



# COPA news

building caring Christian communities

June 2008

**“2008 has seen some fantastic teamwork bringing about major changes.....”**

2007 ended very badly in the DR with both villages struggling with the after affects of Tropical Storm Noel. Mud, water, damaged homes, loss of belongings and disease was what your friends and mine (the village people) were dealing with daily. We know your love and prayers went out to them because your prayers were answered. Life has changed so much in both villages and 2008 has seen some fantastic team work to bring about major improvements to the homes and lives of these poor people.

In November 2007 an appeal went out to you and within no time money was donated from all over the UK and Guernsey. The grand total of over £25,000 was sent from hundreds of people of the UK. Large donations have been sent from the US as well. We are so grateful for these because they have been put to such good use. Whatever has been needed in the classrooms has been bought so that the teachers and children could get back to normal. The clinics needed to be gutted and rebuilt and they have been rebuilt with more concrete rather than wood so that if anything like this happens again the damage will not be as great. New couches and various pieces of equipment have been purchased for the clinics. The volunteers' kitchen and bathroom units have been replaced. The furniture in the COPA offices as been replaced, once again not using wood. A new truck is in use and, although it is not safe to do longer journeys carrying our volunteers, the old one is still being used around the villages to transport supplies necessary for the concrete floor project.

Some of the money has been spent on concreting the floors of most of the homes in Bombita and a few in La Hoya so you can imagine the difference that must make to the hygiene and health of the families. Obviously I am extremely pleased for the village people to have concrete floors but what excites me more is how they came to get them. We have experienced such team work in the villages. Under the wonderful leadership of Russell Kamradt of the US, neighbours have helped each other to concrete their floors. The deal was - if you help your neighbour you will get your floor done. And they did. People who did not have the skills initially learned them. We all know that wonderful feeling of learning new skills and being able to put them to good use. I saw the excitement of some of the people in Bombita. It was fantastic. At a time when there was no work around on the land these people were busy doing something that would really improve their standard of living immediately and learning a skill for the future. Maybe more could work in the building trade now. Other work groups have been out from the US to work on various smaller projects and we are grateful to them.

**On Saturday,  
October 18th 2008  
A concert will take  
place starring the  
classical singer  
Hayley Westenra at  
the Victoria Hall,  
Stoke-on-Trent.  
The proceeds will be  
divided equally  
between COPA &  
UNICEF.  
Tickets are available  
now! See poster on  
back page for  
details.**

Ever since Sebert and Doreen moved to the DR in 1992 to build the first school and clinic you, the sponsors, have never let us down. When we have wondered where we were going to get the money from for the next project you have answered our prayers. Of course we are planning our next project! Regis Balland, a young Frenchman working in England, is going out in August as a construction supervisor to supervise the building of a new library in Bombita. He wants to use the skills he has to help people abroad and has been given 6 months leave from his job. He can speak French, Spanish and English fluently so I think he will be able to help the people in Bombita with their language development as well as their building skills. Aren't we lucky with the people who want to work for COPA?

I look forward to meeting some new faces, and hopefully all our regular attendees, at the AGM when we meet at a different venue. We are grateful to Wesley Place Methodist Church for their hospitality and to the fund raising event they are organising for COPA and UNICEF. More information on the back page of this Newsletter.

The Project Trust girls, Aimee, Marlene, Lauren and Alice and Verona have only a few months left in the DR. We are extremely grateful for their contribution to the work in the schools. The girls had a very difficult start because of the floods but they showed such determination and strength of character. We wish them well as they move on to University or work and hope that they will feel to have benefited from their experience. Verona has helped in so many ways but in particular, along with Lynne, to start working with the Partnership schools. We certainly see this work as a great way of helping more children who need a better education. Verona moved to the DR from Spain so her command of the language has helped a great deal to build up these new relationships. We all wish Verona well and say a big THANK YOU for her contribution to COPA.

