

Dear friends of House of Encouragement

For our friends in Switzerland the summer holidays are over and here in South Africa the days get longer and warmer. Although the seasons are not as pronounced as in Switzerland we can see that spring is on its way. Especially in Pretoria and the surrounding areas, including in Soshanguve, the jacaranda trees bloom again, turning streets into a fairy tale landscape. A really special sight that brings joy not only visitors. Next to our orphan care center Lesedi-Potlana we also have a jacaranda tree. Even if a few months ago this tree was severely damaged by a storm it presents itself already again in the spring costume.



Such magical images of beautiful residential areas in Pretoria are famous for the South African Capital.

During our winter holidays we had lots of fun and joy at our center. It was interesting to see how the children not only waited to be entertained but also often brought in their own suggestions and ideas on what could be done throughout the day. The activities ranged from craft projects, playing and dancing to reading and discussing in groups. During the school holidays we agreed with the legal guardians that visiting the center is voluntary. Some children visit relatives or friends during this time. However, most children attend regularly and we even have many who spend every single day of the vacation at the center and in fact never miss a single day during an entire year.

Creative work and projects are always a success for all age groups. With the smaller primary school children, we started a colouring book, where we work on different topics together. Here are some samples of the young artists from grade one to grade four:



The teenagers made Paper Mache bowls and painted them creatively.



But it is not only for creative projects, the fun and games, that the children feel comfortable and are happy at the center. Here they truly have an alternative home, a family with many friends and a place where they get a lot of affection. Our caregiver team really does a great job and all six of them identify themselves with the work and goal House of Encouragement and are involved with heart and soul.

The positive atmosphere in the center is certainly also influenced greatly by the team leader, Charles Kapa. He leads his team diligently and maintains good relation with the children of all ages. Although Charles at the age of 28 is still relatively young, he exudes a natural authority and has the "big family" well under control. His successfully applies his experience from various earlier jobs and responsibilities, especially of several years as a supervisor in a home for disabled children. Moreover, we have come to know and appreciate his integrity and reliable personality very much.



A few months ago Charles (with red shirt) had the opportunity for the first time in his life to buy a piece of land in a new settlement in Soshanguve. This area is not yet developed and therefore he has no water or electricity and no sewage connection. Nevertheless, he is proud of his own place. As a first step he could set up a Shack. A curtain separates the sleeping - room from the rest of the house. The furniture is currently still extremely modest, but that will come bit by bit, he says. Until now he always lived together with relatives or friends.



Recently we have asked Charles how he sees his future. He spontaneously said that we might quote him anytime in our newsletter: *"I want to make a difference for other people. It gives me pleasure to work with children and young adults. I want that in a few years, young people can say to me that I have given them valuable assets on their way. Also as far as the starting a family is concerned, I would like to proceed responsibly. Before I take a step in this direction, I want to develop a stable professional situation and have a private home ready for my future family."*



It's just great that we were able to win Charles Kapa for the work of House of Encouragement in Soshanguve. His sound and firm commitment for the orphan care center House of Encouragement Lesedi-Potlana is a great help and relief for us.

Unlike in Switzerland, here in South Africa and particularly in the townships, it is very difficult to prepare the older scholars in terms of a possible future career. Since there are no apprenticeships, the practical perspectives and also the professional career counselling are lacking. As we have reported earlier that over 95% of the young people leaving school are initially unemployed. The risks that are associated with it as slipping into crime, prostitution and drug addiction unfortunately are sufficiently known.

Due to political reasons the purchase of land for the planned Skill Center has been further delayed. However, we have been talking with our teenagers for a long time about their goals and wishes. Also we have contacted various companies and institutions in order to find out where and how the young people could find work and secure existence after school. We are confident that we will be able to assist all children leaving our center next year in practical steps into either further training or work.

With kind regards,

House of Encouragement

Walter and Estelle Bosshard