

Our Latest News Update from Khaya Lokukhanya and Thusananga

November 2008

We currently have 12 foster children and 4 place of safety children.

We have just finished building a separate annex for our 3 older boys, Thato, Zolani & Thandolwakhe, still at school, but in their late teens, early twenties. We felt it important to provide them with their own adult space, and give them adult responsibilities, such as managing a budget and keeping their home tidy (yes 3 teenage boys mmm how tidy will that place be?) We are currently trying to help them find some holiday jobs this Christmas. They are such lovely young men. They have had their ups and downs but we are very proud of them, of how they have kept their heads high and well above water, and have coped with all the challenges and losses life has thrown at them, so early.

Our 'middle' children, the 7-13 year olds, are getting extra maths tuition from "Maam Luleka", who teaches at The Barkly School. She visits KL 2-5 times a week and helps the children with their maths, ALL this as a volunteer on top of being a Mum & a teacher. Mongezi, Tersia & I are all busy listening to the children read, and doing basic numeracy and literacy and the foster mothers' are also more involved with their reading now than before. Reading with the children is a magical moment for us grown ups as well as the children. It allows them one-to-one with an adult-which they don't have too much of-and it allows us to see the joy and excitement as their world starts to open up in front of our eyes. Even simple counting games can be a revelation to all concerned. We also pay for computer lessons for all children above seven.

We have 3 tiny tots, cheeky girls, Thinama & Siwe, both aged 3...who are a delight. They seem to have got through the "terrible twos" without it being terrible...they are just terribly adorable. We also have one infant, Siphesihle, just learning to walk and smiling so much since he came to us.

All the children come to the farm on a regular basis. Joe has finally succumbed to my years of nagging and is allowing the children to use his stock of precious mountain bikes. You must know how are hearts crawl up to our throats as we watch them ride into the sunset....with helmets on of course....me worrying about broken forearms & collar bones, and Joe worrying about broken chains & gears.....

The swimming pool is in action too, so the children have an absolute ball splash-splashing for hours at a time. We are teaching them how to swim. Slow but steady.

Nkosthandile & Andiswa will be moving to Cape Town to be with their paternal Grandmother. We will miss them but know it is the right thing for them. Andiswa may also have the opportunity to attend a school for the deaf there. She has one more hearing appointment in Bloemfontein before they leave around December time. Everyone who has met these two know what little pieces of magic they are. Nkosithandile is our resident funny man and Andiswa just all round gorgeous. Andiswa & Ntauleng both had their hair done into braids last week by sweet Magobo who lives on the farm. They look amazing and it has encouraged the other girls (and boys too we hope) to opt for something other than the "childrens' home" shaved head style.

Nine children from Child Headed Households continue to be supported with food parcels and clothing from us.

Our Feeding Scheme to under seven year old children ran for 6 months this year, and provided hundreds of children with hot soup and bread for 5 days a week.

Our Project Manager, Tersia, continues to be her kind, selfless, organised self. We could not run this project without her.

Mongezi has successfully completed his Diploma in Youth & Community Development-thanks to hard work and a bursary from KL, and starts work for the Department of Social Development here in Barkly in January. He will still be part and parcel of KL.

Our foster mothers have had a busy, challenging year with lots of new place of safety children and they have coped really well. Well done Nandi & Levia. The atmosphere at KL is lively and fun with the arrival of Lucy our daily help and salvation, who works wonders with the tiny tots and with the garden. We have beans, spinach, carrots, cabbage, onions, pumpkins, tomatoes galore and she has managed to get the children growing their own sunflowers in a competition to grow the biggest flower. Lucy is a Granny to her daughters two children, but she is also very much part of the KL family.

Thusananga Home Based Care Association has had a busy year too.

We still have a high turnover of patients, and although we are very involved with getting people ready to take their anti-retroviral therapy (anti-HIV drugs), we are sadly still having to put a lot of time in providing high quality end of life care for those mainly young people who are often referred to us "too late", when they are moribund. This is why we push push for early testing for HIV, in order that people can come to terms with their status and take control during the early stages. We are very proud of the quality of care we provide, the time we take with patients and their families, and believe this is a fairly unique situation here in South Africa.

We will see 2 Barkly learners through their HIV Education Programme this year-a pharmacist and a nurse-in collaboration with the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation in Cape Town. They sit exams just before Christmas and I know they will pass with flying colours. They have been easy students for me to teach as they have worked so hard.

Our beautiful new office will provide a safe space for our patients to work, educate themselves about their condition, sort out problems, or simply hang out and chill. The Thusananga vegetable garden is already very green and lush after recent rains. As I speak clouds are gathering so hopefully some more water will fall on the mass of vegetables already there. We have bought a new sprinkler system this year too. Our caregivers and supervisor Maggie continue to work very hard. We welcome a new patient/ caregiver Nthabiseng Motsi to our group-she has proved a hard worker and asset to our team.

We are looking to new sources of funding our caregiver's stipends. We are exploring new avenues with income generation for our Sibanye HIV+ Support Group to market their beading & craft work.

Enough for now, but a big thank you from us to you!

Clare and all the Executive, staff and children from Khaya Lokukhanya and Thusananga Home Based Care Association.

Dr Clare Murphy
Thusananga HBCA & Khaya Lokukhanya

Cell: +27(0) 8346 99919
Home: +27(0) 4597 19088

www.thusananga.org

Thusananga (which means 'helping all' in Sesotho) is a non-profit organisation registered to the Department of Social Development (020-194-NPO) Khaya Lokukhanya (which means 'house of light') is registered to the Department of Social Development (058-607-NPO)