**Jeanne Bergin - Chairperson COPA UK**



# The International Conference

In February 2008 representatives of COPA UK travelled to the Dominican Republic for an International Conference which included representatives from USA, Guernsey and DR as well as members of our team of volunteers. The meeting was over two days and was chaired by Sebert Lane the founder and International President of COPA. This was only the third time that such a meeting has been held in the history of COPA, the previous meeting being six years ago in February 2002.

There were many reasons for the meeting and these include:

- To review our progress and impact to date
- To confirm with our partners the core aims and vision of COPA
- To agree the way forward for COPA

Although the meeting was planned well before tropical storm Noel struck in October 2007 it provided an opportunity for us to witness progress with the clear up and also the early stages of the project to provide each house in Bombita and La Hoya with concrete floors (this turned out to be 230 houses).

It was also of great value to meet members of the other committees whom we had only corresponded with by email or telephone. We can now put faces and personalities to names.

Several proposals and recommendations were made for discussion and for ratification by each national committee. Whilst it's not possible to detail everything that was achieved at the conference the following bullet points will provide a flavour:

- Agreed the importance of maintaining the level of excellence in the schools and clinics.
- Confirmation of the commitment to share equally the core costs of our work in the DR. However this would not preclude one partner from undertaking agreed additional projects provided sustainability could be assured.
- Agreed in principle to extend our work to developing additional schools if the need presented itself within our geographical area of operation. This would of course require significant funding and sponsor recruitment.
- The delegates were excited by the progress of the experimental partnership schools project whereby COPA provides training and resources to assist in raising the standards at existing state schools. We see this as a positive way in improving the education of more young

people without the need to invest heavily in construction. We were able to visit potential partnership schools and could see very clearly how COPA could help.

- Continue to support students to attend secondary education.
- To explore ways of improving the facilities and standards at the local secondary school to which many of our Bombita children progress. The present school is greatly overcrowded.
- Developing our training rooms to provide vocational courses for young people not suited for academic studies.
- Set up a fund from which we can support students to go on to university.
- In view of the expanding and also ageing number of buildings we identified the need to recruit a maintenance/facilities volunteer to work in the DR.

During the course of the meeting presentations were made to Dominican members of staff who had given exceptional service during and following tropical storm Noel.

We were all greatly impressed by the dedication and professionalism of all of our volunteers and we thank them for the hospitality provided throughout our stay.

**Roger Tovey** – Vice Chairman COPA UK



*Delegates to the conference together with the COPA Volunteers and La Hoya Head Teacher, Ruber*

## Guernsey Branch News

Jenny and Rodney Benjamin were invited to talk to two assemblies at St. Sampson's Secondary School, following a fund raising day at the end of the previous term. You could have heard a pin drop - the pupils were so attentive! Oakvale representative Sue Pratt attended as her pupils had also contributed to the funds. It is wonderful that so many of our young people care so much for those less fortunate, and they are a credit to themselves, their families and their schools.

Louise Benjamin, who was one of the first volunteers for COPA, before the Bombita school was built, had a fairytale wedding in Guernsey on 17th May to a dental surgeon from Luxembourg. Louise has supported COPA for many years with visits to the Dominican Republic and local media coverage. Although she will continue to live in Luxembourg, she will still be supporting COPA as she has always done.

Peter Keeling attended the COPA International Conference in the Dominican Republic and felt privileged to see the COPA operation in action and to meet the delegates from US, UK

and the DR team. The conference provided a forum for all involved with COPA to discuss in depth what has been achieved and more importantly, the way forward. The DR management and staff are dedicated and experienced and we thank them for looking after us so well. It was impressive and moving to see how involved the villages had been in the operation to clean up the schools, and then their own houses in the aftermath of Hurricane Noel. It is also evident that the regular visits by teams from the US and the UK add value to the COPA operation.

The COPA schools and clinics set the standard for education and health care in the area. The opportunity to visit other nearby schools which are being considered by COPA as "Partnership Schools" drove home the very real need to raise standards to match the COPA model. Guernsey is very keen to see early advancement of the Partnership programme.

