has donated over €4,500. Included in the photo is Principal Marie O' Mahony who is one of the four Trustees of the charity.



Kilkenny meets Waterford in Uganda.

they wanted, nearly all the families said they would like help with education fees for their children," said Harry.

It costs approximately €60 per year to pay the school fees at primary level for each child which includes a porridge meal each day.

For the first year, Harry and Ursula gifted €20,000 to start off the fund.

Their aim is to send the

money to Uganda and then visit on two occasions each year to monitor the spending of the money and to ensure that it is having the desired impact.

Harry and Ursula are actively engaging in fundraising here in the locality and they have received significant support.

Harry's brother and sister-in-law, Brendan and Breda Knox from Ormond Crescent in Lismore Lawn, who are active members of the Waterford Gardening Club, prepared and

opened for visitors their Urban Award Winning Garden for the past two years.

So far they have raised €3,500 on the day and a further €1,500 from further once off donations and regular monthly donations by gardeners.

They will open the garden again on Saturday July 20th this summer and hope to receive support once again from neighbours, friends and members of various gardening clubs.

Ursula and Harry took an exhibition stand at the Kilmacow Christmas Craft Fair and sold donated handmade jewellery and Christmas Cards featuring photographs of the inside and outside of St. Senan's Church Kilmacow.

Fr. Brian Flynn, retired Parish Priest of Kilmacow, Patron of the Charity and brother of Ursula, organised one of his popular entertainment concerts in November 2018.

'Opportunity Knox' was one of the charities which profited from the proceeds of the attendance as well as from the monster raffle.

Many local schools have fundraised for 'Opportunity Knox' through hosting a variety of events.

Harry and Ursula have also spoken to schoolchildren here to spread news of the charity and also as a way to build awareness of the living circumstances of rural dwellers in Uganda and in other African Countries.

Additionally a local mother accepts uniforms and tracksuits that children have out grown and sells them to other parents and accepts donations for 'Opportunity Knox'.

Ursula herself has also participated in the Christmas Day Swim in Tramore as a means of fundraising.

"From what donors tell us, the knowledge that 100 per cent of their donations are spent on the children, is why they are attracted to this charity," said Harry.

Harry and Ursula continue to pay all overheads associated with 'Opportunity Knox' in Ireland and Uganda.

Each year they will donate, at the very least, sufficient funds to cover all of the administration costs in Ireland and in Uganda as well as all of their own travelling expenses.

The charity needs €15,000 per year to pay the school fees and daily mugs of porridge for the children.

Harry and Ursula's most recent trip to Tiira Village took place from January 1st to 27th this year.

This visit had a different focus than previous visits as, after

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