

Dear friends of the House of Encouragement foundation,

Our three months in Switzerland have passed extremely quickly and we look forward to the work on site again. During this time approximately a dozen people have used the House of Encouragement at The Hills. Furthermore, a big development has been achieved in Soshanguve. The orphan kids and their foster mothers experienced for the first time what it means to belong to the big family of the Centre at Lesedi-Potlana.

The timely demands for the operational manager of the centres, Willem Basson, have increased considerably with the responsibility for the new centre. Therefore, over the past months, he has trained the four volunteers Thulani, John, Koketso and Vussi in various tasks and fields of activity. Today, he is able to delegate more and more responsibilities to these dedicated young men, who are eager to learn. Consequently, this brings a welcomed relief of the strain for Willem.

Thulani is one of the volunteers who - as a needy young person himself – has been working as an orphan care taker for almost 3 years now.



Willem Basson, in discussion with the volunteers



Donald Thulani Majika, 26 years, volunteer

Thulani grew up in a family together with 5 sisters and 2 brothers, raised by his mother as a single parent. They only had the bare necessity to live and sometimes not even that much. Although Thulani did not see any perspectives for him, he eagerly learned and wrote his final exams (matric) in 2005. Today he says, that it is only because of his mother that he is where he is. She made it possible for him to learn and go to School. Four years ago a younger sister died and currently two sisters and one brother are working. Thulani himself did not find work immediately after school. Later he worked once a week as a gardener what he still does today. One day he mentioned to his employer that his passion would be to work with people. Based on this, his employer organised a contact with the foundation Acts2Change and so he was introduced to our work in the Orphan Care Centres. As a volunteer he gets a small (expenses-)compensation.

- What is your motivation to work in the OCC?

To watch the innocent faces of the orphans every day keeps me going. I see hope in their eyes.

- How do you experience your relation with the orphan kids?

It is a role like being the big brother. To be somebody, where the kids can lean on, where they find comfort, advice and motivation, makes me happy. I can make a difference in the kids' lives.

- What would you like to change or improve in the work here at the centre?

It would be wonderful if we could provide stable homes/shacks and a secure environment for the kids to enable them to concentrate on their studies. Otherwise I think that we are able to grant comprehensive help for the kids

- Where do you see challenges in the work you are doing?

Trying to contain my emotions when kids ask me for something reasonable they wholeheartedly wish for and I cannot give to them.

- How do you see your future in this work?

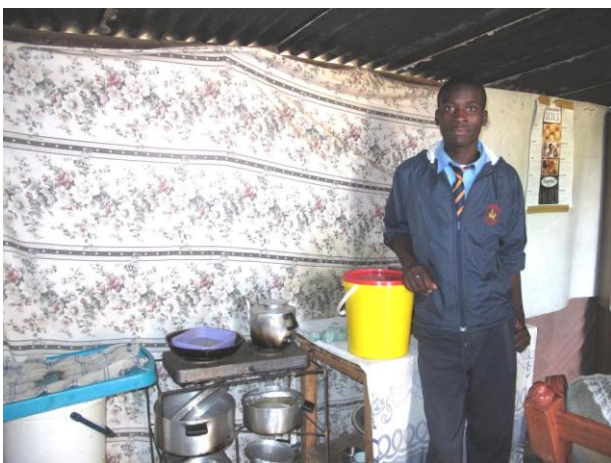
As long as I live I will follow my passion to help children and people. I really want to make a difference in my community and contribute to a better situation for the orphans. The experience I can gather in my current work will certainly be of advantage and supportive for these goals.

- What are your very personal wishes and goals?

I would like to have my own family one day. I want to be able to provide them with all they need and everything they wish for. Also it is important for me that I stay focused and level headed in everything I do. It would be wonderful, if I had the opportunity for a specific training as a caregiver and social worker. Another area of interest would be computer literacy. Last but not least I would very much like to attend a theological training as a pastor.

It is really nice to observe Thulani and the other volunteers how they take care of the children with such big hearts. After school the small orphans run to Thulani & Co and cling to them like they would run into their parent's arms. However, with the increasing responsibilities in the centre Lesedi-Potlana Thulani will have to plan his time with the children very carefully and make sure he attends to the many other topics as well.

Already well before the start of the building project we have queried certain situations of the orphans of the Primary School Lesedi-Potlana. We started supporting some of the very critical situations with the provision of food parcels once a month. Right from the beginning also „Prince“ belonged to this group of people. This boy – he is now in High School – has been living on his own since he was 13 year old. After his parents died shortly after one another he stayed on at his parents shack where some neighbours looked after him from time to time. As these people were in constant battle for survival themselves and this boy proofed to be brave and was acting independently, they soon withdrew this support. From time to time a teacher stepped in to help. Prince always went to school and stood his ground in the single household during all the years. He has an only brother, much older than him, who lives somewhere up north in South Africa, where he found work. Just as the saying „whatever doesn't kill me makes me strong“ Prince developed very well. He is a good scholar with a personal maturity comparable with much older adolescence.



Princes' kitchen: Left dish washing, Middle cooking and Right eating area. The yellow bucket contains food as provided for on a monthly basis by Acts2Change.



Prince in front of his house. He looks after himself in an exemplary fashion just as he makes sure the area around the house looks spotless.



The sleeping corner is cleaned up neatly just as the rest of the shack.



Prince is proud of his home where he even wrote the street number 100 in a very creative way.

Just in time before the holiday and very welcome during the cold winter season, Acts2Change distributed over 80 blankets for the orphans of the new care centre at Lesedi-Potlana.



It took a minibus with trailer to transport the blankets



The foster mothers collected the blankets for the orphans



Busy hand of helpers sort out piles of clothes



These clothes were meant for the foster mothers and the orphans



After the official dedication middle of May it was quite obvious that some aspects will have to be completed. As already mentioned in our last newsletter, we still need chairs, tables, kitchen equipment and would like to install a flexible partitioning wall in order to optimise the working with the children. Furthermore, we couldn't finish the layout and planting of the surrounding ground and the school Lesedi-Potlana still had to put up fencing to separate the area for the orphan care centre/Grade-R class rooms. A team of a youth group from Pretoria were helping to prepare some of the ground for planting. Apart from the trees we want to plant, the ground will be used for a garden project (vegetable garden) with the orphans.

With sincere thanks and kind regards,
For the charitable trust House of Encouragement

Walter und Estelle Bosshard

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