**Peter Keeling**  
**Treasurer - Guernsey Branch**



# The story of 230 concrete floors.....

At the end of the initial clear up after Tropical Storm Noel the state of the houses in Bombita was noted by Sebert in his final report. "Many have earth floors which are well below the level of the surrounding ground. Some as much as 8 – 10 inches below! The mud had flowed straight in and the houses are not habitable. The sight of sloshy 10 inch deep mud in a house is unbelievable. I have no idea how many houses that is but it may be as many as 100. A count will take place as soon as one can move around".

So a search was started to find someone who could oversee and co-ordinate this project. You can read what happened from then on in the article below from Connie, our Project Director.

"God can and will bring good out of bad things if we trust in Him! COPA received so many financial gifts to help us with the recovery process that we made a commitment to see that every house with dirt floors in both our villages would receive a concrete floor. We prayed for someone to come and oversee the project and were blessed with Russ Kamradt (pictured below)



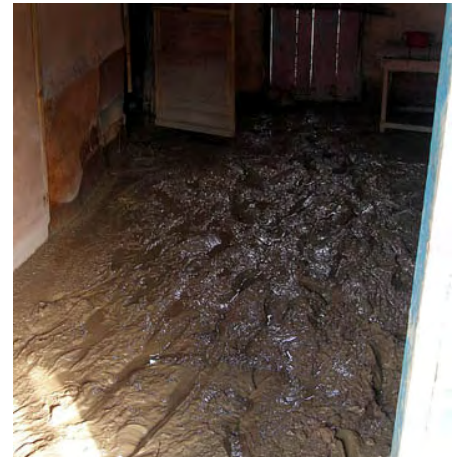
from Jacksonville. Russ came on February 12<sup>th</sup> and left on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

During that time, we have finished 211 houses in Bombita and 19 in La Hoya. La Hoya is better off than Bombita and we only found 19 without a proper floor, but the job in Bombita was huge. We worked with the homeowners who provided the labour. Each homeowner had to work on their home and two others. Many completed many more than their required three!

The coordination job was daunting and I marvelled at Russ' calmness in overseeing this project. He had as many as 18 houses being done on any one day in different areas of the village. We kept the suppliers busy bringing in cement, rocks and gravel! Needless to say the homeowners are very happy. It still amazes me as I walk through the village that there are NO DIRT FLOORS!!!! Can you even imagine the new sense of pride the families have now, not having to live in a home with dirt floors? I wish I had thought to buy mops for resale! Everyone has bought a new mop!

Thank you to all who were able to help make this amazing work a reality!"

Russ sent weekly progress reports which included stories of life in the village as well details of the floors laid. These can all be found at <http://www.fiumc.org> then click on outreach then outreach missions. Well worth a read if you have access to the internet.



Above - the state of the mud floors after the flood.

Below - pictures of the concreted floors



**Christian Youth Work:** The work that we have been doing with the youth in La Hoya is starting to bear fruit. A number of the youth have made commitments to Christ and this has changed their lives and has begun to change La Hoya. Walking past the park one day as I was returning from the capital, I noticed three of them working with some of the younger boys on the basketball court. I asked what was going on and Arismendes said to me, "Now that we are Christians, we have a responsibility to work with the young students so that when they grow they will be able to make better decisions!" How wonderful!  
*Connie—Project Director*

## A project for 2008

Maribel, the director of the COPA school in Bombita sat down with Rosalba (school psychologist) and Amy, the Health Advisor to express her concerns about children who had not successfully completed the school year for several years and not able to advance.

Our aim is now to create a scheme that helps children with learning disabilities due to neurological or social problems to be able to learn a life skill that they can use to support themselves in the future.



