

Siyakhulisa Abantwana

We are Nurturing the Children

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Dear Friends,

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It has been a pleasure to have Alan and Lucie Russell in South Africa for their usual annual visit. They left yesterday to return to Canada and we wish them a safe journey and trust they enjoyed their stay.

While Alan was here the Board discussed a number of issues around the future of the Siyakhulisa Abantwana Foundation, one being the implementation of this newsletter to keep the friends of Siyakhulisa posted on any new developments. We have taken the liberty of assuming that you wish to be kept informed but if not, then please just drop us an email requesting that we take your name off the mailing list.

Fire at Newcastle Orphanage

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the fire at the Hope in Christ Home in Newcastle that claimed 11 lives, including that of Sarah Holland who founded and ran the home for the past 6 years. The Board members of Siyakhulisa Abantwana has decided to make a significant donation to the Sarah Holland trust fund, which has been set up to rebuild the centre and support the survivors.

In the act of rescuing 9 of the survivors, including two newborns, Sarah died. As a remembrance of her work and life, our Foundation has established the Sarah Holland Bursary Fund. This education bursary will be awarded annually to a deserving child from the Blue Crane Route Municipality in the Eastern Cape (Somerset East, Cookhouse and Pearston)

The Trust Fund

Last year donations to the Trust were almost non-existent and knowing how the recession affected each and every one of us, you will have noticed that we held back on requesting donations. As such our trust fund grew virtually only by increments of interest accrued and to date we have R128 000 in our ABSA account. As you all know the trust was set up with the grand idea of building a complex of four foster homes with a Day Care Centre which will cost in the region of R2Million. While we work slowly towards this sum, which is beginning to seem unattainable, the number of children requiring safe housing and care, grows by the day. This has caused the Board to rethink our strategy and it has been decided that as soon as we can afford to buy an existing house which can house 6 children and a foster mother we should use the funds we have to purchase such house and get it established and up and running while we continue to save towards a second house. We trust that you will all agree that this is the way to go: Save 6 children at a time rather than wait till we can save 24 at one time.

The Mary Coetzee Children's Home

Many of you have taken a special interest in our involvement with the children at the Mary Coetzee Foster Homes. This home belongs to Child Welfare SA however we continue to play a significant role in ensuring that the children are well cared for. Lynne continues to serve on the Child Welfare Board so that she can keep a watchful eye. Should she find that it becomes

necessary, she will approach the Siyakhulisa Board members about dipping into Siyakhulisa funds to supplement the grocery bill. However all is well thus far and the children are thriving.

It has been a tradition since the inception of this home in 2005, that the children get a complete new outfit, including new shoes, and a gift at Christmas time. This year Child Welfare was not in a position to honour this tradition however the Siyakhulisa Board members managed to collect sufficient donations without using Siyakhulisa funds. See the pictures on our website at <http://www.siyakhulisa.com/gallery.shtml>. Thank you to those of you who contributed and afforded us the opportunity to bring so much joy to 24 young souls.

Future Projects

Our "Operation School Shoes" project held in Winter 2008 was a great success and we were able to provide 115 children with new school shoes and socks. We were astounded at the difference a new pair of shoes, probably in most cases their first new pair ever, can make to a child's dignity and pride. See the pictures in our picture gallery <http://www.siyakhulisa.com/gallery.shtml> - scroll down past the Christmas party.

Last Winter we planned to run with "Operation Windcheater" however the recession put a stop to that. Fortunately South Africa experienced one of its mildest winters ever. However we would very much like to run a Winter project this year: if not the windcheaters, then may be to adopt a school and help out with a soup kitchen or similar. We'll keep you posted.

All that's left for us to say is a great big thank you to all our supporters. With your help we promise to continue to work towards a better life for our orphaned and needy children and we welcome any suggestions and positive criticisms that will help us achieve our goals.

Warm Regards from the Siyakhulisa Trustees,

Lynne, Rosalee and Alan.