# News from the schools.....

## PACKS OF GOODNESS

There are many ways to recognize and encourage positive behaviour and attitude and thanks to a donation of stationery packs organised by Donna and John Beardon from Augusta, Georgia, USA, this has been possible in our COPA schools. It is always a challenge to promote positive qualities when students reach the “top of the school”, in our case 8<sup>th</sup> grade. As they grow both in age and maturity more responsibility is placed on their shoulders as they become more responsible for their actions. With this in mind the packs gave the directors the perfect opportunity



to celebrate the efforts of students who have worked hard during the year and not succumbed to negative peer pressure. They were presented with the packs during a merit assembly and, as you can see from the smiles, were pleasantly surprised with the contents. They included an A4 writing pad, pencils, crayons, scissors, erasers and pens which we hope will inspire them to maintain a high level of presentation and achievement. It is also hoped that those students who did not receive a pack will strive to make a change for the better in the near future.

In La Hoya the packs were also presented to students from younger grades also recognising the same achievements within the school.

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## BEYOND OUR BORDERS!



The week before the Easter holidays Bombita was awash with different cultures from Latin America. A peace agreement between certain Latino countries under the guidance of the President of the Dominican Republic, Lionel Fernandez Reina, inspired Maribel the Head-teacher to choose these countries. The week culminated in a special assembly filled with music, dance, expositions and colourful costumes. Not forgetting the two important Fs, “food” and “flags”. It was a time of learning which was thoroughly enjoyed by all and showed both students and teachers at their very best.



In Bombita 7<sup>th</sup> grade student Juan Carlos Perèz Perèz has been selected by the Tamayo district office to attend a summer camp for a week in July in Jarabacoa. Each school in the district has selected a student of merit for this reward and as he has excellent grades, behaviour and attitude he was chosen from our school.



Many special days are celebrated in the Dominican Republic. These pictures show just two of them from earlier this year. Independence day was celebrated by mask wearing, flag waving children parading around the villages and Women’s Day, marked by an assembly which celebrated the role of mothers.





## ....from Verona and Lynne, the COPA Education Advisors in the DR

After the trauma of the preceding weeks the end of term celebrations were deliberately kept low key but after a few enjoyable classroom games the children tucked into scrumptious fare with Bombitians enjoying chicken and spaghetti and the La Hoyans pizzas. Even this arrangement met with an enormous hiccup as the pizzas arrived over two hours late due to a huelga in Jaquim-eyes! The students all appreciated the Christmas gifts and left the schools to start their Christmas holidays with big sunny smiles.



### Connie diLeo, Project Director writes about 'MORE BLESSINGS'

COPA's desire is to always try and network with other organizations that are working here in the Dominican Republic so that we don't try and reinvent the wheel. Two wonderful examples of the success of networking are our computer labs and our trade rooms. Thanks to the cooperation of Indotel (Dominican Information and Telecommunications program) both schools were recipients of computer labs with ten new computers, a laser printer, an inverter with batteries to use when there is no electricity, tables, chairs and fans! This partnership will greatly benefit our students and students from nearby villages who may also come to use the computers.

The second example is the cooperation with Infotep. This Dominican program is dedicated to teaching skills that will help a person learn a trade that can help them earn an income. We went to them to ask for their advice on how to run our new trade rooms. They came out to visit and see our new trade rooms. They were so impressed they said they would gladly provide the teachers for our classes in sewing and carpentry. At present we have two classes of carpentry in session. One is beginning carpentry for persons who have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They are learning basic carpentry skills while making a dining room set and chairs. The second class is for an

### The end of term traditional Easter Kite flying competition at La Hoya




association of women from various villages that are learning how to make furniture for sale. They have a location in a nearby village where they will sell their furniture.



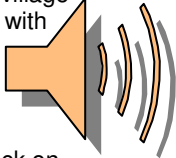
The first sewing class was complete before Noel struck. We are working to replace the cabinets in this room and will begin the next class in June.

We are very pleased to be working together with local Dominican organizations to help people improve their standard of living while giving them the opportunity to develop skills and self esteem. This is always so much better than giving hand outs!



Amy arrived in Bombita from the US to work for COPA as Health Advisor in October last year, shortly before the hurricane struck. Once things had returned to some semblance of normality Amy was able to send us her first impressions of Bombita and they are bound to bring back memories for those people who have spent time there, either as volunteers or members of a workgroup.

1. The electricity goes out 2-3 times a day. We have electricity on average about 10-16 hrs/day.
2. I wake up in the mornings without a running fan and without being able to make coffee because of the lack of electricity.
3. You wake up to the sound of donkeys, cows, pigs and roosters outside your window as if the animals were right there with you.
4. You wear long pants and long sleeves in 90 degree weather to protect yourself from the swarms of mosquitoes. 
5. You race to see how fast you can get your key in the door and inside your house before the mosquitoes eat you alive and before they can get into the house.
6. There are dozens of motorbikes to 1 car in the village and the one van is COPA owned.
7. Most houses are made of the trunk of coconut trees with tin roofs.
8. Most of the houses have mud floors (but this has now changed!!)
9. The dirt roads have such bad potholes yet continue to be driven on daily without being fixed.
10. Kids use a sugar cane stick as a bat to play baseball and bat bottle caps and yet are very good at batting the small object. They also have been seen playing hockey with a sugar cane stick and a coconut.
11. The people use the water in the “rigola” (ditch with water) for multiple purposes: for washing clothes, bathing, animals do their business there and sometimes they use the water for cooking and drinking.
12. The kids run around freely naked yet if they are bathing in the river and you walk by, they need to cover themselves.
13. Kids say “hi” over and over no matter how many times you have acknowledged them.
14. There are tons of banana trees, coconut trees and sugar cane fields surrounding us; yet no one sells them in the village and you have to go 30 min away to the city to buy them.
15. The villagers consider old sugar cane great because it’s “drunk” and has an alcoholic taste to it.
16. The villagers eat rice and beans every single day.
17. If we wait for our fruit to ripen on the tree, it’s gone before we know it. Fruit has to be picked green or it’s taken.
18. We can only have meat twice a week and a little produce the 2 days we go into Barahona for eating and shopping because they won’t last long in the fridge with the lack of electricity.
19. When people talk to each other about something, it sounds like they are arguing and they raise their voices and it seems like they are yelling at each other.
20. Live pig castration without anesthesia is for village entertainment and a delicacy for dinner.
21. There are no driving rules: stop sign means “it doesn’t exist”, and a red light means “pretend I don’t see it and go through”. If I’m going through a green light I should slow down or stop to make sure nobody goes through the red light and hits me. When turning left and someone is behind me on the highway, move to the right shoulder and let them pass, then turn left. If nobody is coming on the opposite lane and someone is behind me, get in the opposite lane going in the wrong direction and turn from there.

22. Car horns are like music to their ears and they freely use it all the time.
23. Toilet paper can’t be flushed down the toilet and must be thrown in the garbage can. 
24. It rains and the village becomes a huge mass of mud and school is cancelled.
25. People hang outside their houses and just sit and talk.
26. All the people know their neighbours very well.
27. You leave something out or unattended and someone else thinks it’s theirs and takes it.
28. You loan someone something and don’t ever see it again.
29. A person can surprise you by calling your name through your window or opening your house door and walking in.
30. Dogs and cats are given birth control shots and still get pregnant.
31. The people pin clothes pegs under their chins to keep track of the losing points during a domino game. 
32. The villagers are such domino pros, they throw their piece down decisively and so fast that you can’t even think, yet they figure out who has what so easily.
33. All men walking down the main road carry a machete in their hand.
34. Women sweep the dirt roads and their dirt yards.
35. There is no garbage service. All trash is burned to get rid of it even cans and plastic is attempted.
36. Burning trash serves multiple purposes: getting rid of the rubbish, keeping mosquitoes away, having some light at night when there is no electricity and a social time with neighbours.
37. People consider 70-75 degrees (about 28 degrees Centigrade) “cold” weather and start wearing their jackets.
38. Compost pile is made to throw to the pigs.
39. Kids have no shame asking for money or anything they see you have.
40. An immigration soldier comes to the village unexpectedly on a motorbike looking for illegal Haitians.
41. Anything starts at least 1 hour later than scheduled.
42. The villagers are aware of a health promotion class and want to go, yet don’t show up until someone rounds up the village last minute, then you have 50+ people come.
43. Some of the young men are very dynamic and gifted natural teachers that keep the audience’s attention and get everyone to participate.
44. People think an injection or antibiotic will fix any illness.
45. The only source of music comes from the village bar. People love to share their music with everyone else. 
46. The village bar has a generator to have the music going when the electricity goes out.
47. People cheer when the electricity comes back on.
48. We have no TV, radio, microwave, or toaster yet can still live decently.
49. There are very dedicated, faithful, and devoted clinic and school watchmen willing to do anything to protect us and keep us safe
50. **ONLY IN BOMBITA do I get a shocking welcome with a cyclone, lots of mud, flooding and evacuated after a week of being here and then coming to a muddy house to clean up. And that makes my life more adventurous, interesting without a dull or boring moment!**

□ □ □ □



## A request from the DR

Hi everyone,

Now that I'm getting to grips with the sponsorship programme, I'd like to ask for help from sponsors in order to make the scheme more beneficial and interesting for the child and his/her sponsor. Before that though, I would like to thank all sponsors for their support, which is of utmost importance in helping to maintain the operation of the schools in both communities.

I would like to ask for your help in the following ways:

Please do not send parcels or money in order to ensure that all children are treated equally. However, if you would like to send something could they be small items that fit into an envelope such as pencils or stickers (preferably not written in English!).

Children really appreciate receiving short letters and photos of their sponsor family and colourful post-cards. They show your sponsored child that you care and are thinking of them and it brightens up their day. However, all the letters written in English need to be translated so please could they be quite brief. It would also be very helpful for me if those of you who write in Spanish could make a note on the envelope that it does not need translation.

It is very important that in every correspondence the child's full name and ID number is written clearly on the envelope. There are around 700 children in both schools and it's surprising how many of them have similar names! Just writing the reference number helps tremendously.

Thanks again for the wonderful work you are doing!

Cathy  
Assistant Project Director



Pictured above are some of the helpers from Leedstown Methodist Church who held a coffee morning and sale in aid of the Appeal following Tropical Storm Noel. Our thanks go to them, and all the other churches, schools, community groups and individuals who kindly donated to this appeal. As you will have read previously in the Newsletter, over £25,000 was raised and has been put to good use to repair and restore the schools and clinics in La Hoya and Bombita and lay over 200 concrete floors. in villagers homes.

### First impressions: intense, joyful and unforgettable!

Cathy Williams has taken up a two year position with COPA as Assistant Project Director. She has taken time to reflect on her first impressions as a COPA volunteer.

My arrival in the Dominican Republic coincided with Tropical Storm Noel in November 2007. Six days after arriving in the country I was able to make my way to La Hoya and Bombita, observing collapsed bridges and submerged villages. I was unaware that two of the villages that I passed on my journey, which appeared hardest hit by flooding were, in fact, La Hoya and Bombita!

I had left my job working with refugees in the UK and now found myself as a refugee in the DR. The COPA team and I squished together; ten of us living 'Big Brother' style in one house. My first day was spent going to the refugee centres where the villagers were housed with very limited facilities (100 mattresses for 1000 people and one toilet). However, even amongst such conditions they managed to have a smile on their faces and keep their faith in God.

My agenda for the first few weeks involved cleaning, walking around the schools and housing area in Bombita. It was like wading through a pool of melted chocolate, which needed to be cleaned out of the houses and schools. Once the water had started to recede we quickly assessed the damage caused to the paperwork, furniture and equipment, which was largely irreversible.

It is amazing how, instead of complaining and grumbling, the local people have accepted the situation and remained positive throughout. Those initial weeks were a great lesson for me as well as a challenge in accepting God's will without complaining. I am excited about the prospect of using the disaster relief money to help build concrete floors in the villages, which will help long-term not only if a similar situation reoccurs, but also for reasons of hygiene. So, my first impressions can definitely be summarised by three words; intense, joyful and unforgettable!

**The Medical Fund** is continuing to be used for the welfare of the villagers of La Hoya and Bombita. Amy, our Health Advisor in the DR, assesses the need and finds the appropriate healthcare for them. Some of the recent cases dealt with include severe ear problems, thyroid, hip joints, teeth, heart problems and sickle cell anaemia. The list could go on and on. There will be more details of Amy's work in the next Newsletter. Amy also works at the Clinics and provides Health Education in the schools.

As you can see, the need for the Medical Hardship Fund is great and donations are always welcomed. A large donation has just been made by Verity Threlfell, a member of the COPA UK committee, who raised over £1,000 for the fund when she took part in (and completed) the Stockholm Marathon earlier this month. Congratulations Verity and a huge thank you for your contribution to the Fund.



## The COPA UK AGM - 18th October 2008

COPA UK began life at Lonsdale Methodist Church in Gloucester and the members of that church set about recruiting sponsors to support and resource the work that Sebert and Doreen Lane had begun in the Dominican Republic. As the project developed there became a need to recruit volunteers to work at first with Sebert and Doreen and later, when Sebert and Doreen returned to the UK, on their own with of course the Dominican teachers and staff.

These volunteers came, and still come, from all parts of the UK and some from other parts of Europe. Over time many volunteers and workgroups have come and gone but almost without exception each has recruited more sponsors for COPA. The result has been that we now have over 700 sponsors from many parts of the UK (and beyond).

It is true that the largest proportion of sponsors is still from the Gloucester/Swindon area but there are a number of groupings elsewhere who are raising money and recruiting sponsors for COPA. One such group is the Wesley Place Methodist Church at Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent. One of their members is promoting a high profile concert at Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent which will raise funds to be shared by COPA and UNICEF. See below.

In recent years membership of the UK committee has evolved from

being centered on Lonsdale Church to becoming nationwide. This has provided a few challenges when organising meetings but we are getting to grips with this both in terms of the number of meetings and their location. Greater use of email has also made this possible.

Since the beginning COPA has been operated by unpaid volunteers and the present committee wish this to continue. However, to continue providing the funding and resources needed to fulfil our ambitions in the DR as well as improving our communication with an expanding number of sponsors, we need to build our already strong and active committee.

Over the last few years the committee has pondered long and hard on how to involve more sponsors at the Annual General Meeting and has considered changing the location. The Hayley Westenra concert this year has provided a focus for us to do just this as it coincides with the date of our AGM. We have therefore decided, as an experiment, to hold the AGM in the afternoon of the concert at Alsager. It will be held at Wesley Place Methodist Church, Lawton Road, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 2RU.

As always, all sponsors are invited to attend and further details will be sent out in September. We are sorry if this is inconvenient for some of our regular AGM attendees but we do feel it to be only fair to make this annual meeting available to other sponsors. We will of course review the situation for future years perhaps alternating between Gloucester and another venue. We would welcome your views.

### Sponsorship Letters and Cards

The address for your letters and cards is:

*Child's name and sponsorship number*  
Escuela de COPA (La Hoya or Bombita)  
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. The volunteers have asked that messages to the children be kept short as each one needs translating into Spanish. As you can imagine, translating up to 800 cards from UK sponsors and 800 cards from USA sponsors is a huge task! Thankyou for your understanding.

### 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 contact**

Mrs Margaret Keeling  
Address as above

Daniel Keen presents

# Hayley Westenra

*"The audience heard one of the most beautiful voices to grace the Victoria Hall"*  
- The Sentinel

Saturday 18th October 2008, 7.30pm  
Victoria Hall  
Stoke-on-Trent

Tickets £20 & £15  
0870 060 6649

[www.theambassadors.com/victoriahall](http://www.theambassadors.com/victoriahall)

All profit raised will be split equally  
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